

## COLLECT MEANINGFUL DATA: Decolonizing Your Data Processes

**Purpose:** No organization wants to accidentally hurt communities by reinforcing stereotypes that contribute to racism. Decolonizing data is about bringing real, tangible benefits to communities you're serving through an ongoing process of learning and reflection. This emPower Tool provides a decolonization framework to consider when you develop or modify your data processes for Indigenous communities and beyond!

**More emPower Tools**  
+ learn more about each topic  
[thecapacitycollective.org/resources](http://thecapacitycollective.org/resources)

### What is Indigenous Knowledge?

**Indigenous knowledge** refers to the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of Indigenous people to a particular geographic area.

**Traditional knowledge** is handed down through generations with stories like how the community began or experiences between ancestors and the spirit world.

**Empirical knowledge** is learned from careful observation of multiple perspectives over many years.

**Revealed knowledge** is learned through dreams, visions, and spiritual practices.

**Indigenous knowledge is stored in peoples' memories and activities** through stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, taxonomy (the classification of living things), agricultural practices, equipment, materials, plant species, and animal breeds.

### Why Indigenous Knowledge (IK)?

- 1 **IK creates mutual respect** between staff and the community as staff pays attention to, accepts, and respects the information provided.
- 2 **IK encourages local participation from the community.** This forms a foundation for building partnerships that problem-solve community challenges collectively.
- 3 **IK facilitates the design and implementation** of culturally-appropriate programs to avoid staff burnout or exhaustion.
- 4 **IK helps to identify community practices** that can be useful for data research and improving programs while building a more sustainable future!

### Other Helpful emPower Tools:

- *Capturing Stories with Photovoice*
- *Beyond Numbers—Collecting Qualitative Data*
- *Conducting a Root Cause Analysis*
- *Centering Healing & Resistance in Your Data*

### Decolonizing Your Data...

**Is a process for *working alongside*** communities to place their voices and ways of knowing at the center of the data.

**Challenges the accepted belief** that Western research methods and ways of knowing are the only true science. There are many ways to collect data aside from a survey like *focus groups* or *one-on-one interviews*!

**Is an *orientation*** for your data processes that focuses on equity and open dialogue over an absolute truth.

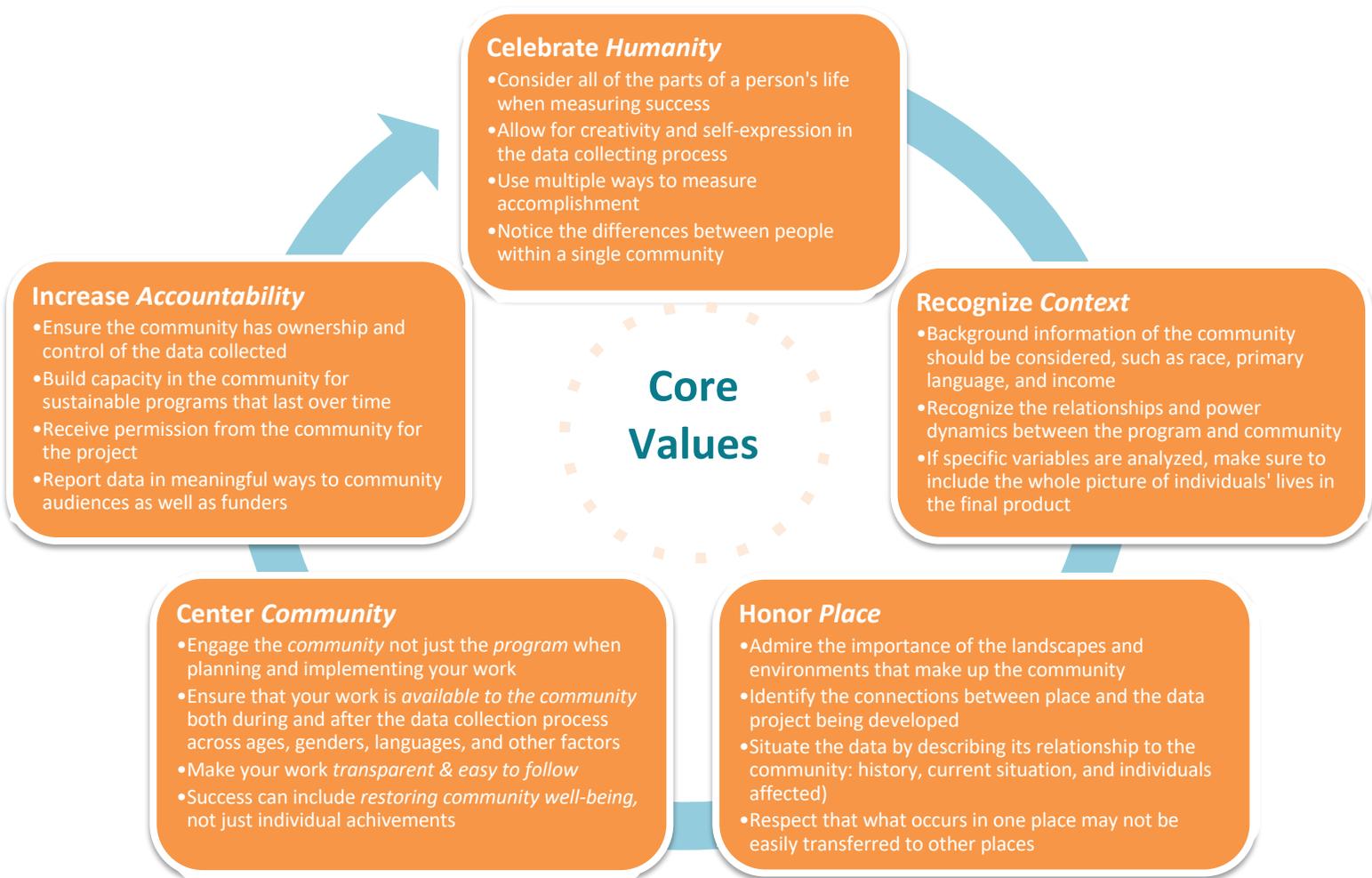
### Decolonizing Your Practice Means...

**Each tribal nation, project, and team** are recognized as *unique*.

**Staff's primary role is to be *learners*** and to be educated about the community, by the community.

**Ownership** of data, data analysis, and data presentation is a *collective* process.

**Knowledge is sacred, and access must be *earned*** by actively listening, being open to new information, and by integrating community recommendations.



## Six Best Practices for Starting the Decolonization Process:

