

KDE Hub Event Brief

Decolonizing Workshop, hosted by the Centre for Indigegogy
Wilfrid Laurier University, Kitchener, Ontario – December 5, 2019

Purpose

In the spirit of honouring multiple ways of knowing and doing, the KDE Hub participated in a decolonizing workshop to further our own understanding of Indigenous knowledge and research. With this experience, participants began the process of examining how socialization and internalization of colonial values, principles, norms and ways of life impact how we view and interact in the world. This workshop introduced the participants to circle work, being in ceremony and creating ritual space to critically unpack our locations to create room for new knowing to enter.

Participants

- A facilitator from the Centre for Indigegogy
- 9 participants

Participants included members from the Hub secretariat, the Hub leadership team, the PHAC MHP-IF team, and Social Work practicum students.

Meeting structure

In preparation for this decolonization experience, a pre-reading list was provided. A one-hour seminar was held a week before the event to discuss the pre-readings and to share reactions and insights. The pre-readings provided definitions of decolonization and indigenization and provided insights into Indigenous approaches to knowledge. The event itself was a full-day session with all participants attending in person. The day focused on being in ceremony and took the form of circle work. The history of colonization and its implications were presented. Discussions explored the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical elements of being and knowing.

What did we learn?

Reflections on the day considered all elements of Indigenous wholistic theory with implications for KDE Hub relationships and ways of working.

Spiritual (East, Vision)

- Hub's core commitments to reflect multiple ways of knowing
- Being comfortable with discomfort
- Seeking a common/supportive vision

Emotional (South, Relationships)

- Using the lens of putting relationships first and at the forefront of work
- Consider who the local knowledge holders are and who needs to be engaged; whose territory are we in or building a relationship with
- Seek to understand others' contexts

Mental (West, Political Context)

- Inclusive and inviting language
- Not making assumptions based on culture
- Understanding that colonization is not only a historical reality and be conscious of ways it continues

Physical (North, Place)

- Asking who's not in the room and who needs to be here
- Honouring the Indigenous connection to the land
- Make assumptions and intentions explicit/visible/shared

How will learnings from this event be used?

- The MHP-IF and the KDE Hub are committed to reducing the impact of colonization; events such as this are a first step to increasing understanding and building relationship with those who can help to curate knowledge and resources to honour Indigenous ways of knowing.
- KDE Hub team members have a continued commitment to exploring decolonization both personally and professionally.

