

# Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework



Ministry of Children's Services

June 2018

Alberta

Honouring  
Indigenous  
peoples from a  
place of cultural  
understanding  
and respectful  
relationships.

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# Acknowledgement

## Beginning the Journey in Ceremony

Our Elders tell us it is important to begin any important work in ceremony. It is important to have our Elders support this work to “do better” in providing culturally appropriate services, programs and policies. Therefore, The Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework (ICUF) began this work in ceremony.

Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections (PIIC) would like to thank Leonard Bastien a Blackfoot Elder from PIIC’s Elders Wisdom Circle who conducted a special Blackfoot *Ceremony to support the development and success of the Framework*. This sacred ceremony *included a Buffalo hide*.

Elder Leonard Bastien explained the *importance of the ceremony* in the following way: *The Ceremony was the consecration of a Buffalo calf hide with humility to the Creator for blessings and guidance for successful outcomes to moving forward.*

There are many that shared stories and experiences, connected us to others with knowledge, offered technical and human resources advice, reviewed documents, refined ideas, supplied information, provided resources, and brought heart to the work. Our deep gratitude goes out to all the participants in our Engagement sessions for your contributions and to our ICUF - Working Group for your dedication and commitment to the development of this Framework.

We especially give our deepest thanks and gratitude to the Elders Wisdom Circle for their support, advice and guidance throughout the development of this Framework:  
Elder Leonard Bastien, Elder Charlie Fox, Elder Tom Ghostkeeper, Elder Dorothy Jobin, Elder Joyce Parenteau, Elder Darlene Cardinal, Elder Joe Ground, and Elder Wilson Bearhead.

Special thanks to Elder Gilman Cardinal for his support on this journey with beginning ICUF-WG meetings in ceremony and prayer.

Our Elders tell us...

***We are all connected, we are one family and we are committed to healing the 'spirit of the child', one child at a time.***

In order to effectively engage with Indigenous people and communities, there are significant historical, cultural and legal considerations that Children's Services employees must know and understand. As employees of the Alberta Public Service, we want to serve all people of the province with awareness, sensitivity and understanding that comes from learning culturally-appropriate knowledge.

Respecting the worldviews of Indigenous peoples in Alberta requires learning and development that focuses on Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being, Indigenous history, current realities, and aspirations. Success in working with Indigenous peoples and communities comes with this deeper understanding.

The Framework supports growing employee competencies through an *Employee Learning Journey towards Reconciliation*.

## A Living Framework

The intent of the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework is to establish a vision and a plan that will set the future direction for a coordinated and consistent application of a Learning and Development Pathway that will lead to Indigenous cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding for all employees of the Ministry of Children's Services.

The framework is our guide to support staff in transforming the way we work with and support Indigenous children and families. By providing culturally appropriate services with awareness, sensitivity and understanding, Ministry employees will maintain and further develop respectful relationships and connections with Indigenous children, youth, families and communities leading to better outcomes.

The Framework is a living document and may evolve over time. This framework will incorporate leading practices, ongoing trends and drivers of transformative change within the Ministry and Indigenous communities.



# Introduction

## Reconciliation

As employees of Children's Services we know what we need to do, because our commitments are outlined in legislation, Treaties, and other agreements. It is how we carry out our work that makes all the difference.

The process of reconciliation and healing is all of our responsibility. It is up to all of us, to be more understanding, knowledgeable and respectful of the ways in which we conduct our work.

Within this document the term Indigenous refers to honouring First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Alberta. Given the diversity of Indigenous cultures across the province, training will be developed with local Indigenous communities to be reflective of all cultures.

Many organizations, including the Government of Alberta and Children's Services support the need to work towards redefining, reconciling and healing the historical relationship with Indigenous people. Reconciliation of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Government has long been needed.

Therefore, the ministry is committed to delivering services and developing programs in a culturally appropriate manner as it works towards reconciliation based on respectful relationships, accountability, trust, and understanding.

This framework is a clear plan and map of how ministry staff can grow in understanding and respect for Indigenous history and worldviews. By providing greater cultural awareness, sensitivity and understanding, ministry staff will become better equipped with the knowledge and skills to work with Indigenous peoples and communities and support reconciliation, which leads to improved Ministry outcomes.

The journey through this framework will transform the way Children's Services works with Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities. In the spirit of reconciliation, it is designed to achieve healing outcomes when meeting the needs of Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

## Background

The Government of Alberta seeks to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework to educate employees on Indigenous history.

It is essential that Children's Services has its own framework in place to align to this broader work and to provide the necessary education for staff to understand their role in reconciliation as it pertains to Children's Services.

The Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework (ICUF) has been formulating in the minds of numerous Indigenous community partners, Elders, and ministry staff over the past few years. The

Framework builds on this previous work of engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities, leaders, and organizations to provide more culturally sensitive policy, programs and services.

The working group would like to acknowledge that many good things have already commenced in the Ministry (including champions and regional partnership and relationships with Indigenous communities) that focus on healing outcomes for children and families.

We recognize that there are gaps that still exist in the development and delivery of Indigenous cultural training. This Framework will reduce many of these gaps through the Learning and Development Pathway included in the Framework.

The ICUF will support employee's learning journey to reconciliation and guide them towards knowing, doing and being and understanding the concept of becoming an Ally to Indigenous peoples.

By increasing cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding of Indigenous history and the various Indigenous cultures in our province, our knowledge will provide enhanced practice, which will enhance the supports and services to Indigenous families and their children.

## It Begins and Ends with Each One of Us

Providing space and time for Indigenous worldviews in our processes, systems, and programs, can alter the very foundation of how we work in respectful relationships with Indigenous children, families and communities.

## Our Vision

### **Honouring Indigenous peoples from a place of cultural understanding and respectful relationships.**

The Framework's vision focuses on a holistic Learning and Development Pathway to Indigenous cultural understanding for Ministry employees that fosters respectful relationships and facilitates the development and delivery of culturally appropriate services, programs, and policies.

The vision aligns with the Government of Alberta's commitment to work toward reconciliation and to achieving better outcomes for children and families, through partnership and a collaborative approach that addresses the root causes of social and economic challenges.

The vision aligns with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is utilized as an important starting point in redefining, reconciling, and healing the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The vision also aligns with the strategic context identified within the Ministry's business plan to support Indigenous children and families through strengthening partnerships with Indigenous leaders and communities. With greater collaboration between government, communities and Indigenous partners we will strengthen services and achieve better outcomes.



The main purpose of the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework (ICUF) is to outline a holistic Learning and Development Pathway to Indigenous cultural understanding for Ministry employees. This will influence programs and services to be culturally appropriate, and support better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

## Principles

**These principles support the core values of the Alberta Public Service (APS) of accountability, integrity, excellence, and respect, and also brings forth the Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being.**

### Reconciliation: Moving Forward Together

By gaining cultural understanding we can begin to comprehend our own role in the story, understand why things are the way they are, and how we can be a respectful Ally in moving forward together.

### Respect: Open Minds, Open Hearts

By keeping our minds and hearts open to the stories and teachings shared about Indigenous history, culture, challenges and resilience we can begin to understand Indigenous children, youth and families, thus ensuring genuine compassion while supporting those who access our programs and services.

### Relationships: Seeing Beyond

Building this foundation of cultural understanding enables us to maintain and develop respectful relationships, see beyond the current family challenges, understand the Indigenous worldviews of interconnection, account for the deeper needs that need to be addressed, and enables us to appreciate working together.

### Accountability: Taking Responsibility

Taking responsibility includes our accountability to the children, in ensuring that our actions and decisions reflect their interests and their right to an Indigenous identity. By learning about Indigenous history, cultures, languages, challenges and resilience, we take responsibility to ensure these teachings are incorporated within our work with children, youth, families and communities; that our decisions better reflect Indigenous ways of **knowing, doing and being**.

