**Facilitator’s Guide: Land Acknowledgement Session**

**Slide template:** **INSERT LINK**

**Handout**: **INSERT LINK**

**Background**

This session is meant to supplement the [**Respect, Sincerity & Responsibility: Land Acknowledgements @ UBC**](https://wpl.ubc.ca/browse/professional-development/courses/wpl-pd-rsr)course, which gives learners a basic grounding in the history and practice of giving land acknowledgments that recognize the First Nations upon whose lands we necessarily live, in North America. This session situates land acknowledgements within the much older, diverse, and localized practices of protocol that different First Nations have practiced between groups since time immemorial. It is important to note that this framing is meant to spur learning into actual lived traditions of Indigenous protocols of the people on whose land we live. These protocols are specific to the peoples of the specific land on which we live, and are as diverse as the languages, traditions, and cultures of the many Indigenous, Inuit, and Metis peoples across this land. Protocols are also something that are often only taught in specific situations to specific peoples. Facilitators should take time to learn more about Indigenous protocols, and their significance before giving this session. Specifically, work by [Chelsea Vowel](https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/). An example of one kind of protocol between nations can be found [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7ZQqlFeE7g). Another longer discussion of protocol in the Arts can be found [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6VuHJi6O0Q).

At the end of this session, participants should be more comfortable giving land acknowledgements, know whose lands they are on, have learned more about Indigenous protocol, and have had a chance to learn more about the process of creating/giving a land acknowledgement.

**Goals**

* The key goals of this session are to give individuals within your unit a chance to learn and practice land acknowledgements in a setting where it is safe to share and learn.
* Modelling how to learn and how to receive constructive feedback on one’s acknowledgement is a key facilitation goal.
* The purpose of this session is ***not*** to elevate land acknowledgements to the level of protocol. Land Acknowledgements are***not necessarily established protocol****.* However, in implicating the relationality, positionality, and whole self of the speaker, they can be understood as approaching actual protocol, and give a foundation in potentially unfamiliar skills to new colonized and/or settler learners in this space. These skills of speaking about who we are, where we are from, and what we want are important skills to begin to understand our relationships and responsibilities to the peoples who have been on this land since time immemorial.
* Point towards the importance of learning the protocols of host nations, and differentiate land acknowledgements from protocol.

**Schedule**

* We facilitated the session for 60 minutes and then added a 30 minute Q&A at the end in case some people wanted to stay around to chat further.

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| Time | Activity | Resources |
| X:XX – X:XX~15-20 mins | **Land Acknowledgement by unit/department member****Intro/Breakout*** Provide an overview of the community agreements for the session (respect, relationships, reciprocity, constructive)
* Acknowledge that everyone is coming from different spaces to this history, vocabulary, and practice and to centre the conversation in respect and judgement free learning.
* Review the goals of the session (listed above)
* Describe the small group activity
	+ Groups of 2-3 people (consider creating the groups ahead of time to ensure effective participation; if using random assignment, it’s very important to emphasize the community agreements so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute)
* Indicate that people can post questions or emergent ideas on the Jamboard
* **Move into paired breakouts for 10-15 mins, practicing.**
* ACTION: Facilitators move participants into pairs
* ACTION: (Facilitators pop into break out to check, and reconvene if need be)
 | **INSERT JAMBOARD LINK HERE** |
| X:XX – X:XX~30 mins | **Grounding in Protocol*** **Overview of Protocols from Facilitator**
* Goal: Take some time to talk about Indigenous protocols and how land acknowledgements relate to this.
* You can pose a question about why we do land acknowledgements and ask people to share their thoughts in the chat.
* Below are some italicized notes from the GAA who facilitated this conversation about protocols
* *Protocols are familiar:*
	+ *We’re all familiar with some kind of protocol, usually in the context of greeting, or formal situations. For example, we might have been taught about which fork to use in a fine dining environment, or how to greet an Elder in our culture.*
	+ *Protocols are about acknowledging the context within which we meet, and what the context and relationships within a space demand of our actions.*
* *What do we know about Indigenous protocols?*
	+ *Firstly, not all Indigenous people know all Indigenous protocols, or their own.*
	+ *Culture is always changing and growing and protocols cover a WIDE variety of traditions and ceremonies. When we talk about protocols, we’re talking about what people do know, which is grounded in what’s been done in the past.*
	+ *Just as Indigenous, Inuit, and Metis peoples are diverse and have vastly different languages, cultures, and traditions across North America, so too do protocols differ. Therefore, we shouldn’t think that there is one monolithic thing called “Indigenous protocol”.*
	+ *Protocols you might interact with might take the form of offerings of tobacco, blankets, sage or other items to elders that you work with. It might also take the form of knowing how to give thanks and gifts should you be invited to a potlatch.*
	+ *Protocols in an Indigenous context are ever changing, are contextual, are relational.*
* *Protocols are about who you are and who you represent.*
	+ *Who you are matters*
	+ *Why you’re there matters*
	+ *Who you’re speaking to matters*
	+ *Acknowledgements are context specific.*
* *I wanted us to think about protocols in terms of land acknowledgements because of what land acknowledgements can be.*
	+ *It’s worth making explicit: Land acknowledgements are NOT protocols. Protocols are highly contextual and have been developed by nations in relationship with other nations and within nations.*
	+ *However, understanding land acknowledgements within the context of protocols can draw our attention to ways we can engage more meaningfully on the terms of the indigenous peoples whose lands we live on.*
* *At worst, critical scholarship about land acknowledgements would say that land acknowledgements are not useful when they become a standard placeholder, something we run through very quickly because we don’t feel prepared to engage with them*
* *At BEST land acknowledgements can help spur us to begin to think in terms that facilitate decolonization. They ask us to think relationally, to focus on the land and the history we are a part of, and they ask us to be aware of to whom we are speaking, and how.*
* *But doing this takes practice, confidence, and an understanding about why it is important to think about ourselves as whole, historical beings in relationship with the land and the people who have always lived on it. And finally, like other richer protocols, they can be a signifier to others of the communities that hold you accountable, your intentions, and your good faith in working towards decolonization.*

**Jamboard Activity*** ACTION: Invite people to use the Jamboard to ask any questions or make any comments about either the lesson, or the conversations we’ve been having.
* ACTION: as issues come up, hold space for a discussion. This can look like making sure you look happy and intentional when silences stretch during the group, asking probing questions and follow ups to people’s queries, and reigning in people who usually speak in the space.
* The goal is to get people comfortable with surfacing questions, and with the topics, while modelling respectful learning
 | **INSERT JAMBOARD LINK HERE** |
| X:XX – X:XX~10 mins  | **Reflections*** + ACTION: Hold quiet space for three minutes and ask people to reflect on the question, “How has my understanding and/or engagement with land acknowledgements changed after our discussion today?”

**Wrap up and Thanks** |  |

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