

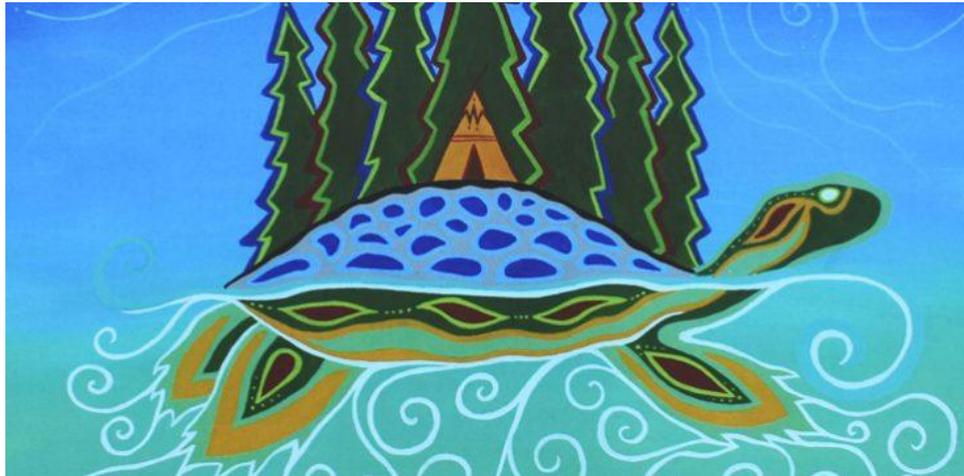
Supporting Your Professional Practice

Territorial or Land Acknowledgements

A territorial or land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call it home. The practice of land acknowledgement is only part of the larger process that Canadians and organizations such as OSOT commit to undertake towards reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

A land acknowledgement's purpose is to recognize that we, as settlers and as people who are not part of First Nations or Indigenous groups, are here on their land. They commemorate Indigenous peoples' principal kinship to the land. However, it's more than just recognizing that we are on their land, it's about thinking about what happened in the past as our forebears settled these lands and what changes can be made going forward in order to further the reconciliation process with indigenous communities. To be meaningful and respectful, a territorial acknowledgement needs to be intentional.

For organizations and individuals who want to take steps to reconciliation or encourage others, the land acknowledgement should lead to more questions about who the people listed in the acknowledgement are and how their land came to be possessed by settlers.



Considerations in Developing a Land Acknowledgement

- Do your research to find out if the land you are gathering on is Treaty Territory (numbered treaties), Unceded Territory (not legally signed away to the Crown or to Canada), or part of Inuit and Métis homelands and find the names of local First Nations communities who have lived there. www.native-land.ca is one online resource that can assist you to search your location.

- If you are uncertain how to get a land acknowledgement right, look to larger organizations, municipalities or governments that have likely consulted heavily with an Indigenous advisory panel
- If you are not sure how to pronounce a nation’s name, there are a number of ways to learn, including:
 - Respectfully asking someone from that nation or from a local organization such as a Friendship Center or Indigenous Student Center;
 - Check the nation’s website, they may have a phonetic pronunciation on their “About” page, an audio-recording of their name, or videos that include people saying the nation’s name; or
 - Call the nation after hours and listen to their answering machine recording.
- **Developing a land acknowledgement:**
 - Name which Indigenous territories you are currently on.
 - Explain why you are acknowledging the land.
Take the time to reflect on why it is important for you or your group to acknowledge the land and what your relationship is with the territory you are on Explain why you find it important to acknowledge the land.
 - Address the relevance of Indigenous rights to the subject matter of your event or meeting or to your activist work in general.
- A Sample that could be used by OSOT Teams or working groups:
 - *As an important part of our commitment to reconciliation, the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists recognizes the traditional territories on which we live and work (physically or remotely) every day, across what is now known as Ontario. This includes distinct groups of First Nations Peoples: Algonquin, Mississauga, Ojibway, Cree, Odawa, Potawatomi, Delaware, and the Haudenosaunee – Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Seneca. Other Indigenous Nations also have long standing relationships with the land in parts of this province including the Wendat, and the Métis Nation. Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) report draw attention to the health disparities faced by Indigenous Peoples and how poor health outcomes are linked to the complex histories and ongoing realities of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Society and its members will contribute to reduce these health disparities by working to ensure access to the occupational therapy services that a community has a right to and to promote occupational therapy practice excellence that is culturally sensitive and acceptable to Indigenous Peoples. As we come together today to exercise leadership of the profession of occupational therapy, let’s all take a moment to reflect on the roles we can play to ensure that disparities in access to quality health services can be successfully eliminated.*
- **Other samples to provide guidance**
 - *We [I] will begin this event (Name the Event) by acknowledging that we are meeting on aboriginal land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. As settlers, we’re grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land - for thousands of years. Long*

before today, as we gather here, there have been aboriginal peoples who have been the stewards of this place. In particular, we acknowledge (identify the appropriate territory).

- *We/I would like to acknowledge the Algonquin nation whose traditional and unceded territory we are gathered upon today. OR We/I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin nation.*
- *I (we) wish to acknowledge this land on which the [insert your organization] operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit [insert actual Indigenous Peoples]. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and meet on this land.*
- **Virtual Meetings** - Land acknowledgements need to be part of all gatherings, including virtual meetings. Depending on the location of your participants, you may acknowledge all Indigenous groups, or research the First Peoples of the land you are on. Here is a suggestion developed by the Canadian Engineering Association;
 - *I would like to begin by acknowledging the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands that we are on today. While we meet today on a virtual platform, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the importance of the lands, which we each call home. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improving our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures. From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home. Please join me in a moment of reflection to acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and to consider how we are and can each, in our own way, try to move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.*

Resources/References

- www.Native-land.ca
- Native-Land.ca offers an online platform where users can interact with maps of Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages, and locate themselves on the map. You can search your address/location to find the territories on whose land you are located. By clicking on links, you will be taken to a page specifically about that nation, language, or treaty, where you can view some sources, give feedback, and learn a little more. Provides a [Teacher's Guide](#) on how to use the map to enrich one's learning and understanding.
- **Indigenous Peoples: A guide to Terminology, Usage Tips and Definitions.** Indigenous Corporate Training, 2021. Retrieved at <https://www.ictinc.ca/hubfs/ebooks/eBooks-2021/Indigenous-Peoples-A-Guide-to-Terminology.pdf> .

- **Traditional Territory Acknowledgements in Ontario**, Ontario Federation of Labour, May 2017. Retrieved at <https://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017.05.31-Traditional-Territory-Acknowledgement-in-Ont.pdf>
 - Provides a list of municipalities in Ontario and the appropriate territorial acknowledgement for each local region
- **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation** - <https://nctr.ca/>
- **Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada** - <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=84>
 - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was formed as a means of reckoning with the devastating legacy of forced assimilation and abuse left by the residential school system. From 2008 to 2014, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard stories from thousands of residential school survivors. In June 2015, the commission released a report based on those hearings. From that came the 94 Calls to Action: individual instructions to guide governments, communities and faith groups down the road to reconciliation. Beyond 94 will now monitor the progress of that journey.

July 2021

**** Please note, this resource is developed to support OSOT members to engage Land Acknowledgements in their meetings and gatherings in ways that assure the acknowledgement is meaningful and thought-provoking.**

OSOT's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force will review and inform this work.

***** Read about the significance of the Graphic – [Turtle Island](#)**