

# Knowledge Translation *for* Indigenous Communities



## Policy Making Toolkit

P. Gaye Hanson *and* Janet Smylie



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# **Knowledge Translation (KT) for Indigenous Communities:**

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## **A Policy Making Toolkit**

P. Gaye Hanson *and* Janet Smylie

Prepared by P. Gaye Hanson and Janet Smylie  
on behalf of the Indigenous KT Summit Steering Committee

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The Knowledge Translation Summit Team



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# **Knowledge Translation (KT) for Indigenous Communities: A Policy Making Toolkit**

## **Introduction**

We have put together this kit of information to provide practical assistance to community policy makers and those who assist them (policy analysts, etc.) in development of Knowledge Translation (KT) policy. The specific focus is on health related knowledge translation. The toolkit has been developed for use at the First Nation, Inuit or Métis community level, understanding that regional, provincial/territorial and national organizations may provide assistance to communities. These organizations may also need KT policy to guide their internal knowledge processes as well as their support of the grassroots communities. The request for this information came from the KT Summit hosted in March 2006 by the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC) and other organizations in Regina, Saskatchewan. The Summit provided an opportunity for researchers, community members and organizational representatives from Canada and the international community to gather to discuss KT as it affects Indigenous people. The dialogue throughout the four day summit and the discussions held with a small group during the last day informed this toolkit. The call from the participants at the summit was to provide practical assistance to communities planning to develop policy to guide their decisions about knowledge development, translation and use in and with their communities. Seeing Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge and ways of translating knowledge fully respected, side-by-side, in knowledge translation processes is also a desired outcome of KT policy processes.

## **What are the KT Challenges at the Community Level?**

Communities face a variety of challenges related to knowledge and knowledge translation. One example is the case of health related information being brought into the community from an external government organization. The information may not fit the community context due to the use of the English language when not all community members read or understand English, it may not be culturally relevant, or may lack information on specific community concerns that are not shared by other communities. In this case, the information may need language and/or knowledge translation to ensure the information fits the community and is easily understood by community members.

A second example may be a situation where an outside researcher is coming into the community with a proposal for a research project. The community may be concerned about the benefit the community may receive from the research and ask for a knowledge translation plan. The plan, if well developed and implemented, would see the results of the research being returned to the community in an appropriate way to make sure the community shares in the benefit of the research project.

A third example may be the use of Indigenous knowledge in the development of health or social policy or programs in the community. A community level KT policy could help to ensure that appropriate protocol is used in accessing Indigenous knowledge and that the knowledge keepers are properly respected and acknowledged. The written documentation of Indigenous knowledge previously transmitted orally needs to be done carefully and be guided by policy to ensure protection of the knowledge, including intellectual property protection, if appropriate.

## **What is a Toolkit for KT Policy Making at the Community Level?**

The toolkit is intended to briefly review issues in KT, provide an overview of a possible process for policy making and suggest principles and elements to think about when drafting a KT policy at the community level. We hope to provide easy to understand and practical guidance for navigating knowledge translation.

The purpose of the toolkit is to make a contribution to understanding and supporting community action in knowledge translation. A similar approach has been taken by the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) in the development and distribution of toolkits such as “Privacy Tool Kit”, “Ethics in Health Research: Key Issues” and “Surveillance Tool Kit”. These other toolkits are available from the First Nation Centre at NAHO [www.naho.ca/fnc](http://www.naho.ca/fnc).

## **A. Knowledge Translation Policy Development**

### **1.0 What is Knowledge Translation?**

We will begin with finding a common understanding of key words:

#### **KNOWLEDGE**

Current definitions of knowledge include:

- a state of fact or a state of knowing
- familiarity, awareness or understanding gained through experience or study
- specific information about something

Knowledge can be held by a person or a group. It is possible that it can be shared through teaching and learning of all kinds and can be stored for later transmission in written form, pictures or stories and legends of oral tradition. In reviewing the ethical use of knowledge, both the knowledge and the intent directing the use of the knowledge must be reviewed.

#### **TRANSLATION**

Aspects of the definitions of translation include:

- the act or process of translating, especially from one language to another
- the act of changing form or appearance
- changing the knowledge to fit a new context such as medical information changed to be understood by a non-medical consumer or patient
- rewording something for a specific person or group to easily understand

In translation of the written word from one language to another or from highly technical to less technical language, one of the principles is ensuring that the meaning is the same or similar once the translation is complete. In knowledge translation, one of the concerns is to ensure the meaning or integrity of the knowledge is not damaged or lost in translation.

#### **KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION**

Dictionaries do not have this term in them yet, as it is new. The main health research funding agency in Canada – the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) describes knowledge translation as: “a broad concept, encompassing all steps between the creation of new knowledge and its application to yield beneficial outcomes for society.” (CIHR, 2006)

KT strategies as documented by the CIHR include linkage and exchange, communication and education, policy change and program and practice improvement initiatives. CIHR’s vision of successful KT is “the exchange, synthesis and ethically sound application of knowledge within a complex set of interactions among researchers and users – to accelerate the capture of the

benefits of research for Canadians through improved health, more effective services and products and a strengthened health care system.” (CIHR, 2006) The World Health organization (WHO) identifies KT as a way of bridging the “know-do” gap, using knowledge to improve health policy, programs and practices. (WHO, 2005)

Effective knowledge translation also requires an understanding of local and cultural knowledge systems or “ways of knowing” practices by Indigenous leaders and communities. Indigenous knowledge translation is also connected to discussions of literacy, culture and health (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006)

## **2.0 What is Policy?**

A simple definition of policy is a plan or course of action of a government, business or other organization intended to influence decision and actions. Policy is a written or non-written statement of intent used to guide decision making. For example, communities may have policies relating exercising powers of self-government in lands and resources. The administration of community affairs may involve policy guiding the expenditure of funds for various purposes and who has what level of authority to spend money.

Policies that guide hiring and management of employees form the human resource management policies. Policies may be formalized and written or informally communicated as “the way we do business”. For example, an organization may have an unwritten policy that everyone washes their own coffee cups or a family may have an unwritten policy that all bottles and cans are set aside for recycling.

## **3.0 What is a Knowledge Translation (KT) policy for Indigenous communities?**

In considering the development of a KT policy at the community level, specific issues and interests need to be considered which may include the following:

**INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY (COLLECTIVE) BENEFIT** – The primary concern is how to ensure that the development and use of knowledge ensures a positive impact for individuals and communities. Knowledge that is generated in a context that is non-Indigenous and far removed from community realities may be “lost in translation” as it comes into the community and may create more harm than good. We need to ensure the meaning and the value of the knowledge is not lost and that it is filtered by the community, if necessary, to ensure the most positive impact. KT policy may ensure community benefit is one result of the generation and use of knowledge within the community.

**DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL SPACES** – The recognition of inherent diversity within and between Indigenous communities must be considered in working with knowledge. The spectrum of values and practices of the non-Indigenous research partners, institutions, bureaucracies; and the “ethical spaces” where these Indigenous and non-Indigenous diversities meet must also be

included. (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006). KT policy may ensure diversity is respected and opportunities for the creation of ethical spaces for dialogue created.

**INDIGENOUS IDENTITY** – The protection and development of individual and community identity as “Indigenous” and the related issues are central to the discussion of knowledge and knowledge translation. The KT policy may speak to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge and how the use of both can enhance Indigenous identity.

**OLD, NEW AND TRANSFORMED KNOWLEDGE** – Knowledge Translation is not just about new knowledge. Some of the most treasured knowledge in an Indigenous community is the old or traditional knowledge. Much of this knowledge is held sacred and is kept and shared under the protection of protocol and cultural practices. Transformed knowledge is the result of making new connections between elements of knowledge, sometimes bringing together old and new, that together is transformed into new knowledge. The KT policy may cover one or all categories of knowledge.

**KNOWLEDGE, SACRED KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM** – Balance and spiritual harmony are seen as characteristics of wisdom. To tap into wisdom means understanding the true meaning from the roots or collective understanding. It is understood that knowledge can be given, received and imparted from one to another. Wisdom involves the ability to responsibly and respectfully provide assistance to others in developing awareness and understanding. Knowledge can be held in the mind alone, whereas wisdom must also engage the heart and spirit. The body and its connection to mother earth is also a source of wisdom. Skills are about doing, knowledge about thinking and wisdom is about being and knowing. KT policy may include all of these dimensions.

**INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TRANSLATION** – Indigenous languages embody the true spirit, history and culture and therefore a deeper meaning of knowledge. Indigenous languages are powerful in communicating the truth which taps into deeper layers of meaning and understanding. In some cases the “spirit embedded in the words and the language” gets lost in translating from the Indigenous language to a western language. KT policy may include provisions for protecting and ensuring the integrity of the knowledge so that true meaning is not lost in translation.