## Why Do We Need an Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework?

Delivering programs and services to Indigenous children, youth, families and communities often comes with the struggles of historical trauma that is lived out in the day-to-day realities of poverty, racism and loss of connection to culture, community and families. The ICUF guides us in this journey of transformation, reconciliation and healing. It sets a purposeful intention, a clear vision, and provides aspiration and opportunities for long-term change.

The ICUF is a valuable tool for learning and development to guide employees on a meaningful learning journey on how to become an Ally in healing and reconciliation. It is our map to establishing greater understanding and respectful relationships by supporting:

- I. An inclusive approach to learning that includes Indigenous culturally-appropriate training on Indigenous history, intergenerational trauma, identity, culture and protocol. This includes working with Elders and engaging Indigenous communities respectfully; and the diversity of Indigenous cultures in Alberta and the role of Indigenous communities and Elders in learning.
- II. A focused Learning and Development Pathway that is aligned to roles, competencies and outcomes.
- III. A consistent and coordinated approach to delivering training that can be evaluated to determine if the training is successfully impacting employee knowledge and behaviours.
- IV. The ICUF will also support the development of policies, programs and services that are culturally informed and appropriate. It will serve as a catalyst to create a shift in employee's thinking, attitudes and behaviours.

This framework outlines a pathway to learning and development for Ministry employees to understand the context of our province and have a deepened understanding of why things are the way they are.

## How is the Framework Different From What We Are Doing Now?

In the past Indigenous cultural training has been ad hoc and not evaluated or monitored consistently. By having a framework, including a Learning and Development Pathway, which is created in partnership with our Indigenous Elders, we will build greater collaboration with Indigenous peoples, combine leading practices and open the minds and hearts of staff.

The ICUF is unique in that it leads the way for the development of a new approach to learning Indigenous cultural beliefs, traditions, and practices based on a holistic and system-wide approach for culturally appropriate training.

The ICUF supports the targeted outcome of having our Ministry workforce informed and knowledgeable of the root causes and complexities impacting Indigenous children, youth, families and communities. Employees will learn the impact of bias or misinformed beliefs that may cause further harm, how to address them, and how to move forward in policy and practice with respectful and meaningful approaches.

This Framework illustrates the journey towards a reconciled relationship between the Ministry of Children's Services and the Indigenous peoples in Alberta. This Ministry has a leading role in healing the relationship with Indigenous people. We have a high frequency of interactions with Indigenous communities and play a key role in the reconciliation efforts across the province.

This Framework outlines a pathway to training for Ministry staff to understand the context of our province and have a deepened understanding of why things are the way they are.

Implementing innovative, experiential learning identified in the Framework's Learning and Development Pathway has the potential to change every interaction that the Ministry has with every Indigenous child, youth, and family as well as agencies, communities and Nations into positive collaboration.

The "child" in Indigenous cultures includes a family and community that are collective. This concept differs from a western understanding of "child" which includes only the child supporting the notion of "individual." And for most Indigenous communities "family" is more than just parents; it also includes siblings, grandparents, and other extended family members, and in some circumstances, the whole community.

Traditional practices/parenting teachings can be passed on to families and communities.

Our focus is on helping parents to become better parents.

We need to provide safe places for families and service providers to give meaningful reinforcement e.g. hugs, laughter, appreciation, and affection.

## Learning Objectives

- a) Ministry-wide, cultural learning and development opportunities for employees to increase their knowledge of Indigenous history, culture, challenges, and resilience.
- b) Provide opportunities to learn about Indigenous worldviews to support employees to better appreciate and show understanding that leads/contributes to more respectful relationships, both in practice and in the workplace.
- c) Learning and development opportunities will focus on a competency and outcomes based approach. Policies and programs are influenced by the experiential learning and developed through this framework.
- d) Enable staff to have deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews, leading to a greater respect of it in their daily interactions and work.
- e) Achieve better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities through greater understanding, awareness, sensitivity and stronger relationships.

## Goals and Outcomes

The ICUF and its Learning and Development Pathway will increase knowledge and skills that will give staff a better understanding of Indigenous history, culture, challenges and resilience. This knowledge will affect behaviour, leading to more respectful and meaningful approaches as we serve Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

The Goals and Outcomes (changes in knowledge and behavior) that will lead to achieving these goals are:

**Goal 1:** Children's Services employees, at all levels within the organization, will complete training identified within the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework.

**Outcomes:**

*Short-term:* Ministry employees are knowledgeable on Indigenous history, cultural awareness and protocol and the importance of identity and belonging for Indigenous people.

*Long-term:* Ministry employees become cultural allies to support reconciliation and create positive change and greater outcomes in Children's Services.

**Goal 2:** Children's Services will create safe spaces and opportunities within the Ministry for employees to engage in Indigenous dialogue and ceremonies.

**Outcomes:**

*Short-term:* Ministry employees are provided with opportunities to learn more about Indigenous world views within the workplace.

*Long-term:* Ministry employees better appreciate and understand Indigenous world views and contribute to more respectful relationships, both in practice and in the workplace.

**Goal 3:** Children's Services will foster respectful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous people while implementing the ICUF.

**Outcomes:**

*Short-term:* Ministry employees will have a deeper understanding of the various cultural groups and world views, leading to greater local respect in their daily interactions and work.

*Long-term:* Ministry employees will achieve better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities through greater local understanding, awareness, sensitivity and stronger relationships.

All of these outcomes serve to assist in building and maintaining respectful relationships between all people in Alberta.

## INDIGENOUS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING FRAMEWORK

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	LONG-TERM OUTCOME	EVALUATION MECHANISM
<p>ICUF – Learning and development opportunities will focus on a competency and outcomes based approach and employees are influenced mainly by the experiential learning provided through this framework.</p>				
<p>Children’s Services employees, at all levels within the organization, will complete training identified within the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework.</p>	<p>50% of Children’s Services Employees will complete the training identified in the ICUF within the first 2 years of implementation.</p>	<p>Ministry employees are more knowledgeable on Indigenous history, cultural awareness and protocols and the importance of identity and belonging for Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>Ministry employees become cultural allies to support reconciliation and create positive change and greater outcomes in Children’s Services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudinal Survey – will demonstrate measurable improvements in employee knowledge and attitudes towards Indigenous people and communities.</li> <li>• Circle Process (qualitative)</li> </ul>
<p>Children’s Services will create safe spaces and opportunities within the Ministry for employees to engage in Indigenous dialog and ceremonies.</p>	<p>Children’s Services will support and work with the Elder’s Wisdom Council, Indigenous Interns, and other employees to support Indigenous ceremonies and practices in the workplace and host Indigenous learning series and other forums for further dialogue.</p>	<p>Ministry employees are provided with opportunities to learn more about Indigenous world views within the workplace.</p>	<p>Ministry employees better appreciate and understand Indigenous world views and contribute to more respectful relationships, both in practice and in the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of Elder’s Wisdom Council meetings</li> <li>• # of Indigenous Interns and Mentorship supports</li> <li>• # of Indigenous ceremonies</li> <li>• # of Indigenous learning series/forums</li> </ul>
<p>Children’s Services will foster respectful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous peoples while implementing the ICUF.</p>	<p>Children’s Services will work directly with Indigenous partners in Alberta, as close to home as possible, in the delivery of ICUF training.</p>	<p>Ministry employees will have a deeper understanding of the various cultural groups and world views, leading to greater local respect in their daily interactions and work.</p>	<p>Ministry employees will achieve better outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities through greater local understanding, awareness, sensitivity and stronger relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of CS and Indigenous partnerships</li> <li>• # of completed training sessions in local communities</li> </ul>

## **Moving from Vision into Action: Building Competencies within the Learning and Development Pathway**

It is important that this framework is applicable to the work being done by Ministry employees and aid them in the reconciliation process between Indigenous peoples and Children's Services. Employees will be directed to undertake the training outlined in the following chart below.

