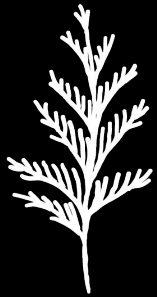




# Transformative Territory Acknowledgements

2024

# OVERVIEW



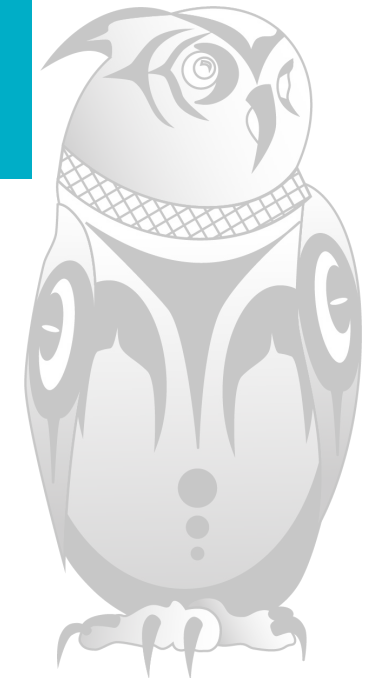
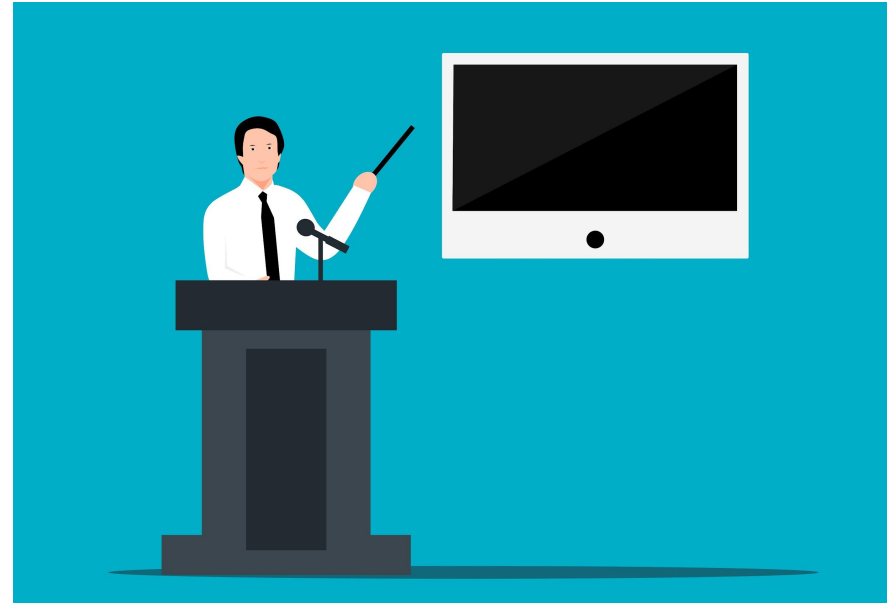
Transformative Territory Acknowledgements

WHO?  
WHAT?  
WHERE?  
WHY?  
HOW?



# WHO does the acknowledgment?

- Everyone who is in a place of delivering a presentation, chairing a meeting, hosting, or MC'ing a gathering
- Non-Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous peoples in territories that are not their own traditional lands
- It is a formality (like saying thank you or welcome)
- The protocol usually offered by the host or most senior leaders in their welcoming address.