**INDIGENOUS WAYS OF BEING, KNOWING AND DOING** – Understanding the meaning of Indigenous knowledge requires the ability to work from a perspective that is human and spirit centred. The need to translate knowledge into action was fundamental to survival. Individuals were expected to “walk the talk” and demonstrate patience, presence and readiness to learn. Wholistic approaches that seek to connect learning with the mind, body, spirit and heart were seen as those that strengthen the community. KT policy may need to find new ways to encompass the “whole” when seeking to provide policy related to Indigenous knowledge and wisdom.

**HONESTY AND GENEROSITY** – Ethically sound use of knowledge is based in principles of honesty and generosity. The wise ones know that the more that knowledge and wisdom is shared

in a spirit of generosity, the more the Creator will bless a person with more and deeper understanding. KT policy may need to provide a number of different ways through which knowledge can be shared honestly and generously.

**RESPECT AND TRUST** – Respect and trust, as two linked principles are at the foundation of understanding that relationships are the vehicles for knowledge sharing. In order to develop trusting relationships, respect must be demonstrated for the knowledge, the community and the knowledge keepers. Knowledge is understood, translated and shared within the context of relationships. According to Indigenous wisdom, relationships are best developed on a foundation of trust and respect. KT policy needs to ensure that foundation is built and maintained to support KT related activities.

**RELEVANCE** – Communities have a limited capacity to engage in research and formal knowledge translation. Therefore, the community engagement needs to be dedicated to KT projects that are relevant to the community. If the project is highly relevant to the community, it may be worth it to the community to make it a priority. KT policy may need to include measures and methods for use in sorting out the issue of relevance.

**BACK AND FORTH RECIPROCITY** – The knowledge must go back and forth, sometimes many times to develop shared meaning. Reciprocity means that within the community and beyond the community, there is an expectation that individuals and groups will both give and receive benefits. The KT policy may need to include mechanisms for ensuring balanced reciprocity in all KT related relationships.

**USE OF KNOWLEDGE IN A “GOOD WAY”** - Self-knowledge, spiritual development, reflection, relationship and connection with teachers are Indigenous ways to ensure the “ethical review” of decisions and actions. Misuse of knowledge and the power that it brings is not expected of those with higher levels of spiritual and cultural development, which is why the learners are assessed before the most sacred and powerful knowledge is shared in traditional oral tradition. These protective mechanisms do not work as well with written knowledge. The KT policy may need to provide mechanisms for protection of Indigenous knowledge and ways of assuring Indigenous ethics review of the use of knowledge.

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING BETWEEN RELATIONS** – As stated by Fred Wien at the KT Summit, “it is beneficial for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to draw from both (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) traditions; people coming together to learn from each other is knowledge therapy (growing, respecting, contributing to each other’s learning)”. (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006). Sakej Henderson said that ‘the basic beauty of knowledge translation is that you are creating shared meanings out of diversity. You have not extinguished the diversity, you are extending the diversity. That enhances knowledge and languages. It should empower, mediate, reconcile.” (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006) The understanding of the interconnectedness of all people, all living things and all knowledge is what is meant by the blessing “all my relations” that is often used in some communities to close a prayer. The KT policy may need to be creative in expressing traditional views of knowledge and knowledge sharing.

**ART AND SCIENCE OF DIALOGUE** – Willie Ermine has stated that “dialogue is key and that it is not so much about policy or research methodology as it is about how we understand each other across cultures.” (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006) Eber Hampton has added that “something new has come along (in knowledge translation) – it isn’t really new, because it is Indigenous practice – as human beings, that notion of sitting in a circle and talking to each other to find out what we can learn from each other. That is very old practice, it is tried, tested and true over thousands of years and generations.” (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006) A KT policy can include descriptions of the principles and practices that support dialogue.

**SAFETY** – Sue Crengle also spoke at the KT summit and stated that “safety is a concern throughout the (knowledge translation) process.” The challenge is how to make the process culturally safe for Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous people. (Kaplan-Myrth, 2006) Including provisions to ensure safety is another possibility for the KT policy.

**OWNERSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP** – As one anonymous Summit participant said - “how can we enter the dialogue if we do not know what it means to own knowledge”? The ideas related to the ownership of knowledge are to some extent, western ideas. Traditional Indigenous thought supported the ideas of “stewardship” which meant that identified individuals, groups, families or communities were given the responsibility for carrying specific knowledge along with any rights or privileges that may accrue from holding the responsibility in a “good way”. The explanation of concepts of ownership and stewardship as it relates to knowledge may be another KT policy consideration.