The ministry identified the development of a cultural understanding framework as a key priority. This led to the development of the ICUF to fully describe the employee learning journey towards reconciliation through a Learning and Development Pathway. The Learning and Development Pathway is an interactive adult learning experience that includes Foundations; Relationship and Culture; Reconciliation; and Wisdom. As there is no one way to reconciliation, this framework allows for a flexible, local approach to meet the same goals and reach the same standards. The training within the pathways is intended to be developed in collaboration with Indigenous knowledge keepers.

The ability to utilize culturally appropriate teaching methods such as experiential and interactive components will facilitate strong competencies for Children's Services' employees and greatly enhance the learning opportunities outlined in this framework. The ICUF is intended to serve as a catalyst to create a shift in employees' thinking, attitudes and behaviours when engaging with Indigenous children, families, and communities.

The following chart summarizes a consistent approach for the Learning and Development Pathways, which will be provided to ministry staff at all levels and in all divisions. These learning pathways are explained further in the Learning and Development Pathway chart and within the role development levels on page 17 & 18.

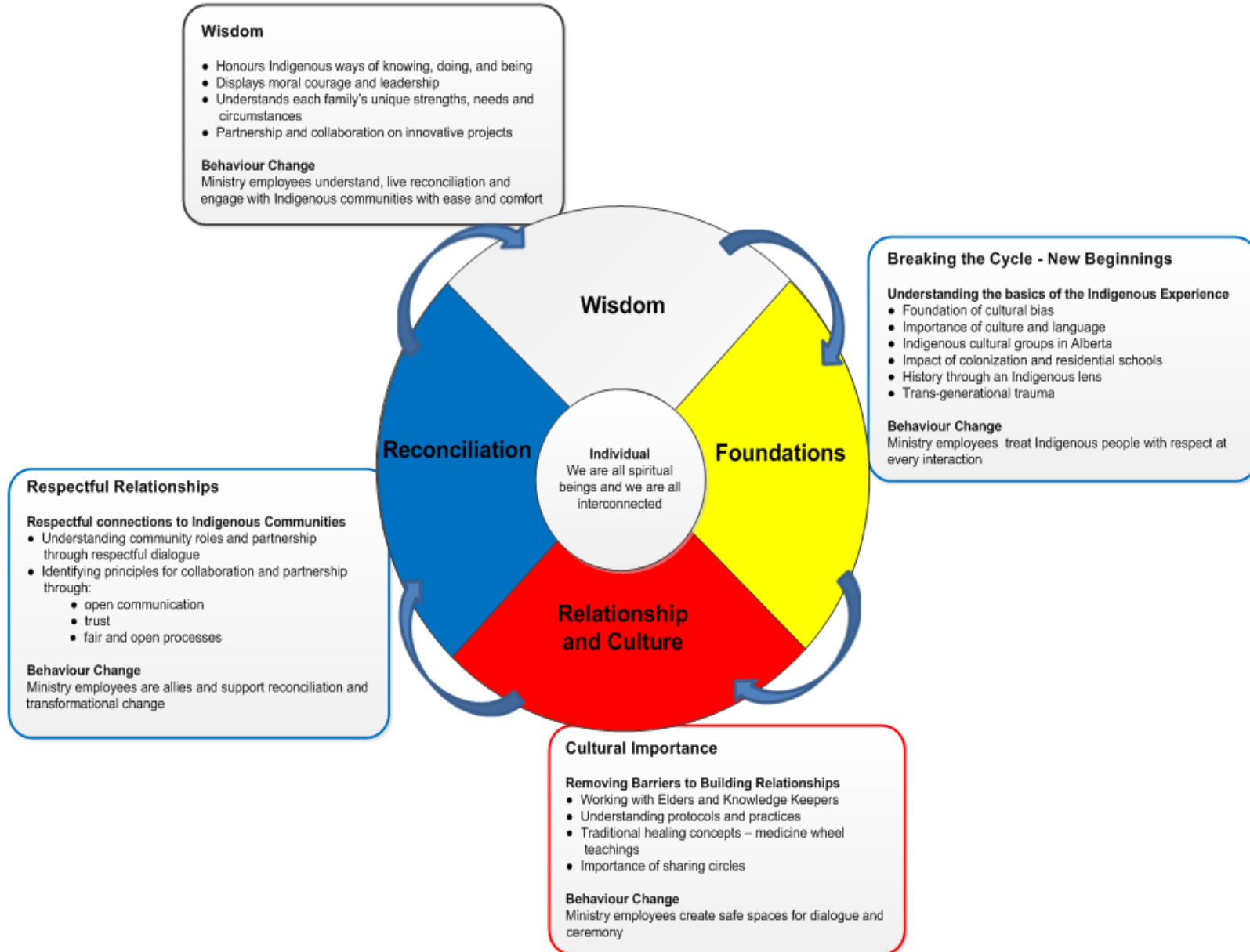


<b>Position</b>	<b><i>Foundations</i></b>	<b><i>Relationship and Culture</i></b>	<b><i>Reconciliation</i></b>	<b>Wisdom</b>
Executive Management and Leadership	✓	✓	✓	<b>Aspirational Level of Wisdom.</b>  <b>Reached when we have the natural ability to respectfully engage with Indigenous people, display moral courage and leadership regarding Indigenous relations and issues, and embody being an Ally'.</b>
Policy Staff and all other Management	✓	✓	✓	
Program Delivery Staff and their Supervisors and Managers	✓	✓	Optional	
Administrative Staff	✓	Optional	Optional	
Engagement and Stakeholder Relations Staff	✓	✓	✓	

Due to the nature of the Learning and Development Pathway, culture and protocol are intertwined in all of the teachings. The Relationship and Culture pathway is specifically for people who consistently meet with Indigenous families and children and need a deeper understanding.

# Indigenous Learning and Development Pathway

## “Employee Learning Journey to Reconciliation”



## Learning and Development Pathway Descriptions

### Foundations:

Sets out the baseline knowledge and understanding all employees in the Ministry should have, regardless of their role, function or classification.

### Relationship and Culture:

In addition to the baseline knowledge acquired from 'Breaking the Cycle – New Beginnings', the 'Relationship and Culture' pathway sets out the knowledge and understanding that Ministry employees must have if they are working directly with Indigenous people or communities. The focus is on understanding, building relationships, and participating in cultural practices.

### Reconciliation:

Sets out the specific knowledge, understanding and behaviours that employees in executive management and leadership positions need to possess in order to achieve meaningful outcomes with respect to Indigenous peoples, families and communities. It will also apply to employees exercising leadership responsibilities at any level within the Ministry.

### Wisdom:

This is an aspirational goal. This refers to a level of Indigenous cultural knowledge, understanding and competence where one is proficient and culturally capable to a high degree, and understands both the Indigenous and western worldviews with skill and understanding of a master.

## Job-Specific Cultural Understanding and Development

Certain functions and work activities are more likely to impact outcomes for Indigenous peoples and communities. Employees performing these functions or activities need specific cultural understanding and competencies.

We have divided Ministry staff into five categories: Executive Management and Leadership; Policy Staff and all other Management; Program Delivery Staff and their Supervisors and Managers; Administrative Staff, and Engagement and Stakeholder Relations Staff.

### Executive Management and Leadership

The leadership of an organization is important in setting direction and embedding culture. This

section outlines the cultural understanding and competencies that should be developed and applied by senior executive management employees as well as anyone exercising leadership responsibilities.

## Policy Staff and all other Management

The cultural understanding and competencies of policy staff targets employees responsible for developing policy as all policy can have a ripple effect that ultimately impacts Indigenous peoples and communities in Alberta; whether direct or indirect.

## Program Delivery Staff and their Supervisors and Managers

Many employees deliver services directly to members of the public, including to Indigenous peoples, families and communities. The cultural understanding and competencies of program delivery staff would support effective interactions and communication with Indigenous peoples, families and communities aimed at improving service delivery. Specific local knowledge and understanding of issues in the community may also be needed to be effective in this work.