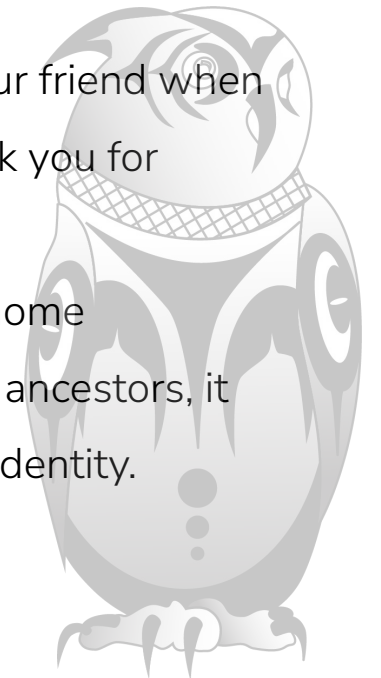




# WHAT is a territory acknowledgement?



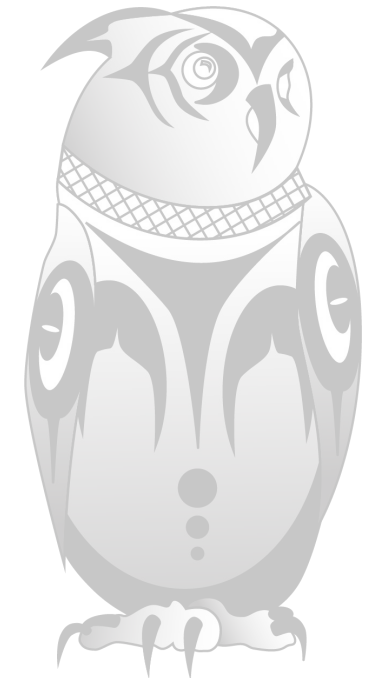
- Ancient Indigenous protocol used in several Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island
- Is offered as a custom, etiquette, and demonstration of respect for people and place
- It is like saying thank you to your friend when leaving their dinner party (thank you for having me)
- Our territory is our house and home
- Our territory is our relative, our ancestors, it has our language, stories, and identity.





# WHERE do acknowledgements come from?

- Practiced since time immemorial
- Travelling through other Nations territories
- Recognition that this is not out home
- A place-based people
- Self-positioning
- Sacred laws of respect and sharing
- Truth and Reconciliation era
- First Nations protocol brought into corporate and community contexts in recent years
- Can seem superficial, hollow, or tokenistic





# WHERE do we put them?

- E-signatures
- Websites - front and centre
- Public literature/reports
- Policies
- Orientations
- Lobbies
- Front entrance ways





# WHY do they feel awkward or hallow?



- All lands in Canada are stolen lands
- Canada is an administrative state
- Non-existent or broken treaties
- Trillions of dollars made of Indigenous lands and resources without a cent going to stewards
- Indigenous poverty is systemic racism
- Lands given away for free to settlers
- Where does wealth come from?
- Where does Canadian wealth come from?
- #LANDBACK