**OCAP** – More modern and politically based ideas of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession have emerged in an attempt to protect individual and collective rights related to their own information and the use of that information. A KT policy may need to include statements related to OCAP, if it is important to the community.

**PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY** – Issues related to provincial/territorial and federal laws related to privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property are important to consider as they may have application, appropriate or not, to the Indigenous community knowledge translation efforts. In reviewing the policy context, the KT policy needs to be developed with a full understanding of the applicable laws and policies in other areas to make sure that they fit together without conflicting with each other.

**PARTNERSHIPS WITH MUTUAL RESPECT AND BENEFITS** – The history lived by some Indigenous people have contributed to a legacy of mistrust as one of the negative effects of colonization. Therefore, the careful development of partnerships and multi-party relationships within the community and with outside communities, researchers or agencies need to be grounded in mutual respect that ensures mutual benefit in all KT related initiatives.

## **4.0 How would a community develop a KT policy?**

### **4.1 KT Community Context and Policy Making Environment**

Each community has its own unique context and policy making environment which must be taken into account in writing KT policy. The various elements and characteristics of the community and its surrounding policy making environment needs to be assessed and considered in developing KT policy.

Questions that could assist in customizing the approach described in this toolkit to your unique community context include:

#### **COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

*Are we an Inuit, Métis or First Nation community? What is our level of autonomy and authority over our own political and policy processes? What regional or national bodies do we have relationships with that might be able to assist us?*

*(Examples: stage of self-government, delegated authority through administrative agreements, and relationship with Tribal Councils, or national political organizations, etc.)*

*Where are we located geographically? (Examples: degree of urban, rural or remoteness of the community, with a province or territory, near large universities, etc.)*

#### **POLICY CONTEXT**

*Do we have experience in policy processes that might help? Can we access assistance from a neighbouring community or regional/national organizations, if necessary?*

*Do we have any laws of our own (self-government context) or provincial/territorial or national laws that we need to consider in developing our KT policy?*

#### **KNOWLEDGE AND KT CONTEXT**

*What Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge is coming into our community, being accessed within our community or being taken out of our community?*

*Do we have a history of knowledge being handled well in our community? What problems have we encountered in the past?*

*Do we have any specific concerns about Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge and how it can be accessed, protected and used in a “good way”?*

*What knowledge needs to be translated and why?*

## 4.2 KT Policy Purpose

If the community is considering the development of a KT policy, it is important to know why. A question that might guide the understanding of purpose is:

*Why is KT policy needed at the community level? What does it offer?*

*What issues or problems are we trying to solve?*

*Are we seeing an increased number of research proposals that need to be assessed for knowledge translation related benefits for the community?*

*Are we seeing an imbalance in the way Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge is considered and used to support decision making?*

*Is health information being distributed in the community that is a poor fit for target audiences?*

*Do we need more clearly established processes and protocols for dialogue and access to Indigenous knowledge?*

## 4.3 KT Policy Development Process

Some of the important process considerations include:

- the process that you use and the relationships with the people engaged in the policy development process is as important as the policy itself;
- community input, engagement, and consultation ideas include: beginning with an open dialogue about knowledge, knowledge translation and use; developing a framework and then going out to the community for additional ideas; holding workshops, family “kitchen table” discussions or sharing circles with Elders on the land etc.; and
- ensure the full spectrum of people in the community are involved because women hold different knowledge from men and individuals and families hold different knowledge and a diversity of ideas due to their life experience and learning.

Some of the questions that might guide the design of a good process are:

*What process do we use to develop good policy that reflects the values and priorities of the community?*

*Who needs to be involved and how do we get them to stay engaged throughout the process?*

#### **4.4 KT Policy Content**

Some of the important content considerations are as follows:

- what you choose to include or exclude is up to the community;
- usually it is best to start with more general and basic statements and information and proceed to more specific information in the middle and end of the policy;
- include definition of key words to help understanding and use of the policy
- keep it as short and clear as possible as you can always add and/or change it later;
- use section and sub-section numbers to make it easy to use and make reference to specific parts of the policy; and
- be clear on when the policy will be reviewed and the process to be used to amend the policy.