## Administrative Staff

Administrative staff plays an important role in supporting the work of the Ministry. This section outlines the understanding and competencies that employees engaged in administrative function and responsibilities need to possess.

## Engagement and Stakeholder Relations Staff

This section refers to staff that engage, consult, or negotiate with Indigenous communities in Alberta.

The following table shows some examples of how competencies could apply to different jobs, depending on the level of engagement with Indigenous peoples.

Please note that these are examples and that the supervisor/employee needs to identify those competencies specific to the position so that they support the employee's ability to demonstrate exceptional performance.

# Role Development

## Executive Management and Leadership

Role: The role of the executive management and leadership is to set direction and to model the behaviour they seek to encourage and set the tone for workplace culture through leadership.

Knowing	Doing	Being
<p>Understands the legislative frameworks, policies and Ministry plans relevant to Indigenous peoples</p> <p>Understands the cultural context and the impacts of past events, policies and programs and their relevance to emerging issues, challenges and opportunities</p> <p>Understands the sources of knowledge and information resting with Indigenous employees, stakeholders and networks</p> <p>Understands the broader implications of the government's agenda for Indigenous peoples and communities in Alberta</p> <p>Understands individual, family, community, and regional level structural and systemic barriers to achieving shared outcomes</p>	<p>Clearly communicates expectations in relation to cultural awareness and understanding</p> <p>Leads the engagement of Indigenous peoples and communities in order to effectively deliver the Government's priorities in a culturally appropriate way</p> <p>Acknowledges and shows appreciation for the contributions and knowledge of Indigenous peoples and communities in achieving Ministry outcomes</p> <p>Works in genuine partnership with Alberta's Indigenous peoples to achieve shared outcomes</p> <p>Is properly informed and makes careful observations to understand the underlying dynamics shaping an issue</p> <p>Models inclusive behaviours and challenges and deals promptly with inappropriate behaviour, attitudes, and bias</p>	<p>Continuously learns about Indigenous peoples in Alberta; about their culture and supports others to do the same</p> <p>Encourages and draws on different cultural experiences and knowledge</p> <p>Respects and supports the social and kinship systems of Indigenous peoples in Alberta</p> <p>Has an authentic and respectful interest in Indigenous cultures, policy, and implementation matters</p> <p>Actively seeks to understand Indigenous peoples' points of view, perspectives and experiences in all dealings</p> <p>Engages with Indigenous employees in a sensitive and equitable manner</p> <p>Displays moral courage and leadership, and speaks out when observing inappropriate behaviour</p> <p>Speaks about systems and structural issues, and discussing how to address the issues</p> <p>Demonstrates reconciliation through personal behavioural change and speaking up when misinformation is stated by others, and addressing systemic and structural issues</p>

## Policy Staff and all other Management

Role: Ministry employees that formulate policy that ultimately impacts directly or indirectly Indigenous peoples and communities in Alberta.

Knowing	Doing	Being
<p>Understands Indigenous people's business within the Ministry and the outcomes the Ministry is responsible for delivering</p>	<p>Achieves policy outcomes for Alberta's Indigenous peoples and communities through connecting with other agencies and working co-operatively</p>	<p>Finds opportunities to connect and partner with other Ministries on policy development that impacts Indigenous people and communities</p>
<p>Knows Government of Alberta priorities as they impact Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>Identifies issues and develops strategies to implement changes in policy</p>	<p>Routinely engages with First Nations and Métis organizations, communities, and other Indigenous stakeholders</p>
<p>Understands Indigenous stakeholders in Alberta and the dynamics of engaging with them respectfully</p>	<p>Recognizes and makes attribution to the expertise and contributions of Alberta's Indigenous peoples in developing policy</p>	<p>Is respectful and professional towards Indigenous peoples and communities throughout the policy development process</p>
<p>Understands the possible unintended consequences or disproportionate impact government policy may have on Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>Gathers evidence through appropriate resources, knowledge, networks and consultation in policy development</p>	<p>Recognizes the unique nature and historical status of Indigenous peoples</p>
<p>Understands the divisions of power in the constitution between the levels of government and how these relate to one another in developing policy that impacts Indigenous peoples and communities, and how this creates inequality and systemic issues that need to be addressed</p>	<p>Actively shares the vision for success by consistently engaging Indigenous stakeholders in policy development</p>	<p>Demonstrates reconciliation through personal behavioural change and speaking up when misinformation is stated by others, and ensuring an Indigenous lens on policy work to better address systemic and structural issues</p>
<p>Understands First Nations and Métis governance structures, including agreements and Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7, and Treaty No. 8</p>		



## Program Delivery and their Supervisors and Managers

Role: Ministry employees that deliver programs and services.

Knowing	Doing	Being
<p>Understands the issues affecting Indigenous peoples in the communities and beyond</p> <p>Understands Government of Alberta policy in the context of achieving outcomes for Indigenous peoples and communities in Alberta</p> <p>Knows the cultural and historical context of Indigenous peoples in Alberta and the implications for program delivery in Indigenous communities</p> <p>Knows the protocols for providing culturally appropriate services with Indigenous clients</p> <p>Understands key Indigenous community stakeholders and their role in their community</p> <p>Understands the opportunities for working across jurisdictions at a local level</p>	<p>Applies appropriate flexibility in program delivery to meet the specific cultural needs of the community they are situated in</p> <p>Makes information accessible, culturally appropriate, and focused towards the audience</p> <p>Provides a safe interpersonal environment by listening and showing a respectful interest in culture, past experience, and personal circumstances</p> <p>Consults the community to develop and implement local level strategies</p> <p>Builds and continues to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities by including cultural protocols and ceremonies that include the child, family, community or Ministry</p> <p>Consistently and actively involves community stakeholders in program delivery and advocacy</p>	<p>Is respectful and behaves professionally towards Indigenous peoples and communities in all program delivery circumstances</p> <p>Actively seeks out opportunities to deliver outcomes in collaborative partnerships with Indigenous clients and families</p> <p>Is flexible and willing to tailor approaches to create culturally appropriate solutions</p> <p>Collaborates with other agencies and those working on the ground in delivering programs to achieve meaningful healing outcomes</p> <p>Is familiar with and respects the complexities of kinship systems, and supports individuals and the community to meet cultural and kinship obligations</p> <p>Supports the development and capacity of Indigenous peoples and communities</p> <p>Develops and builds trust with the community they are situated by listening and showing a genuine, respectful interest in the community's specific issues and opportunities</p> <p>Demonstrates reconciliation through personal behavioural change and speaking up when misinformation is stated by others, and respecting ceremony and protocol</p>

## Administrative Staff

All Children's Services administrative employees regardless of role, function and classification.

Knowing	Doing	Being
<p>Basic knowledge of the impacts of historical events and previous policies such as colonization and the residential school systems on Indigenous peoples</p> <p>The current issues facing Indigenous peoples in Canada and the root causes of them</p> <p>The significance of cultural protocols, practices, and definitions of family, and how these impact Indigenous peoples</p> <p>The diversity of the Indigenous peoples of Alberta and their worldviews and shared connections to land and culture</p>	<p>Communicates respectfully with Indigenous stakeholders, clients, and colleagues</p> <p>Works towards eliminating racism through own actions</p> <p>Adapts communication methods and styles when required to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>Is sensitive, appreciative, and respectful towards Indigenous cultures and heritage</p> <p>Identifies and challenges inappropriate behaviours in others</p> <p>Is aware of own personal and cultural biases and how these impact their own perspectives, and puts in place strategies to overcome these</p> <p>Demonstrates reconciliation through personal behavioural change and speaking up when misinformation is stated by others</p>

## Community Engagement and Stakeholder Relations

Role: Employees, who engage, consult, negotiate or have involvement with Indigenous communities.

