
Appendix 1: Glossary*

Aboriginal peoples: Groups or nations who were originally living in North America before European exploration.

Elder: Spiritual and community leader recognized by the Aboriginal community. Elders are cultural experts with special knowledge of community ethical values; some are also counsellors and healers.

First Nations: Aboriginal societies that existed in Canada before Europeans arrived. Some Aboriginal people, including Inuit, do not see themselves as members of First Nations.

Inuit: A circumpolar Aboriginal people living in Canada, Greenland, Alaska and Siberia.

Métis: A distinct and independent people whose ancestors were both of Aboriginal and European heritage and who currently do not have defined status within federal legislation.

Registered Indians: Aboriginal people who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada.

Sharing circle: An Aboriginal process in which each person has an opportunity to speak in turn. It is used for seeking consensus in decision-making, resolving conflicts between participants and building community trust.

Smudging: A cleansing ceremony using the smoke from plant medicine.

Treaty Indians: Aboriginal people who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada and can prove descent from a band that signed a treaty.

*Aboriginal categories based on definitions proposed in *Building International Awareness on Aboriginal Issues*² and definitions on the Statistics Canada Web site.¹

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