Some of the questions that might guide the development of content areas for the policy are:

*Where does knowledge come from – both Indigenous and western scientific?*

*How do we know it is “good knowledge” and that it is the right knowledge for the job?*

*How do we translate and use knowledge in a “good way” to make a difference in the health and wellbeing of our community?*

*How do we know who “owns” the knowledge and when does it matter?*

*How do we know when and how knowledge needs to be protected?*

*What are the options the community can protect traditional Indigenous knowledge or other knowledge that comes from the communities lived experience or research?*

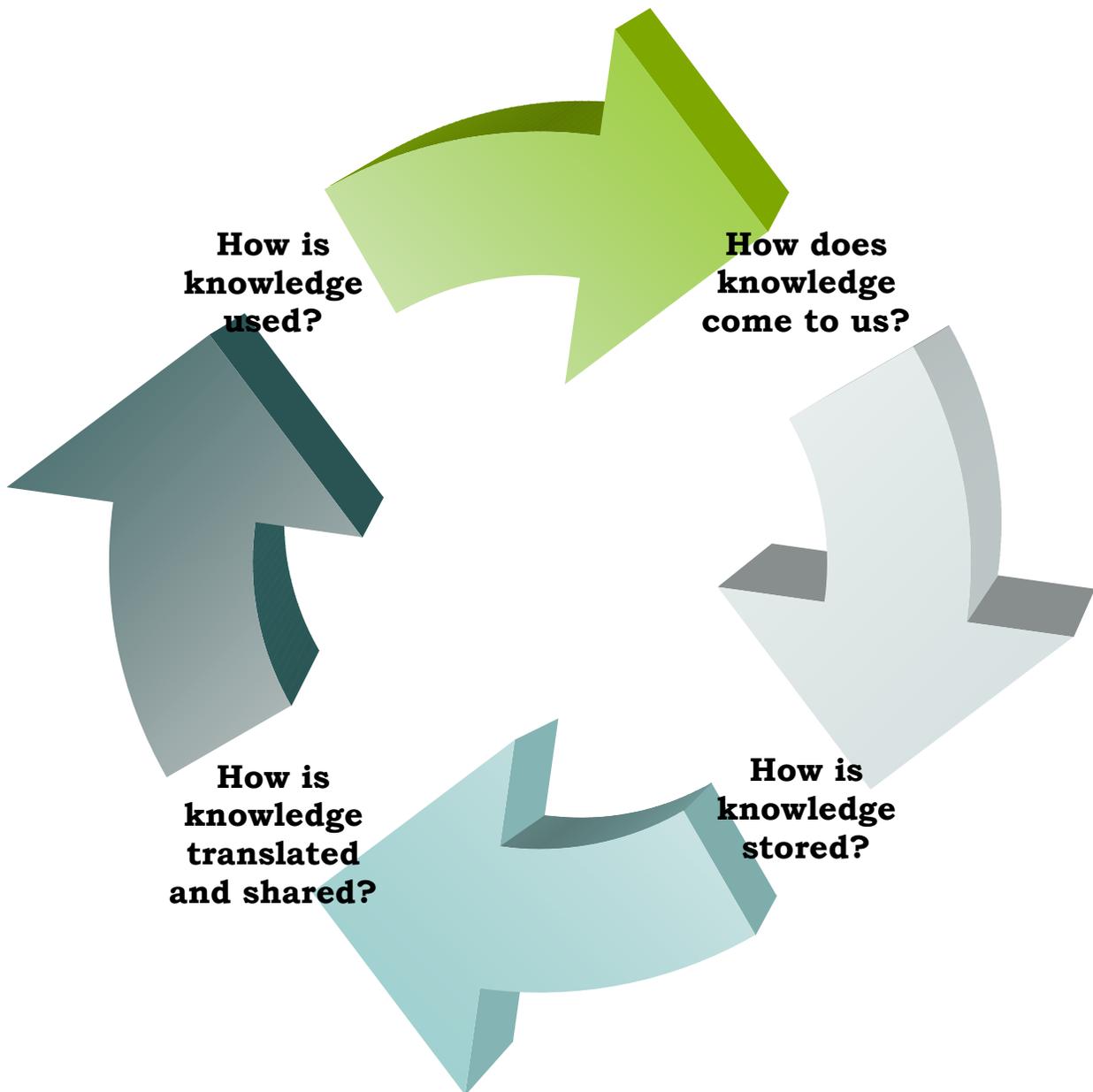
*Who gives permission to community members or others wishing to access and use knowledge that comes from the community?*

*How does the community seek permission to use knowledge that comes from other people or other communities?*

## 5.0 A Knowledge Circle

Finding a way of understanding how knowledge flows in and through the community may be helpful. The knowledge circle as described below is one way of thinking about it.