Knowing	Doing	Being
<p>Knows cultural models, protocols and community dynamics and uses this to shape consultation approaches and engagement with communities</p> <p>Understands priorities and needs of specific communities</p> <p>Understands process and protocols of community engagement in the community's context</p>	<p>Works within cultural and community protocols to deliver results</p> <p>Facilitates, encourages and values the involvement of Indigenous community members</p> <p>Allows adequate time for community members to consider issues and engage productively</p> <p>Ensures ongoing communication to discuss outcomes, actions and initiatives with the community</p>	<p>Is respectful towards community perspectives and needs</p> <p>Responds positively to the uniqueness of respective First Nations and Métis peoples and communicates respectfully</p> <p>Actively identifies opportunities to learn and develop cultural understanding</p> <p>Carefully listens to ensure all views are shared and understood</p> <p>Demonstrates reconciliation through personal behavioural change and speaking up when misinformation is stated by others, and respecting ceremony and protocol</p>

## Key Success Factors

The ICUF serves as a guide to support Children's Services employees in building and maintaining respectful relationships with Indigenous children, youth, families, communities, and Elders. The following factors tell us that we are progressing towards the goal of reconciliation and a renewed relationship based on trust and respect.

All of these successes will assist in building and maintaining meaningful relationships between Children's Services employees and Indigenous children, families, communities and Nations.

### **We will know we are successful when:**

- There is a consistent, coordinated approach for cultural awareness learning and development opportunities delivered to staff at all levels within the Ministry of Children's Services.
- There is a shift in thinking and how we do business and this new knowledge is integrated into our daily work creating a positive ripple effect for all children and families who come in contact with Children's Services.
- There is a reconciled relationship with Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.
- Indigenous children, youth, families and communities will be provided Children's Services support in a respectful and unbiased way. Stronger relationships will be established and maintained with children, youth, families and communities.
- There is increased involvement and support from Indigenous families, Elders, and communities.

### **We will only be able to do this when we:**

- build and maintain meaningful relationships with families, communities and Elders;
- honour Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being;
- understand each family's unique strengths, needs and circumstances;
- develop partnerships and collaborate;
- increase contact and involvement of Indigenous families and communities; and
- involve families and communities early in the decision making.

## A Renewed Relationship

### Honoring Indigenous Resilience

It is a remarkable tribute to the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples in Alberta that they have maintained their languages and knowledge, and we must honour and respect these strengths. Increased understanding from an Indigenous view of colonialism, history of government policies, residential schools and how it has led to intergenerational and historical trauma will reduce current structural and systemic barriers, and result in better service and program delivery and outcomes.

## Growing Together

Moving forward with this agenda for a renewed relationship is a process that will take time and learning together on how we can better understand western and Indigenous worldviews. Over time, we will learn and grow together, developing meaningful relationships that build a solid foundation for collaboration.

## Becoming Allies in Reconciliation

We are now at a critical time in Alberta's history where we need to get it right with building a 'renewed relationship' of trust, respect and understanding for future generations.

Learning resulting from this Framework and its Pathways will encourage and lead employees to become allies, and committed partners in reconciliation with the ability to better understand both western and Indigenous worldviews.

## Next Steps - Implementation and Evaluation

Once we have all the information we need to complete the Framework we will move into the third phase of developing cultural understanding training which will include:

- The development of an Evaluation Strategy and multi-year Implementation Plan.
- Utilizing best practices; incorporating existing training; embedding the ICUF within existing structures and processes within the Ministry to ensure efficiency, avoid duplication, and to lead to a long-term, sustainable Indigenous learning and development strategy.
- Continuing to work with key stakeholders such as: children and families; Indigenous communities, agencies and leadership such as Delegated First Nations Agencies (DFNAs), Treaty Area organizations, and the Métis Nation of Alberta; foster parents and kinship caregivers (i.e., Alberta Foster Parent Association); Office of the Child and Youth Advocate; Child and Family Services Council for Quality Assurance; ALIGN – Association representing contract agencies; members of research and academic communities; and professional associations.

# Appendix A - Efforts to Improve the Lives of Indigenous Peoples

The mandate of Policy, Innovation, and Indigenous Connections division includes the development of internal training to build Indigenous cultural understanding throughout the department and supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Proposal 1(A) reinforcing the need to collaborate with Indigenous communities on the training content and delivery. It also supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action as well as several other recommendations from existing government bodies which are listed below.

## The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

### Proposal 1A of the Cabinet Report on the UN Declaration

*Implement mandatory training for all Alberta Public Service (APS) staff, including front line workers, and GoA Agencies, boards and committees (ABC) to learn about treaties, residential schools and the historical contemporary experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Alberta. Collaborate with Indigenous communities on the training content and delivery.*

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

### Article #57: Education to Public Servants

*We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.*

### Article #1: Legacy - Child Welfare

1. *We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:*
  - i *Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.*
  - ii *Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.*
  - iii *Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.*
  - iv *Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.*
  - v *Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the*



- residential school experience on children and their caregivers.*
2. *We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.*
  3. *We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.*
  4. *We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:*
    - i Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.*
    - ii Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.*
    - iii Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.*

*We call upon the federal, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.*

The ICUF *Learning and Development Pathways* directly support the following legislation and recommendations:

We have a legal obligation to consider:

## The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)<sup>i</sup>

### Section 2

#### *Matters to be considered*

2. *If a child is in need of intervention, a Court, an Appeal Panel and all persons who exercise any authority or make any decision under this Act relating to the child must do so in the best interests of the child and must consider the following as well as any other relevant matter:*
  - a. the family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved;*
  - b. the importance of stable, permanent and nurturing relationships for the child;*
  - c. the family is responsible for the care, supervision and maintenance of its children and every child should have an opportunity to be a wanted and valued member of a family, and to that end;*
  - p. if the child is an aboriginal child, the uniqueness of aboriginal culture, heritage, spirituality and traditions should be respected and consideration should be given to the importance of preserving the child's cultural identity.*
    - i. any decision concerning the placement of a child outside the child's family should take into account*
    - ii. the benefits to the child of a placement within the child's extended family;*

- iii. *the benefits to the child of a placement within or as close as possible to the child's home community,*
- iv. *the benefits to the child of a placement that respects the child's familial, cultural, social and religious heritage.*

## Office of Auditor General of Alberta (OAG)

**Recommendation 3** made July 2016 in the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta (OAG) report for Human Services.

*Strengthen Intercultural Understanding recommended that the ministry continue to enhance its staff training of the history and culture of Indigenous peoples, as well as its training of intercultural understanding. The department should seek the expertise of Indigenous leaders and communities when developing the training. (p.24)*

## Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta (OCYA)

**Recommendation 2** made July 2016 in the Voices for Change Report<sup>ii</sup>.

*The Government of Alberta should review the child welfare legislation for the Aboriginal context by: A. Respecting the right of Aboriginal families to their own approaches for raising children and recognizing these approaches for their inherent strengths; B. Ensuring the child welfare system is supported by excellence in preparation, practice, and research in Aboriginal child welfare, using inclusion and diversity, cultural and traditional methods, and ceremonies.*

*(p. 2)*

**Recommendation 10** made July 2016 in Voice for Change from Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta.

*The Ministries of Human Services, Education and Health, along with their service delivery partners, should require that professionals working with Aboriginal Peoples have adequate training regarding the pre and post-colonial history specific to Aboriginal Peoples so that they have a good understanding of the potential risks, strengths and needs within Aboriginal families.*

## Appendix B - Other Principles Considered

We honour Indigenous Elders, children, youth families, and communities

These groups are the core foundation of Children's Services and the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework.

Their principles and values are:

- One child at a time relationships
- Education
- Indigenous Languages
- Teachings from a local level (life long journey – open mind open heart)
- Land
- Ancestors
- Relationships
- Life-long journey
- Reflective practice
- Identity (personal and community).

Some of which are guided by the Natural Law and sacred teachings (which can vary depending on the community as each community honours the wisdom of their ancestors).

The Core Values of the Alberta Public Service:

- Respect
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Excellence

### The Child Intervention Practice Framework Principles<sup>iii</sup>

*Outlines specific approaches and techniques that support family focused practice with child – centered outcomes, and supports all employees to connect philosophy, legislation, and practice with their day to day interactions with Indigenous Elders, communities, families, and children.*

**Indigenous Experience** – Aboriginal peoples have always had their own ways of ensuring that vulnerable members, including children, are safe, protected and nurtured. We honour this by recognizing their expertise in matters concerning their children, youth and families.

**Preserve Family** – We believe children and youth should be safe, healthy and live with their families, therefore we focus on preserving and reuniting families and building on the capacity of extended family and communities to support children, youth and families.

**Strengths-based** – Our approach is reflective, culturally responsive and strengths-based. Because all families have strengths and resources, we recognize and support the right and responsibility of parents to share in the decision-making process for them and their children.

**Connection** – Children and youth are supported to maintain relationships that are important to them, be connected to their own culture, practice their religious or spiritual beliefs and, for those with involvement, have a plan for their care where they are included in the decision-making process.

**Collaboration** – We are child-focused and family-centered. We collaborate with families, community agencies, and other stakeholders in building meaningful, respectful partnerships across integrated multidisciplinary teams and providing individualized, flexible and timely services to support these efforts.

**Continuous Improvement** – Our casework is transparent and we share information appropriately. Our approach is outcome oriented and evidence-based therefore we support innovative practice, evaluate our performance and strive for continuous improvement.

## Appendix C - Key Milestones for the Framework

	Activity	2016		2017										
		Nov	Dec	Jan 31	Feb 28	Mar 31	Apr 30	May 31	Jun 30	Jul 31	Aug 31	Sep 30	Oct 31	
<b>Phase One</b>	Initiate and Plan													
	Establish working group membership													
	Develop and approve terms of reference													
	Confirm governance													
	Confirm scope													
	Create vision statement													
	Develop work plan													
	Identify required activities													
	Identify risks													
	Develop project charter													
<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Project Charter Approval</i>													
<b>Phase Two</b>	<b>Build</b>													

	Identify past work contributing to Framework												
	Identify principles												
	Develop learning pathways												
	Write draft framework												
	Take draft framework to Elders/ Wisdom Circle												
	Develop a plan/schedule to meet with stakeholder groups for their input												
	Meet with identified stakeholder groups for their input												
	Develop What We Heard Report												
	Revise /Edit framework												
<i>Milestone</i>	<b>Framework Approval</b>												



## Appendix D - Lessons Learned from Community Consultations and Staff Learning and Development

Year	Title	Key Findings
2016	Gentle Whispering the Circle Back Training	<p>A pilot residential schools training for ministry staff. Five pilot sessions of Gentle Whispering the Circle Back were delivered between June 2016 and February 2017. The Gentle Whispering the Circle Back evaluations determined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Staff desires to have more training in three distinct areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more information on the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada;</li> <li>• more information on Indigenous experiences today, and</li> <li>• more information on how to be an Ally.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) More time is desired for training on topics such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) history of Indigenous peoples in Canada;</li> <li>(b) history of policies and how these policies have impacted the lives of Indigenous peoples throughout history was also needed;</li> <li>(c) Participating in the Blanket Exercise in order to understand the history of colonization in Canada.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
2015	The Alberta Child Intervention Service Quality Framework	<p>A secondary analysis of 2011 Community Conversation was completed, input from child intervention key opinion leaders, and direct engagement with service recipients (children, youth, families, and caregivers). This includes the Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training which encourages employees to compare Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Cultures worldviews, language, preferred teaching and learning styles and routines.</p>
2014	Knowing-Doing Partnership Report	<p>The report identified three significant learnings (Knowing Doing Themes):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is significant over-representation of the Western worldview in Indigenous child welfare.</li> <li>ii. We supported the inspiration experienced by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society to step more completely into being an Indigenous agency (instead of a mainstream program with an Indigenous component.</li> <li>iii. “Practice as Ceremony” best describes ideal Indigenous child welfare work by an Indigenous agency founded on an Indigenous worldview. When child welfare practice is recognized as ceremony, we understand the work differently.</li> </ol>

Appendix D - Lessons Learned from Community Consultations and Staff Learning and Development continued

Year	Title	Key Findings
2014	Wise Practices Applying Community Learning Training	<p>Wise Practices: Applying Community Learnings was developed as a result of a series of conversations with Aboriginal service providers, community members and other stakeholders. The training program focused on developing and strengthening the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills for service providers to work in a manner that promotes culturally appropriate care to Aboriginal children, More specifically, this training was designed to achieve three key goals identified by the ministry:</p> <p>Heighten leadership awareness, understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal culture so that leaders are mindful of diversity as they create policies, programs, practice standards and outcomes.</p> <p>Provide the tools and skills to people to increase their awareness, understanding and comfort with diverse worldviews and ways of being so that they are able to respond to the needs of Aboriginal children and families.</p> <p>Help hone the interpersonal skills of child intervention staff so they are comfortable working with Aboriginal children and families, and in a manner that respects and embraces diversity.</p>
2013	Allying with Indigenous Peoples: The Practice of Omanitew Evaluation Report	<p>Evaluation of the Practice of Omanitew Training (developed in partnership with Blue Quills) to see if the experiential learning opportunity made a difference in practice. The findings were:</p> <p><i>Everyone has a story and as human beings we have all experienced some degree of pain, suffering or trauma in our lives; historical factors have played a role in this damage and current factors continue to play a role. Everything is connected; creating a safe place for relationships to build and for healing to occur is critical. It's about moving forward, it's not about laying blame. It is not about "us" versus "them; it's about "us. It's about walking together, side-by-side, as allies for a better future. It's about making people feel comfortable.</i></p>

Year	Title	Key Findings
2013	What We Heard: Summary of the Community Conversations	<p>It was determined that the following key factors were the most important for the youth, Elders, First Nation and Métis community members from 126 communities who were consulted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship based practice (45%)</li> <li>• Developing strong relationships with families and community partners;</li> <li>• Treating people with respect and dignity in every interaction</li> <li>• Truly understanding each person's and each family's unique strengths, needs and circumstances;</li> <li>• Building on existing strengths within the individual, family and community; and</li> <li>• Recognizing that the best place for a child is with a healthy, loving family. A family that may include more than biological parents and siblings. In extreme cases where a child must be removed from the family, relationship based practice would see this done with the least disruption to both the child and family.</li> <li>• Prevention and community support (22%)</li> <li>• Shared decision making (15%)</li> <li>• Acknowledging of Aboriginal history (9%)</li> <li>• Honouring Aboriginal ways of being (9%)</li> </ul>
2011	Review of Cultural Training in Children and Youth Services in Alberta:	<p>A Situational Assessment and Gap Analysis was undertaken to identify the gaps between what is desired and what exists in terms of what is being offered. What we learned is that we need reflective practice – practice that demonstrates understanding, appreciation and respect for different worldviews, protocols and cultural traditions. We need cultural competence – knowing and valuing a different way of understanding the world. We need training that is localized, addresses the uniqueness of respective community and its protocols and allows for direct experience. That Module 5 of Delegation training is not cultural training. Three phases were recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase1: Develop a cultural framework that outlines the vision, guides the development of standards, child intervention policies and programs and evaluation processes with engagement of stakeholders, including to design and develop a cultural competency program aligned with the principles and practices of adult education.</li> <li>• Phase 2: Deliver the cultural competency program – recruit local community leaders/ experts to share insights and knowledge and become mentors to participants.</li> <li>• Phase 3. Evaluate the outcomes by conducting an evaluation via a framework that is sensitive to Aboriginal research methodologies and collaborative, community-based assessments.</li> </ul>

Appendix D - Lessons Learned from Community Consultations and Staff Learning and Development continued

