

Indigenous Inclusion Resource Hub Introduction

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Background

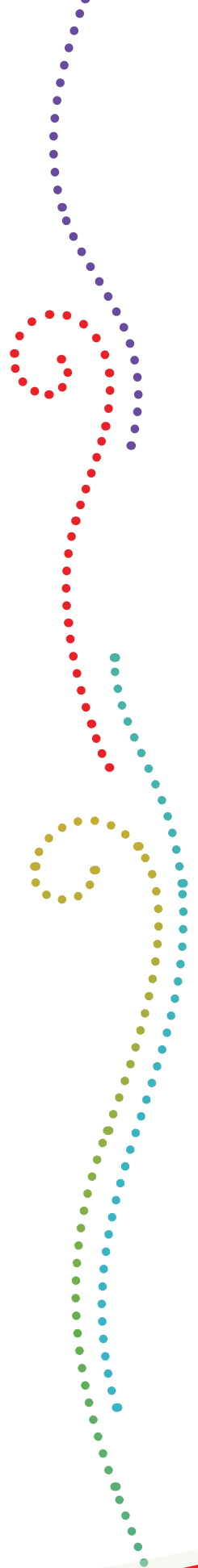
Special Olympics Canada (SOC) has spearheaded various initiatives over the past few years focused on taking the steps towards increasing Indigenous Engagement within programs across Canada.

In 2024, SOC recommitted to continuing this work with short term goals of building a quality foundation of knowledge, focusing on meaningful relationships and prioritizing true collaboration. The recent work in this space will have long-term impacts on how Special Olympics approaches Indigenous inclusion and collaboration, while acting as building blocks as we continue working towards making spaces more culturally safe for new and existing athletes, coaches and volunteers. As we move forward with this work we have three major areas of focus.

- **Meaningful Relationships and Collaboration:** We aim to build and nurture reciprocal partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations, and leaders and are committed to co-creating accessible and responsive programs for Indigenous athletes, coaches, and families. These relationships will be built on mutual respect, trust, and a shared vision of inclusivity.
- **Training and Education:** We understand that to serve Indigenous communities effectively, we must first educate ourselves. We are dedicated to implementing comprehensive training programs for staff, coaches, and volunteers that will enhance our understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives. Trainings will influence our approach to programs, prioritizing cultural awareness. We understand that learning is a life-long journey and are committed to providing continuous education opportunities.
- **Resource Development:** We are in the process of reviewing and updating our existing resources, while developing new ones with a cultural lens that reflects the diverse Indigenous communities we aim to serve.

SOC has had opportunities to learn from many generous Indigenous leaders and additionally from formal training modules like the Indigenous Long Term Participant Development (ILTPD) and Aboriginal Coaching Module (ACM). All of which supports SOC's learning journey of Indigenous cultural awareness, anti-racism, understanding of the holistic model and how it can be applied, along with an appreciation of the Indigenous sport system and how it operates in parallel to the mainstream sport system.

To support the application of these learnings, a series of Indigenous Inclusion resources have been created to guide the implementation of better Indigenous inclusion in Special Olympics and considerations for how to start and to develop this important work.



Introduction to the Resource Hub

The SOC Indigenous Inclusion Resources have been developed through engagement and support of an Indigenous Inclusion Advisory Committee which is comprised of Indigenous leaders and Special Olympics leaders from across Turtle Island.

The purpose of these resources is to support Chapters in getting started to build relationships, to engage with Indigenous communities and leaders, and to appreciate some of the cultural context and considerations that will be helpful in supporting Indigenous participants across the Special Olympics system. SOC believes these resources will be living documents and will evolve as we continue on this journey and as we build on our collaboration and our learning.

These resources should be used with the mindset of this being a learning journey, and that these are meant to offer support and guidance, to be used along with flexibility and openness. It is important to build relationships and to ask for guidance from local Indigenous leaders along the way. SOC also recommends that you attend ongoing training and learning opportunities to continue to build understanding, appreciation and competency in how to support Indigenous participants, and to create more culturally inclusive programming.

Acknowledgements

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Andrea
Carey



Lise
Gilles



Savanna
Smith



Gabby
Radulescu



Lauren
Cardinal



Hannah
Goodings



Preslee
Munroe



Lori
Rutherford-
Simon



Jaclyn
Guenette



Kim
Leming



Sarah
Profitt-
Wagner