### A Knowledge Circle



## The Knowledge Circle

### How does knowledge come to us?

- emergence from the non-physical to the physical world
- intuition, inspiration and spiritual seeking
- dreams, visions, symbols
- nature – trees, plants animals, rocks, land
- ancestors
- from life experience individually and collectively
- Elders, family members, community members, leaders
- good thinking and contemplation
- talking and working with others
- asking good questions and seeking answers
- problem solving
- apprenticeships - traditional knowledge processes for passing on knowledge
- new connections between existing knowledge
- traditional knowledge research
- scientific research
- research – formal and informal – quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (thoughts, words and feelings)
- others

### How is knowledge stored?

- told stories and legends
- drawings and graphics
- art, song and ceremony
- embedded in daily life
- oral traditions, protocols and traditional roles
- written form – written stories and legends, articles, reports, books etc.
- educational curriculum and approaches
- videos, movies, websites
- published and distributed graphics and art
- others

### How is knowledge translated and shared?

- story circles and story telling
- lessons embedded in stories, sharing circles
- art, song and ceremony
- teaching and healing circles
- Elders and traditional knowledge keepers
- around a table with tea and food
- development of multiple literacies – oral, written, human development process, spiritual, emotional and others
- dialogue and discussion in person, using technology or sharing of written documents
- educational processes in formal institutions
- document synthesis and other research and writing projects

- meetings, conferences and other gatherings
- published and unpublished documents
- others

### **How is knowledge used?**

- daily life – using information to “be a good person, live a good life, in a good way”
- to inform relationships – teachings of respect, communication, community and peace, for example
- to solve problems
- to restore and renew culture
- to provide data/information/evidence (scientific and lived experience)
- to support learning and community capacity development (capacity for doing research, developing and implementing policy, designing and delivering programs, managing programs, people and resources, developing partnerships/collaboration and governance etc.)
- to improve research processes
- to support personal and organizational decision making
- to support the design, delivery and evaluation of programs and services (including clinical practices)
- to inform design and evaluation of health services delivery systems
- to inform policy development structures, processes and content within the Indigenous communities and outside
- others

### **Understanding the Circle:**

- how knowledge is used creates new knowledge, and the circle repeats;
- knowledge can be “contaminated” at any point in the process;
- the overall assessment as to whether a knowledge circle is operating effectively and ethically at each stage is to assess the change and positive contribution made by the knowledge as it affects the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities;
- the use of knowledge links back to the beginning as the experience of using the knowledge generates new knowledge;
- business (private sector) uses knowledge in applied research, innovation and commercialization of new products and services to make money; and
- the public sector uses knowledge to create effective policy, programs and services to promote the “public good”, govern and support a healthy, responsible and fair Nation.

**Knowledge as Water** – We can think about how water moves through natural and man made (built) processes. We can also compare how water (knowledge) can be translated (changed in form (ice, snow, water, cloud, steam) and shape as water takes on the shape of the transportation vehicle) contaminated or purified at each level:

How does knowledge (water) come to us?

- rainfall, snowfall
- from the earth

How is knowledge (water) stored?

- natural – lakes, ice, snow and the water table
- built – storage reservoirs and tanks

How is knowledge (water) translated and shared?

- changed in form from clouds to rain or snow to ice and back again
- transported naturally by rivers and underground streams
- transported as steam, water or ice by pipe, truck or bags of ice
- stored in by human and animal bodies

How is knowledge (water) used?

- to support life in humans, plants, animals, fish and birds
- to carry nutrients

## B. A Sample KT Policy Outline for Reference

The outline provided here may be used as a skeleton around which your policy may be developed. Sections may well be added and deleted as the community sees fit. This section begins to answer the question of “what might a KT policy look like?”

### Section 1: Purpose and Scope

Some of the questions that might be considered in this section include:

***What is the purpose of the policy?*** For example, is the purpose to guide the decisions of health staff and political decision makers within one community, a group of communities or some other collective? Is the purpose to only guide decisions about knowledge translation or does it also include other topics?

***What is the scope of the policy – what is included and excluded?*** For example, does it cover both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing or just one? Does it only cover knowledge translation? For example, the policy may state that it does not include research proposal approval or research agreement development policy, as a separate but connected policy is in place or under development. Perhaps the scope does include the KT related aspects of research proposal review and engagement.

***What are the related policies?*** For example, the community may have a research policy, and Indigenous knowledge policy and/or a traditional healers policy that might connect with this policy. The KT policy may make reference to sections of the other policies to define the connection without significant overlap or conflict between the policies.