Year	Title	Key Findings
2010	Aboriginal Awareness Training and Curriculum was developed for Human Services – Wise Practices	Today strategies are being implemented to encourage child invention workers to incorporate Indigenous cultural understanding principles into their work.
2010	The Northwest Child and Family Services Aboriginal Pillar Framework and Action Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our commitment to improve the quality of services provided for Aboriginal children, youth and families;</li> <li>2. Our need to hear the voice, wisdom and knowledge of the Aboriginal communities so that we understand and respond to the vision and values they desire for their children, youth and families;</li> <li>3. Our obligation to strengthen linkages and connections and establishing respectful, supportive relationships with Aboriginal community members and their leaders.</li> <li>4. Our responsibility to increase our understanding and knowledge about the various Aboriginal cultures of the children, youth and families we serve.</li> <li>5. Our understanding that culture transcends all boundaries and is the root source for holistic self-development for all Aboriginal children and youth.</li> <li>6. Our ultimate desire and courage to create spiritual well-being for Aboriginal children and youth to walk their individual paths.</li> </ol>

Appendix D - Lessons Learned from Community Consultations and Staff Learning and Development continued

Year	Title	Key Findings
2010	Aboriginal Policy Framework	<p>Child and Family Services Authorities of Alberta, Children and Youth Services, sponsored this internally focused document. This provided principles, goals, outcomes, governance, operational and ministry wide strategies focused on better outcomes for Aboriginal children, youth and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The well-being and self-reliance of Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities will be promoted and supported.</li> <li>• Aboriginal children and youth will have a healthy start in life and the supports they need to reach their full potential.</li> <li>• Aboriginal children in need will be protected and supported by permanent nurturing relationships.</li> </ul>
2000	Strengthening Relations: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework	<p>The Framework outlines how Ministries of Government of Alberta can work collaboratively with First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal communities and organizations to achieve the following two goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The GoA will work with Aboriginal People, Federal, and Municipal Governments, industry and other interested parties towards the goals of individual and community well-being and self-reliance. Including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal well-being and self-reliance</li> <li>• Aboriginal participation in the economy</li> <li>• First Nations relations</li> <li>• Self-government</li> <li>• Metis Issues</li> <li>• Land Management and Resource Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. The GoA will work with all interested parties to clarify Federal, Provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancing Northern development.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

## Appendix E - Glossary of Terms

**Aboriginal**<sup>iv</sup>—Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, defines Aboriginal peoples as including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs.

**Aboriginal Rights**<sup>v</sup>—Rights that some Aboriginal peoples of Canada hold as a result of their ancestors' long-standing use and occupancy of the land. The rights of certain Aboriginal peoples to hunt, trap and fish on ancestral lands are examples of Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights vary from group to group depending on the customs, practices, traditions, treaties and agreements that have formed part of their distinctive cultures.<sup>vi</sup>

**Albertans**<sup>vii</sup>—All persons (including new immigrants, temporary foreign workers, and non-permanent residents) living in the Province of Alberta.

**Ally**—Reached when we have the natural ability to respectfully engage with Indigenous people, display moral courage and leadership regarding Indigenous subjects, and embody and live 'being an Ally'.

**Allyship**<sup>viii</sup>—is something that is designated by a person or community that one is aspiring to Ally themselves with, because it is only possible for Indigenous Peoples to truly evaluate and ascertain the degree to which they think non-Indigenous person is being their Ally. Therefore, Indigenous Peoples are the only ones that can deem a non-Indigenous person an Ally.

**Band or First Nation**<sup>ix</sup>—A band is a body of Indians for whose collective use and benefit lands have been set apart or money is held by the Crown, or declared to be a band for the purposes of the Indian Act. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one chief and several councilors. Community members choose the chief and councilors by election, or sometimes through custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage.

**Bias**<sup>x</sup>—A personal and sometimes unconscious preference for or dislike of something which can lead to unfair ways of perceiving and acting.

**Bill C-31**<sup>xi</sup>—this is an Act to Amend the Indian Act. It was enacted in June, 1985. This Legislation amended the Indian Act to remove discriminatory clauses against women, restore status and membership rights, and increase Indian control over their own affairs. Those people, who have been reinstated as Status Indians under this Act, are often referred to as Bill C-31 Indians.

**Collaboration**<sup>xii</sup>—People or groups starting together, and continuing to work together, in a mutually respectful relationship to achieve shared goals. A true process of collaboration works for all involved.

**Colonizing**—the process of European settlement and exertion of power over the territory, resources and the original people of the land. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and applied by the colonial rulers in pursuit of the interests of the country of their origin. Colonial principles include a belief that their way is best and they are

destined to rule over others. In colonizing, steps are taken to suppress the culture of others and impose new ways of being and doing.

**Community**<sup>xiii</sup>—A group of people who identify with each other, have common interest, or are viewed as forming a distinct segment of society. This term can also refer to a society as a whole.

**Constitution Act** (B.N.A. Act) 1867<sup>xiv</sup>—Section 9(24) of the Constitution Act states that legislative authority for “Indians, and Land Reserves for Indians” rests with the Federal Government. (Parliament of Canada)

**Continuous Improvement**<sup>xv</sup>—we share and use information appropriately. Our approach is outcome-oriented and evidence-based; therefore, we support innovative practice, monitor our performance and strive for continuous improvement.

**Cooperation**<sup>xvi</sup>—Working together with a shared good intention and willingness.

**Cultural Awareness**—the acknowledgement of difference

**Cultural Barriers**—Those involved in the administration of child welfare laws, including judges, lawyers and social workers, are generally not familiar with the diversity and complexities of indigenous people’s traditional and customary institutions and laws. These are not consistently taught in universities or law schools, students and lawyers are not immersed in these, and judges do not apply it in their courts.

**Cultural Sensitivity**<sup>xvii</sup>—the recognition of importance of respecting difference.

**Cultural Competence**<sup>xviii</sup>—which focuses on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of people’s experience of colonization.

**Cultural Safety**<sup>xix</sup>—refers to the state whereby an employee embraces the skill of self-reflection as a means to advancing a therapeutic encounter with Indigenous peoples and/or their communities. Demonstrates the ability to establish a positive relationship with Indigenous child, youth, families and communities, characterized by understanding, trust, respect, honesty and empathy.

**Decolonization**<sup>xx</sup>—decolonization begins at the level of the individual, in which people gain an awareness of how their actions and lives benefit or (directly or indirectly) contribute to the perpetuation of colonial relations and the disenfranchisement of Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization is about gaining such awareness and shifting one’s behaviour to challenge such relations. For Indigenous people, decolonization is first and foremost about achieving self-determination over their lands and social, political, cultural, and economic institutions. Decolonization is also a political spectrum: for some, decolonization means that their Nations get all of their traditional lands back, or others, it means reclaiming their Indigeneity on an individual level.

**Disenfranchise**<sup>xxi</sup>—to deprive of a legal right, or some privilege or immunity; deprived of power, marginalized, or the diminished social or political status of a marginalized group, especially disenfranchised minorities, disenfranchising the poor and elderly.

**Equal Rights**<sup>xxii</sup>—a principle of human rights that mandates the equal (same) treatment of all persons. This includes the concept of fairness and respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings, as specified in Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

**Experiential Learning**—learning that happens in many different settings outside of an educational setting such as a workshop. This may include visiting Indigenous communities and organizations, listening to elders, mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, volunteering for Indigenous events, and more.

**Feedback**—a process of open, honest communication between two or more people where useful comments and suggestions either reinforce current behaviours that contribute to a positive relationship and outcome or provide constructive ideas for improvement.

**First Nation**<sup>xxiii</sup>—A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term “First Nation peoples” refers to the Indian people in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term “First Nation” to replace the word “band” in the name of their community.

