



A Primer to

CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES

Guide Towards Allyship
in Indigenous Research

Western Research

JULY 2025



PURPOSE

As calls for decolonization and reconciliation in research continue to grow, there is an urgent need to equip researchers, staff, students, and trainees with guidance on how to engage in ways that respect Indigenous sovereignty, support community-led knowledge creation, and follow culturally appropriate protocols. A common question from those new to Indigenous research is, “Where do I begin?”. This Guide offers practical and principled direction for engaging in respectful and ethical Indigenous research. Indigenous research extends beyond community-based approaches to encompass all research that may have potential implications for Indigenous Peoples, their data, Lands (water, air, plants, animals), and/or knowledges.

While there is no checklist that one can complete to become an ally in research, this Guide offers a starting point—fostering accountability, building trust, and helping ensure that research contributes meaningfully to Indigenous well-being and self-determination. It is also intended to strengthen institutional awareness and capacity to “advance reconciliation with Indigenous Communities,” as mandated in *Towards Western at 150* and emphasized in Western Research’s strategic plan, *Mobilize for Impact!* and the collective responsibility to uphold treaties and Indigenous data sovereignty.

PARTNERS

Developed in partnership with The Office of Indigenous Initiatives and through the collaborative efforts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors, including faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students and trainees, and community members, this Guide is intended to support researchers at all levels in conducting research *in allyship* with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations.



Using This Guide

This Guide is an entry point for those engaging in Indigenous research. It complements the *Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University* and is structured around:

- WHAT TO DO
- WHY IT MATTERS
- HOW TO DO IT
- WHAT TO AVOID
- WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

Recommendations

The Guide outlines four key recommendations: 1) learn and unlearn by educating ourselves; 2) unsettle ourselves through continual self-reflection; 3) listen to and support community-led research (& respect the right to refuse); and, 4) advocate to drive structural change in support of Indigenous Research.

- 1

Learn and Unlearn

Do: Educate yourself. Do your own research before reaching out to Indigenous colleagues including scholars and staff.

Why: Respect Indigenous colleagues’ time and expertise. Engage only when your questions align with their identity and research/expertise.

Avoid: Tokenizing or over-consulting Indigenous colleagues, especially without doing preliminary work.
- 2

Unsettle Yourself

Do: Reflect on your positionality, privilege, and responsibilities. Embrace discomfort and learn from mistakes.

Why: Ethical research requires accountability to both community and the natural world.

Avoid: Ignoring your treaty responsibilities or avoiding action out of fear of making mistakes.
- 3

Support Community-Led Research

Do: Respond to community priorities. Respect data sovereignty and the right to refuse participation.

Why: Research should benefit the community and be guided by their terms.

Avoid: Conducting research “on” communities based on your own interests or expectations of engagement.
- 4

Advocate for Structural Change

Do: Work to remove institutional barriers and support Indigenous-led research.

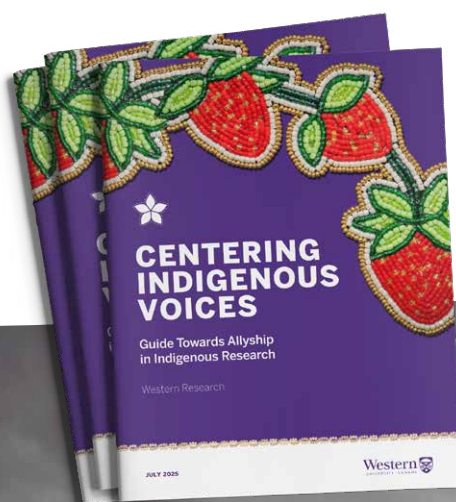
Why: Allyship includes transforming systems that hinder Indigenous research.

Avoid: Being passive in the face of systemic inequities.



A summary of recommendations by key findings can be found below. For details on 'how to' including additional resources and supports, please visit the Guide.

ALLYSHIP ACTION	INSTEAD OF...
Educate yourself and engage respectfully	Relying on Indigenous colleagues without doing your own work
Reflect on your role and responsibilities	Ignoring your positionality or avoiding discomfort
Follow community leadership and respect refusal	Imposing your research agenda or expecting participation
Push for institutional change	Accepting the status quo



ACCESSING THE FULL GUIDE

To access the full guide and explore additional resources, visit [Western Research's Indigenous Research Support website](#).

There, you'll find tools, guidance, and contacts to help you engage in respectful, community-centered research every step of the way.

WESTERN RESEARCH CONTACTS

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