### Section 2: Definition of Terms

Some of the questions that might be considered in this section might include:

***What are the key words and concepts used in the policy that need to be defined to make sure people using the policy fully understand what is being communicated?***

***Are there Indigenous language, English or French words that need to be defined or explained?*** For example, the use and full explanation of Indigenous language terms for knowledge, wisdom, respect and sharing could be very powerful additions to developing an approach that is supported by local traditional philosophy and values.

For example:

- Evidence
- Local or Traditional Knowledge
- Respect

*Would these and/or others be included and what do they mean to you?*

### **Section 3: Principles**

Some of the questions that might be considered in this section might include:

*What are the most important principles that need to be kept in mind when looking at KT questions?*

*What principles need to be used to assess whether or not a decision is a good one after it is made and implemented?*

For example, some of the principles that have emerged in discussions to date include the following:

- Stewardship
- Individual ownership
- Collective ownership
- Protection
- Honouring Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing
- Respecting knowledge keepers: traditional, community and other
- Sharing within the community
- Trans-cultural knowledge sharing – consensus based
- Wisdom and spiritual clarity
- Future generations oriented
- Flexibility
- Partnership
- Community relevance
- Mutual benefit
- Transparency
- Community involvement and engagement

*Would any of these or others be included and what do they mean to you?*

## **Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities**

Different individuals and groups may need to be involved to do the most effective knowledge translation, depending on the nature of the knowledge. For example, if it is clinical knowledge related to new advances in diabetic care, the nurse and the Community Health Representative may want to work together with a few diabetics to translate the knowledge. This work could be done in a meeting room or office anywhere. If the knowledge relates to traditional uses of medicinal plants that are of interest to a researcher, the Elder or traditional knowledge keeper may want to use a culture broker or language interpreter to assist in the translation and also in working through any approval process that may be in place with the community leadership. The best place for this knowledge to be translated might be on the land during a particular time of year when the plant is growing and ready for harvest.

Some of the questions that might be considered in developing this section might include:

***Who are the key players in knowledge translation now and in the future?***

***What are their roles and responsibilities?*** For example, in some Indigenous traditions, responsibilities come before rights and as roles and responsibilities are carried out in a respectful manner, so rights within relationships and communities are earned. This is a statement of philosophy that is part of some Indigenous thinking and could be reflected in this section coming before the next section on rights.

For example, role and responsibilities:

- Researcher
- Educator
- Educational Institution
- Traditional Knowledge Keeper
- Community Knowledge Keeper
- Knowledge Translation Teams
- KT Ethics Review Team
- Others

***Would these or others be identified as key people or groups in your policy and what would be their roles and responsibilities?***

***Would any of them have individual and collective rights and how do these relate to their roles and responsibilities within the community context and beyond?***

## **Section 5: Knowledge Translation Structures**

This section could set out options for knowledge translation structures – groups or bodies that might exist or be created to perform KT tasks.

For example:

- Elders' Council or College
- KT Dyads or Pairs of Individuals
- KT Gatherings
- NAHO FN, Métis and Inuit Centres as Partners
- Knowledge Communities – example Communities of Practice (CoP)
- Universities or Research Centres or Institutes as Partners
- Individual Researchers or Educators as Partners

*Would these or others be identified as KT structures or groups in your policy and what would be their roles and responsibilities?*

## **Section 6: Options for Knowledge Translation Processes**

This section could set out a number of KT processes that could be used by the groups or bodies (see structures above).

Examples include:

### **Understanding and Using Protocols in Seeking Medicine Teachings**

One of the key processes that need to be described may be the protocols involved and the protection of medicine teaching or other sacred knowledge.

### **Setting Priorities for Knowledge Translation**

Setting priorities for which knowledge needs to be translated and what essential elements of the knowledge need to be included in order to ensure understanding and appropriate application.

For example, some of the priorities identified in the gatherings so far include:

- human relationships – family, couples, child-raising
- mental illness and emotional well-being
- intergenerational effects of residential schools and child welfare interventions in families

### **Identifying the Best People and Location**

Knowledge that is connected to land may be best accessed in land-based settings. It may be best to invite people with knowledge of the land to locations on the land to talk about what they know.

### **Assessing the Quality of the Knowledge**

The processes for assessment of knowledge may include examining the following:

- knowledge as “evidence”
- validation
- confirmation from other people or sources of knowledge
- using multiple sources or “lines of evidence”
- asking how “academically sound” the process was for collecting and documenting knowledge
- using cultural processes for validation of knowledge and respecting knowledge keepers

### **Assessing the Relevance, Importance and Community Benefit of Research Proposals**

A KT lens needs to be used in the overall assessment of research proposals that asks the question of how the knowledge generated will be translated and used to help the community improve health.

### **Assessing the Quality of the Relationships**

At least two levels of relationships may need to be assessed including the relationship between the knowledge keeper and knowledge user as well as the relationship between the people and the knowledge.

### **Assessing the Ethics or “Goodness” or “Rightness” at each Stage**

In order for the knowledge to be “good knowledge, developed by good people and used in a good way” ethical concerns in the whole knowledge circle need to be identified and dealt with.

These include:

- Ethical concerns in the accessing or creation of knowledge
- Ethical concerns in the knowledge translation process
- Ethical concerns in applying the translated knowledge
- Ethical concerns related to assessing community benefit and positive outcome

### **Developing KT Teams**

The policy may speak to how to develop knowledge translation teams with a related process that makes sure the knowledge is translated in the best way. The definition of the “best way” would be to look at the use or application of the knowledge and making sure that it goes as well as possible and that the process ensures community benefit.

### **Appropriate Methods for Knowledge Translation and Application**

The appropriateness of the KT methods depends on how the knowledge was generated and stored as well as plans for knowledge translation and application or use. The question of who is the owner, keeper or steward of the knowledge is also central to the identification of appropriate methods. More work may be needed in developing uniquely Indigenous and community based methods that work along with or instead of mainstream methods of doing knowledge translation.

## **Section 7: Knowledge Sharing, Dissemination or Distribution and Feedback**

This section sets out options for sharing knowledge within the community or to outside audiences, what should be considered and how it is to be done.

Some of the questions that might be considered in developing this section include:

*Who needs to have access to this knowledge?*

*What method would be most effective in getting the knowledge into their hands?*

*What kind of language (plain or technical, Indigenous language, French, English etc.) needs to be used? Would pictures or graphics would be helpful?*

*What permission do we need from a person or group to release or publish the knowledge?*

*How can we find out if the intended audiences have received the knowledge and if they have used the knowledge?*

*How can we find out whether the use of the knowledge has made a positive difference in health?*

### **Examples of knowledge sharing vehicles:**

- Word of Mouth
- Meetings and Conferences
- Websites
- Local or regional publications – newsletters, local newspapers and magazines
- Aboriginal or Indigenous Media – newspapers, magazines, websites, newswire services, journals
- Mainstream Media – newspapers, magazines, academic journals

### **Examples of permission that may be needed:**

- This subsection would set out rules for sharing, accessing, publication and dissemination of knowledge. It would set out procedures and protocols on how to seek permission as needed
- Approaching Elders or Knowledge Keepers with “appropriate protocol” for advice, guidance and permission to proceed
- Review and recommendation or decision by the local communication person or committee
- Review and decision by local political decision makers
- Review and decision by partners or their organizations (researchers, organizations etc.)

**Examples of feedback and evaluations mechanisms:**

- Word-of-mouth feedback from individuals and organizations receiving or asking for the knowledge
- Formal follow-up and evaluation of sharing, dissemination or distribution work
- Counting and documenting the nature of requests for follow-up information or access to knowledge
- Assessing the quality of the communication and relationship developed through the sharing
- Counting hits on a website
- Counting distribution numbers of publications

## **Section 8: Policy Amendment Process**

The policy needs to speak to the process for amendment. For example, it may talk about a review every two or three years and identify the review body (perhaps a committee) as well as the decision making body for approval of the revised policy.

The questions that may be helpful in guiding the development of this section include:

*How frequently will the KT policy be reviewed?*

*Who will be involved or consulted during the review?*

*Who will be included in the group to make a final decision on the revised KT policy?*

## **Section 9: Guidelines for Implementation of the KT Policy**

This section will provide guidance on the implementation of the KT policy. It may identify a lead person or group charged with the responsibility to oversee and monitor implementation. It may include information on plans for evaluation of the implementation process as well.

The questions that may be helpful in guiding the development of this section include:

*Who is responsible for providing the information needed to the people who will be involved in KT in the community and beyond (outside communities, groups, agencies, researchers etc.)?*

*What information needs to be shared?*

*How will we make sure the policy is being used?*

*How will we know that we have developed a policy that is clear and effective and covers all of the necessary points?*

## C. References

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2006), *Moving Population and Public Health Knowledge Into Action: A Casebook of knowledge translation stories*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Ottawa, ON.

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