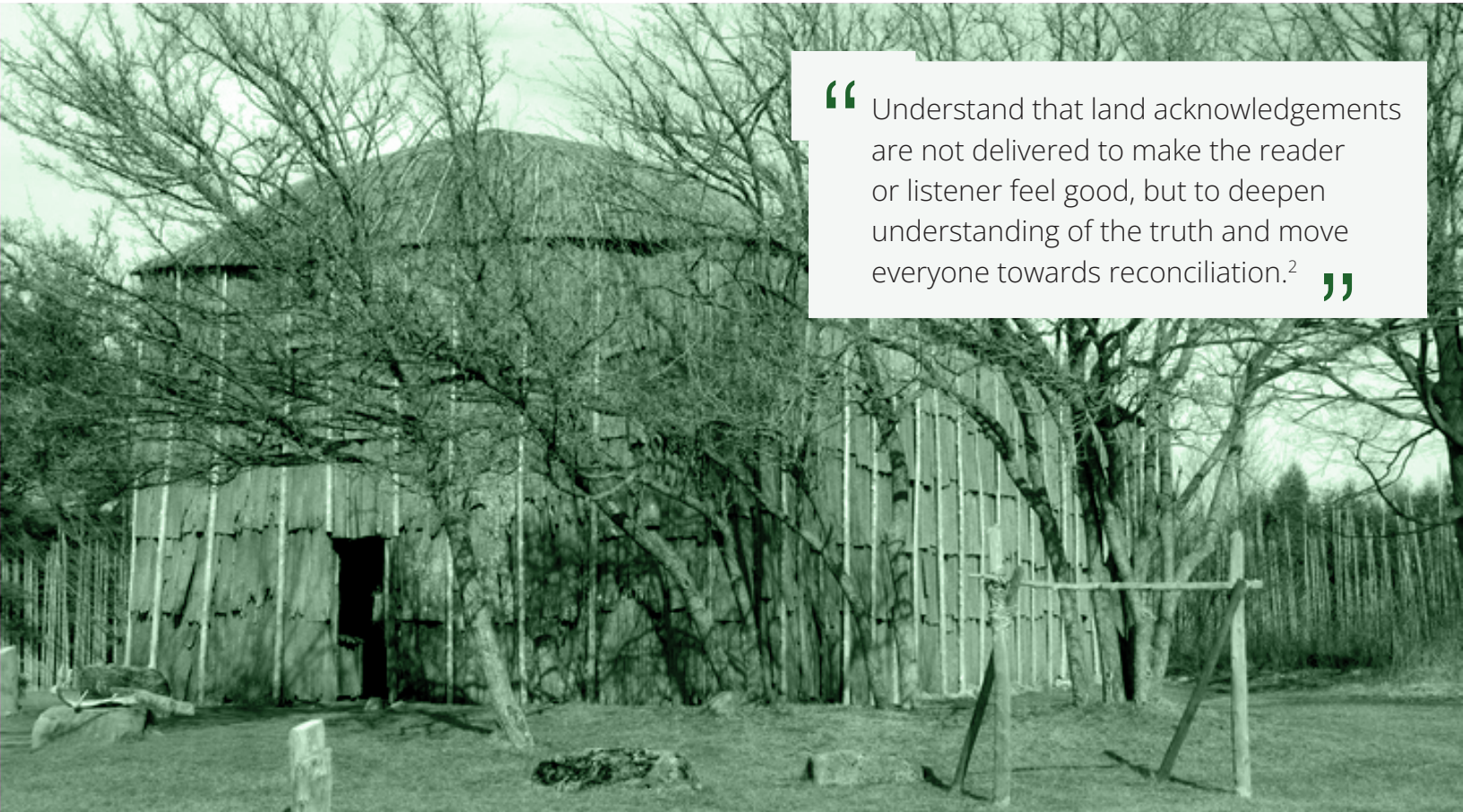


# Land Acknowledgement Practices

## Scoping Review Findings\*

### What are land acknowledgements? .....

Formal statements that are dynamic and intended to recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples as stewards of the land, acknowledging the enduring relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.<sup>1</sup>



“ Understand that land acknowledgements are not delivered to make the reader or listener feel good, but to deepen understanding of the truth and move everyone towards reconciliation.<sup>2</sup> ”

Photo credit: Crawford Lake - Conservation Halton

### Features of land acknowledgements .....



**Name Indigenous Peoples and their lands:** Name whose ancestral Indigenous territory it was, and the Indigenous Peoples who reside on the land at the time of the acknowledgement being given.



**Emphasize connection to the land:** Indigenous worldviews emphasize the interconnectedness of Indigenous lives with the land.



**Relate with treaties:** There is a distinction between traditional or ancestral land, and treaty land. Land acknowledgements may speak to both ancestral lands, where Indigenous People originally lived, or the traditional lands known as being lands of particular Indigenous group(s) and may recognize the lands taken in by treaties.



**Relate with unceded lands:** Territories that are ‘unceded’ “were never signed away by the Indigenous People who lived there before Europeans settled in North America.”<sup>3</sup> (e.g., Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island, Algonquin territory in Ottawa on which the Supreme Court of Canada building stands, Wet’suwet’en in Northern British Columbia in pipeline disputes, and Mi’kmaq territory in Nova Scotia.)<sup>3</sup>



**Acknowledge as one step towards reconciliation:** Reconciliation was cited in most land acknowledgements, but only some detailed specific actions linked to reconciliation and Calls to Action.



**Recognize Indigenous languages:** First spoken on the land known as Canada, which are fundamental to the culture and identities of Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Languages Act declares Indigenous language rights “fundamental to shaping the country...”<sup>4</sup>

# Findings

## 1. Make Land Acknowledgements Meaningful .....

- Acknowledge the land on which the country known as Canada was founded, and the associated impacts of colonization.
- Speak of the Indigenous Peoples specific to the area that you are acknowledging and their connection to their lands in the present.
- Recognize the interconnection among Indigenous Peoples and their land, and how this connection benefits settlers in the region.

“ Don’t let this be your only action to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.<sup>2</sup> Read the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report and consider how you can support the calls to action.<sup>5</sup> ”

## 2. Keep Learning .....

“ Seek out credible information about the history of that land prior to colonization. Understand whether there are treaties related to that land or if it is unceded.<sup>6</sup> ”

- Understand local context, including the history of lands, treaties, unceded lands, and the names of Indigenous Peoples and languages.
- Learn to pronounce Indigenous words used.
- Consider when it may be warranted to craft a statement with Indigenous community members while taking care to not be a burden. Working together may be needed to reconcile conflicting information or fill information gaps.

## 3. Maintain Relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Groups .....

- Seek advice via meaningful engagement with Indigenous community members locally.
- Ask which supports are appropriate and needed (e.g. adequate time and space, symbolic gift, honorariums).
- Meaningful relationships support refining and updating land acknowledgements.

“ Build real, authentic relationships with Indigenous People...Engage and work with local First Nations, Métis, Indigenous organizations and community champions in your area...Some may have also developed template acknowledgement statements for external use. That said, do not ask these groups to do the work for you while asking for advice.<sup>7</sup> ”

**For more information contact:**  
Health Promotion Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention at [hpcdip@oahpp.ca](mailto:hpcdip@oahpp.ca)

\*This visual summary is an overview of the full scoping review: OAHPP (PHO). Land acknowledgement practices: a scoping review to inform public health. Toronto, ON: King’s Printer for Ontario. 2023. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/L/2023/land-acknowledgement-practices-public-health-professionals.pdf>

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