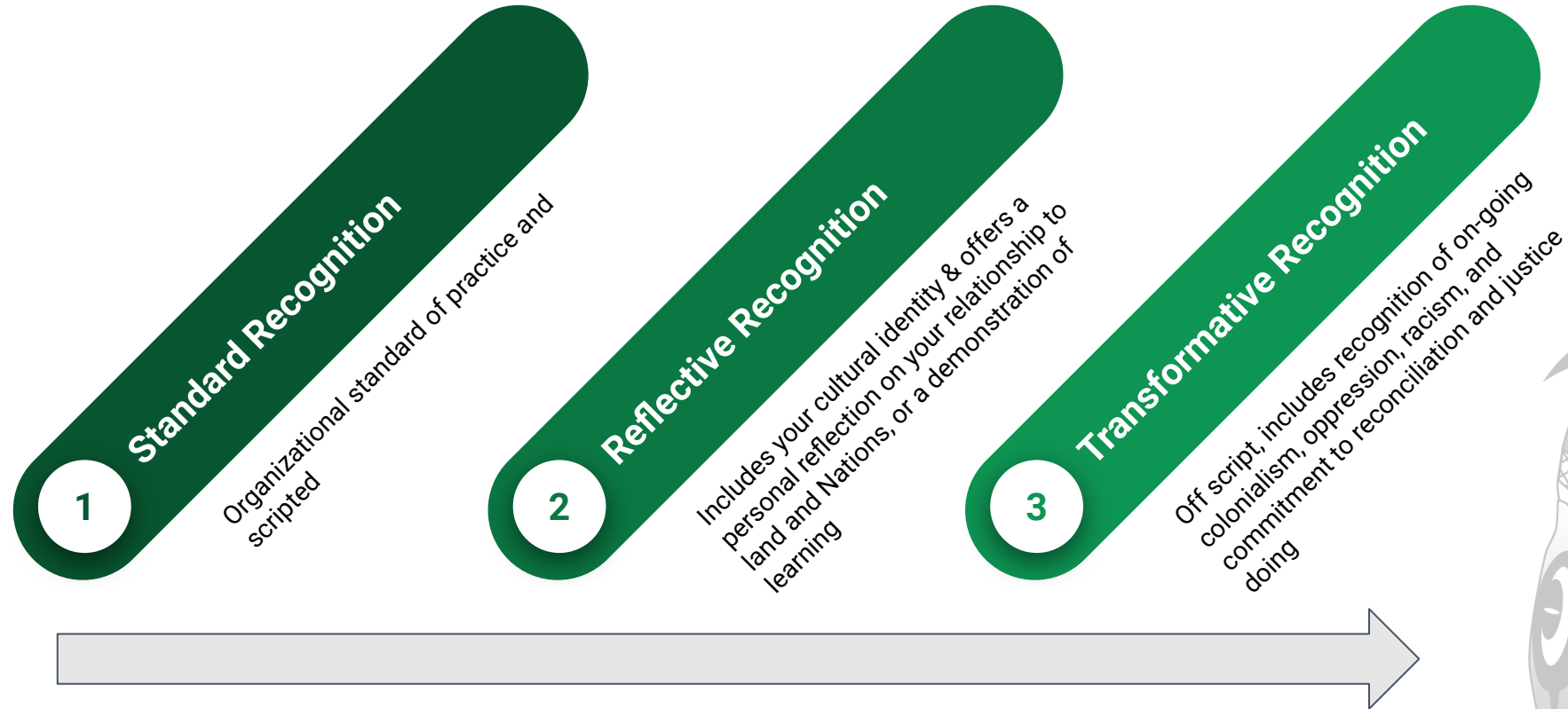
# WHEN do we do them?

- Everytime you introduce yourself
- At the beginning of:
  - Events
  - Conferences
  - Meetings
  - Virtual gatherings
- Where a formal gathering takes place
  - You don't need to do one every day or every week unless you have guests





# HOW can we do the acknowledgement?



# Example of a Transformative Acknowledgement

In keeping with Indigenous culture and to build respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, we acknowledge that our office is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, the keepers of this land reaching from the centre of Coast Salish territory on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, to the Fraser River, since time immemorial.

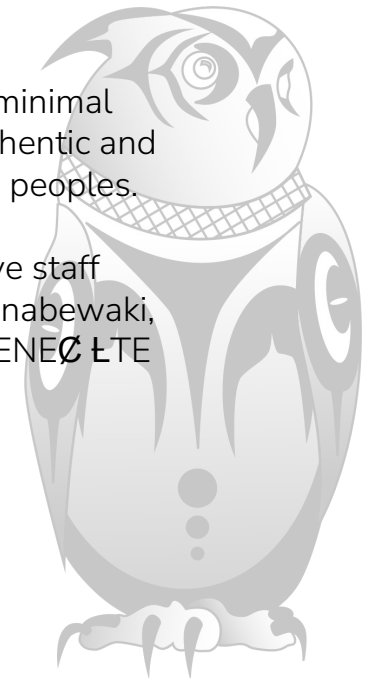
As settlers, it's important to recognize that although we call this place home, the Snuneymuxw First Nation never ceded their lands to the Crown. Instead, we arrived here, and across Turtle Island, uninvited and imposed, participated in, and benefited from the colonial system. Our challenge as settlers, whether recently arrived or born here, is to recognize and work actively to decolonize these systems.

The devastating and lasting impacts of colonization have done much to erase the culture, language, tradition, economy, and world views of Indigenous peoples. We will listen, educate ourselves on decolonization, and uplift and celebrate the Indigenous peoples of this land and, upon invitation to do so, support them in the pursuit of self-determination, sovereignty, and justice.

An integral part of our mission and vision has been to publish books for a world of change, in a way that has a minimal impact on our environment, to help build a just and ecologically sustainable society. For this work to remain authentic and meaningful, we acknowledge our settler privilege and understand the impact it has on the land and Indigenous peoples.

We also acknowledge that while our main business address is located on the land of the Snuneymuxw, we have staff settled on the land of: Southern Anishinaabe (Ojibwa), Western Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, Anishinabewaki, Michif Piyii (Métis), K'ómoks First Nation, Coast Salish, s̓c̓əwaθənaʔt̓ təməxʷ (Tsawwassen), Quw'utsun, Á,LENENEĆ ŁTE (WŚÁNEĆ), Stz'uminus, Hul'q'umi'num'

Whose land are you on? <https://native-land.ca/>





# Do's & Don'ts

## DO:

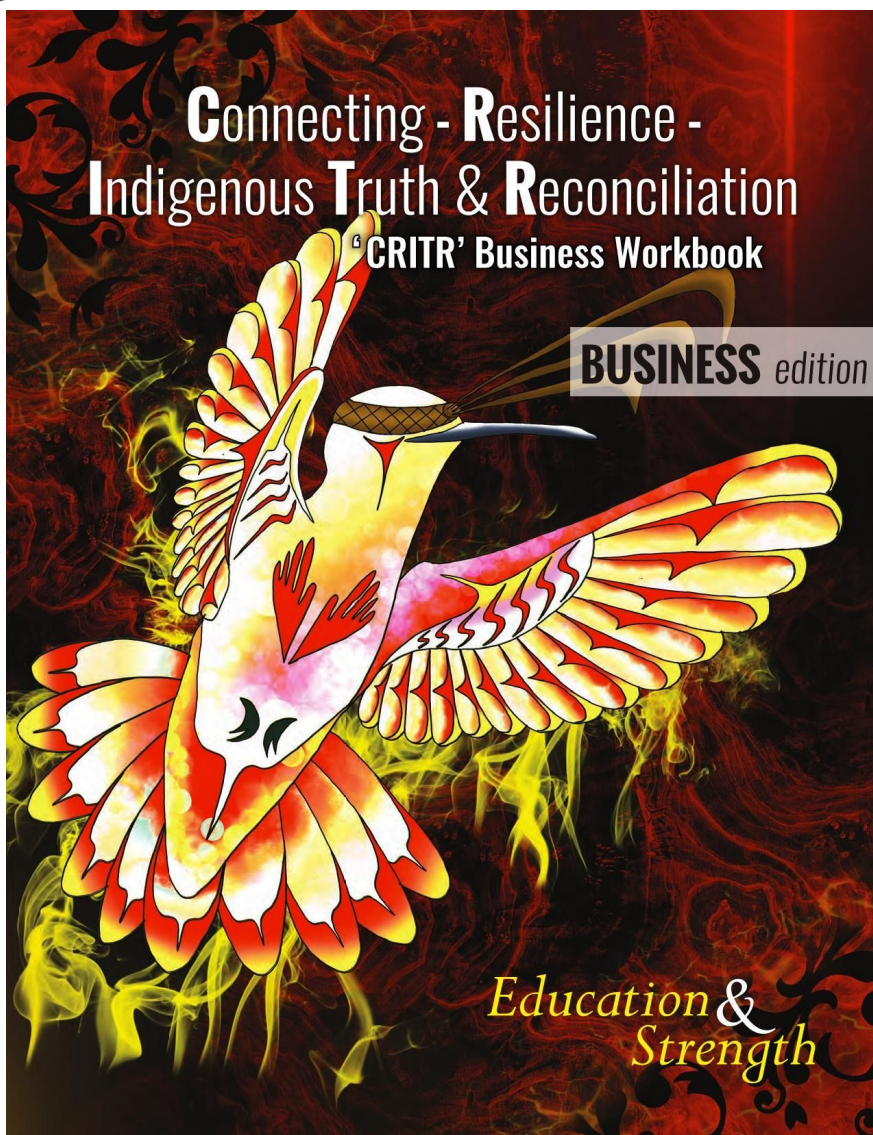
- Say Territory over Land
- Have the most senior leader say the acknowledgement
- Welcome virtual participants to share their own acknowledgements
- Ask non-Indigenous colleagues for advice

## DO NOT:

- Ask Indigenous peoples to do the recognition
- Ask the Indigenous staff/department to do the recognition
- Add ornamental language like: live, laugh, love



# Support for writing territory acknowledgements:



## UNIT 3 Treaties

### Lesson Four

## Writing Land Acknowledgements

Land **acknowledgements** are important because they are an **accurate** way to recognize the traditional First Nations, Métis, or Inuit territories. They help Canadians to recognize and respect the Indigenous Peoples' **kinship** beliefs when it comes to their sacred lands.

The 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada inspired the land acknowledgements as a necessary first step towards honouring the original **inhabitants**. Land acknowledgements began in British Columbia, where there were very few treaties until the 1990s. It indicates Indigenous presence and **sovereignty**.

Below is an example of a land acknowledgement from Ryerson University.

"Toronto is in the 'Dish with One Spoon Territory.' The Dish with One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. **Subsequent** Indigenous Nations and Peoples, Europeans, and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect."

This treaty means that everyone there eats from the same dish or shares that territory. They must share the responsibility of making sure the dish is never empty, which includes taking care of the land and the more-than-humans/other-than-humans with which the people share the land. Importantly, there are no knives at the table, meaning they must keep the peace.

Not everyone will have a treaty to **align** with, especially

in British Columbia; however, there can still be a land acknowledgement. Be familiar with the territory in which you are located. Make sure you have the correct pronunciation and spelling of the names and learn about the communities that have occupied their lands since time immemorial. If there is not a specific treaty for your area, then it is an unceded territory.

A treaty is an agreement between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples. Often with these treaties, Indigenous Nations agree to share some of their interests in their ancestral lands in exchange for payments, promises, and respectful relations. Unceded means that First Nations never ceded or legally signed away their lands to the Crown or to Canada. A traditional territory is the geographic area identified by a First Nation, Inuit, or Métis, as the land that they or their ancestors traditionally occupied and used.

It is wise to do research and gain knowledge about the Indigenous Peoples in your community to write a meaningful acknowledgement. Speaking to an Indigenous authority for help in what is correct shows respect. Remember that respect, friendship, reconciliation, and peace are the goals. The acknowledgement should be sincere, accurate, and respectful, and not just something that has to be done.

Land acknowledgements can be written or spoken. They can be **signage**, short theatre presentations, greetings, or recognition of Indigenous groups such as the acknowledgements at schools, work, events, and even emails. Keep the acknowledgement short, especially if it is used in emails or other written documents. If it is

## UNIT 3 Treaties

long, it won't be read or could be skipped over, and the point of the acknowledgement is lost.

Although many things can be included in an acknowledgement, here are some good ways to start.

If there is a treaty in place between the Indigenous Peoples and the Crown:

We would like to acknowledge the land we are (living in/gathering on/working in) today as the traditional territory of (the/many) nation(s), including \_\_\_\_\_, and is

now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people (if applicable). We also acknowledge that \_\_\_\_\_ is covered by Treaty \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_.

If the territory is unceded:

We would like to acknowledge the land we are (living in/gathering on/working in) today as the traditional unceded territory of (many/the) nation(s), including \_\_\_\_\_, and is now home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people (if applicable).

### Word Power

**Acknowledgement:** Acceptance of the truth or existence of something

**Accurate:** Correct in all details; exact

**Kinship:** Blood relationship or family connections

**Inhabitants:** Persons or animals that live in a place

**Sovereignty:** The fact or condition of having independent authority and the right to govern itself

**Subsequent:** Coming after something; following

**Align:** Arrange into correct relative positions

**Signage:** Commercial or public display signs

### Questions

1. Why are land acknowledgements important?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What inspired the land acknowledgements?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the difference between land for which there is a treaty and unceded land?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DRAW for participants asking thoughtful questions. Win a FREE copy of Connecting - Resilience Indigenous Truth & Reconciliation Business Edition books**

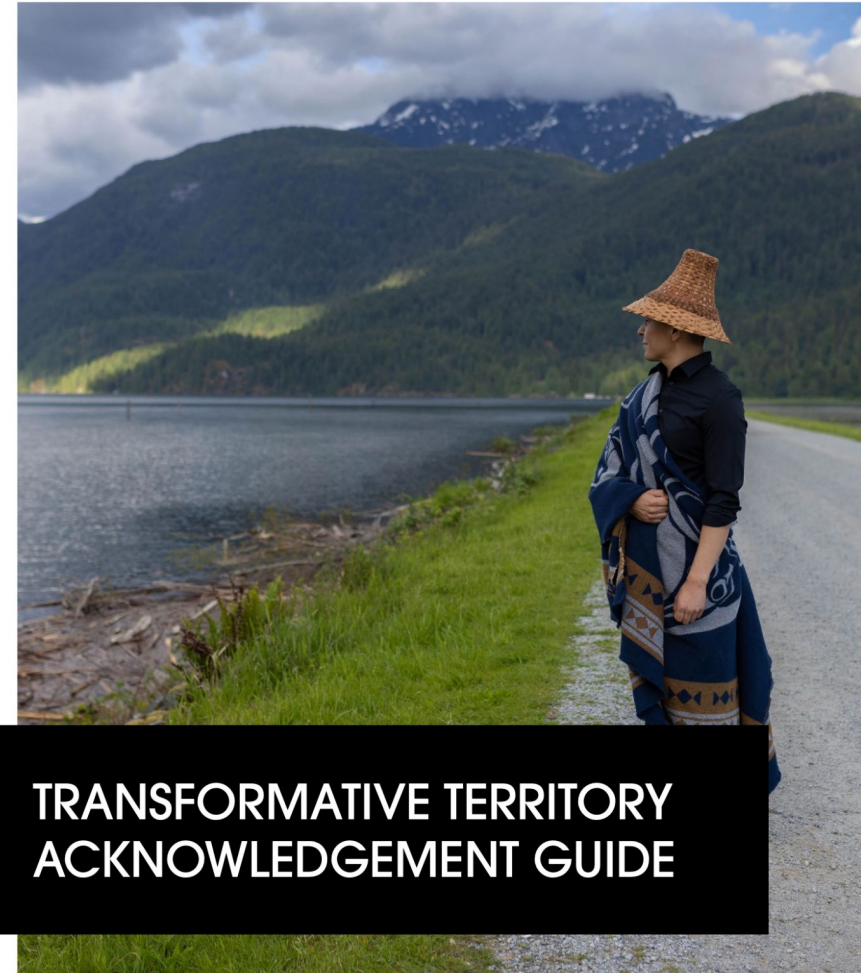




# Resources



1. Download and share our Transformative Territory Acknowledgement Guide for Teams and Organizations
2. Review Len's YouTube video on Territory Acknowledgements
3. Listen and share LPC Podcast episode





**Questions**

**Comments**

**Reflections and sharing**





HAY CXw QΘ (Thank you)



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**Feedback is  
our friend!**

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