



Guiding Questions For Cultural Safety in Research

Essential questions for learning and reflection at the beginning of your work

Have you considered the cultural and historical context?

- Are you aware of the culture and history of the community you intend to work with?
- Are you aware of the historical experiences and context of the community, particularly any factors that might influence their perception of research and researchers (especially past negative experiences of research or data collection)?

What are the community's cultural protocols and values?

- Do you know and understand the specific cultural protocols, values, and traditions of the community you intend to work with?

- How can cultural differences, power imbalances, and reciprocity be addressed to make your interaction safer?

Have you reflected on your own cultural background?

- Have you reflected on your own cultural background and the way it may shape your interactions with others and any biases you may have?
- Are you approaching this work from a place of cultural humility (a commitment to learning, understanding and respecting different perspectives and lived experiences, self-reflection and self-critique)?

Questions to consider before reaching out to the community

These topics should be discussed with the community. Adjust your work according to the recommendations from the community on these topics:

What is the research purpose and benefit to the community?

- Can you clearly articulate the purpose and potential benefits of your research to the community, and have you ensured that it aligns with their interests and needs?
- How can you ensure the project will support more equitable access for community members to government programs and services?
- How will you appropriately recognize, credit, and compensate community members for their contribution to the research?

What are the potential risks for the community?

- Have you conducted a thorough risk assessment, considering potential harms that may result from your research?
- Consider existing ethics processes or frameworks that may be appropriate to your research.

How will you involve the community in research design?

- Have you included community members in the design and planning of the research project? Are they active partners in shaping the research questions and methods?

Are you open to adaptation and change?

- Are you willing to adapt your research methods, timeline, or goals if the community's needs and preferences evolve during the project?

What are the mechanisms for community input and control?

- Have you established mechanisms for community members to provide input, feedback, and have some level of control over the research process?

What is your plan for capacity building and skill transfer?

- Are you committed to building the research capacity of community members and transferring relevant skills and knowledge?

How will you acknowledge and respect traditional knowledge and intellectual property?

- Have you discussed and agreed upon the recognition and protection of traditional knowledge and intellectual property within the community?

How will you share results with the community?

- Have you discussed with the community how you will share the research results with them? What format will this take? What form is most accessible to the community?
- Have you discussed with the community how you will review your analysis, results, and interpretations with the community to make sure it accurately reflects their understanding and experiences?

Questions for reaching-out to community members and leaders

Have you engaged with the community members and leaders?

- Have you considered whether it will be more appropriate to reach out directly to community representatives, or to have an open invitation for people to reach out to you, if interested?
- Have you coordinated with other engagement/ outreach initiatives in order to streamline activities?
- Have you considered what accommodations the community members might need to have a comfortable and welcoming experience?
- Have you initiated open and respectful conversations with community representatives to understand their needs and expectations?