- Publication and Public Enquiries Indian and Northern Affairs Canada “Terminology” – July 2003

**Human Services**<sup>xxiv</sup>—See “Social Services”

**Indian Act**<sup>xxv</sup>—Canadian federal legislation, first passed in 1876 and amended several times since. It sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands. Among its many provisions, the Indian Act currently requires the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to manage certain moneys belonging to First Nations and Indian lands and to approve or disallow First Nations bylaws. In 2001, the national initiative Communities First: First Nations Governance was launched, to consult with First Nations people and leadership on the issues of governance under the Indian Act. - Publication and Public Enquiries Indian and Northern Affairs Canada “Terminology” – July 2003

**Indigenous**—within this document the term Indigenous refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Alberta. We recognize and honour that Alberta’s Indigenous population is distinct and diverse. Acknowledgement of this diversity is embedded in the phrase “Indigenous people.” When used in the competencies and supporting materials, this phrase honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Alberta. It encompasses individuals, communities, bands, nations, organizations and urban populations.

**Indigenous People**—People defined in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant.

**Indigenous World View**—Indigenous peoples in many parts of Alberta regard landscape in ways common to their own experience, and different from the Western perspective land and landscape. The relationship between people and place is conceived fundamentally in spiritually terms, rather than primarily in material terms. Society operates in a state of relatedness. Everything and everyone is related. There is real belief that people, objects and the environment are all



connected. Law, kinship and spirituality reinforce this connectedness. Identity comes from connections.

**Language** – The loss of their community’s language by many Indigenous children was one impact of residential schools. “When you deprive a kid of his language at the sponge time of life, the most precious learning years, a bond is broken.”<sup>xxvi</sup> This loss of language is important because language is the expression of their home culture, and losing it is like losing the freedom to express yourself, and the ability to become a good citizen of your home community.<sup>xxvii</sup> Unless children and adults have the ability to speak in their own language they cannot make decisions as equals within their community. Culture flows out of personalities (parents, Elders), experiences (stories), beliefs and history. Language is at the heart of personal identity and losing one’s language is like losing one’s freedom of expression and their ability to become a good citizen in their community.

**Medicine Wheel**—The Medicine Wheel Holistic education nurtures the development of the whole person recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. It is used by many different Indigenous cultures and the meanings many vary because of this. In general, the wheel is broken out into four components and has the self at the center. You read the wheel in a clockwise fashion, beginning at the top. The quadrants can represent different things such as the four: directions, aspects of life, seasons, times of day, races of man, elements, and sacred medicines.

**Métis**—one of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Separate from First Nations and Inuit, Metis people developed their own culture and identify in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Metis Nation council defines Metis as “*a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.*”

**Non-Status Indian**<sup>xxviii</sup> – Commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the Indian Act. Some may however be members of a First Nation band.

**Outcomes**<sup>xxix</sup>—An outcome is the actual result or consequence that occurs through the achievement of the objectives. It is almost always quantifiable and measurable. For example: rates of violent crime decrease by 10%.

**Preserve Family**<sup>xxx</sup>—We believe children and youth should be safe, healthy and live with their families, therefore, we focus on preserving and reuniting families and building on the capacity of extended family and communities to support children, youth and families.

**Procedural Barriers**—Rules and processes that are more complicated than they should be. Substantive jurisdictional, legislative, policy, and practice-related complexities exist within the child welfare system serving Indigenous children and youth.

**Process**<sup>xxxi</sup>—the way in which something is carried out; how people are present together; how something is communicated. “Process” keeps the atmosphere centered on the people and their interconnection with each other. The course of business follows the direction of the relationships, respectfully moving along in a way that empowers individuals and the group.

**Reconciliation**<sup>xxxii</sup>—The process of restoring the balance to the relationship between Indigenous

and Non-Indigenous peoples. It will not be a quick journey, it will take generations.

**Reserve**—The Indian Act describes a reserve as lands which have been set apart for the use and benefit of a Band, and for which the legal title rests with the Crown in right of Canada. The federal government has primary jurisdiction over these lands and the people living on them.

**Resilience**—the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after one experiences significant trauma through death or loss.

**Resiliency**<sup>xxxiii</sup>—the ability of people to cope with stress and crisis, and then rebound quickly.

**Respect**<sup>xxxiv</sup>—A feeling of courteous regard towards a person, the land, or other living thing; showing proper acceptance or courtesy; acknowledgement; to feel regard for and show esteem; a willingness to show consideration or appreciation.

**Royal Proclamation of 1763**—The British Government proclaimed that the interests of Indian people and their lands must be dealt with fairly if that interest is extinguished. This proclamation was necessary to protect the interest of Indian people in these lands, as British North America became occupied by settlers.

**Social Exclusion**<sup>xxxv</sup>—the process by which individuals and groups are wholly (or partially) excluded from participation in their society. This can be a consequence of a number of issues, from low income to restricted access to employment, social benefits, services, and other aspects of cultural and community life. It is important to represent the issue of exclusion as one of social and community concern, rather than one of individual and personal responsibility.

**Social Policy**<sup>xxxvi</sup>—Laws, actions, regulations, principles, and guidelines designed and used to protect vulnerable people, reduce inequality, and create a system of supports for individuals and communities for the good of society. Social policy influences how members in a society live, work, and spend their time. It determines how human needs are met, such as housing, employment, education, recreation, leisure, health, safety, and the care of children.

**Social Services**<sup>xxxvii</sup>—Government and non-government activities that address the needs of people through social policy or social protection (e.g., income transfers, health care, disability supports, and education are components of the social sector).

**Social-serving system or social-based supports**<sup>xxxviii</sup>—A system of supports designed to meet human social needs. Examples of supports that are part of the system include health care, primary and secondary education, the justice system, and a variety of non-profit organizations.

**Strengths-based**<sup>xxxix</sup>—our approach is reflective, culturally responsive and strengths-based. Because all families have strengths and resources, we recognized and support the right and responsibility of parents to share in the decision-making process for them and their children.

**Status or Registered Indian**—A person who has been registered or is entitled to be registered according to the Indian Act. Most Registered Indians are members of an Indian Band. By virtue of the Indian Act, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is responsible for providing support and services to all Registered Indians.

**Structural Issues** – *Poverty, Substance Misuse, Substandard Housing* (poor housing conditions

such as mold, lack of safe drinking water, and overcrowding have been associated with increased risk of morbidity from infectious disease, chronic illness, injuries, poor nutrition, and mental disorders), and *Inequities in Government and Voluntary Sector Services* (education, child welfare, health services, clean drinking water).

**Systemic**—System-wide: affecting or relating to a group or system (such as a body, economy, or market) as a whole, instead of its individual members or parts. Not to be confused with ‘systematic’ which means ‘methodical’? Example: Racism is not an attitude that a few select people have without affecting society, but it is a systemic problem that affects many areas of society.

**Treaty**<sup>xi</sup>—A legal document that was signed with Indian bands and various British colonial, and later, Canadian government before and after Confederation in 1867. No two treaties are identical, but they usually provide certain rights, including annual payments for ammunition, annuities, clothing every three years, hunting, fishing and reserve lands and other entitlements. In signing a treaty, the Indian Bands ceded, surrendered and yielded all their rights, titles and privileges to the designated lands.

**Treaty Indian**—a person affiliated with a First Nation that has signed, or whose ancestors signed, a Treaty and who now receives land rights and entitlements as prescribed in a Treaty. Not all First Nations have signed treaties; for example, in British Columbia there are almost no treaties.

**Treaty Rights**<sup>xli</sup>—Special rights to land and entitlements that Indian people legally have as a result of treaties.

**Vulnerable**<sup>xlii</sup>—Individuals or groups who—due to age, poor health, minority status, or their otherwise disempowered position in society—may be open to physical, emotional, financial, or psychological exploitation or deprivation.

**World View**—The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world; a collection of values (a moral standard of behaviour) and beliefs (something accepted as true) about life that is common to a group. In other words the basis for the way you act, way you react and way you feel about the world.

## End Notes

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