

Values and Principles to Guide Toronto Zoo's Reconciliation Efforts

The following are the values and principles that will be foundational to the Toronto Zoo's work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis People. These values and principles were adopted by City Council to guide the City's reconciliation efforts and Council directed the City's service agencies to adopt them as a guide to their work with and for Indigenous People. Included are the ten guiding principles of truth and reconciliation, as shared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its report¹.

The values and principles outlined here will be adapted as appropriate to the Zoo's unique operational context in animal care, conservation science and education, guest destination, and position as a community anchor in Scarborough.

Accountability – The Toronto Zoo will be accountable to the self-identified needs and directions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and will honour this commitment through effective and consistent communication, transparency, and demonstrated benefit for Indigenous communities.

Decolonization and Power-shifting –the Toronto Zoo will work with Indigenous communities, organizations, collectives, and cultural professionals and scholars to decolonize Toronto Zoo processes.

Good Mind – This is a central philosophy and way of life for many Indigenous Peoples that signifies one's own peace and ability to use our minds collectively for the good of all people.

Inclusivity – The Zoo will work with the diverse Indigenous communities. We will not perpetuate "pan-Indigenization" where distinct Nations and communities are collapsed into falsely homogenized groups. We will also be responsive to the needs of all members of Indigenous communities, including children, youth, Elders, and Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people, and recognize that their voices must be involved in decision-making processes.

Kindness – The Toronto Zoo will work, unequivocally, with utmost kindness towards First Nations, Inuit and Métis families, communities, nations, and colleagues, and will approach all work from a decolonial and trauma-informed lens.¹

Respect – The Toronto Zoo is committed to ensuring that its leadership, staff, activities, programs, and services actively respect Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in their development, implementation, and evaluation. The Toronto Zoo will respect the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples to be self-determining and self-governing, and

¹ Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based approach that builds on an understanding that an individual's past and current experiences of trauma can affect their overall experiences within the varying systems (medical, education, or other systems) which directly affects their overall health and wellbeing (Northern Health: Indigenous Health, 2021)

these commitments will be appropriately reflected and effectively demonstrated across all the Zoo's processes and ways of working from this point forward.

Right Relations (Relationships) – The Toronto Zoo is committed to actively forming relationships through meaningful engagement, partnership, collaboration and co-development, and power shifting and sharing with Indigenous communities and organizations. The Zoo values the truth and importance of the Indigenous phrases "nothing about us, without us" and "for Indigenous by Indigenous." Righting relations is an obligation to live up to the responsibilities involved when taking part in these relationships—be it to other humans, other species, the land and waters or the climate – and requires respect, reciprocity and just actions.

Seven Grandfather Teachings – Many Indigenous Peoples hold these fundamental set of values that include the collective teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth.

Truth – The Toronto Zoo is committed to reflecting on its colonial structure, as well as instilling and demonstrating a fundamental respect for First Nations, Inuit and Métis nationhood, culture, spirituality, and identity. Understanding the truth of Indigenous Peoples, their families, communities, and nations is fundamental.

Ten Guiding Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that for Canada to flourish in the 21st century, Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada follows these principles:

- The United Nations' "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" provides the framework for Reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
- First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
- Reconciliation is a process of healing relationships that requires public Truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
- Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Indigenous peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

- Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.
- All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
- The perspectives and understandings of Indigenous Elders and Traditional Knowledge-Keepers about the ethics, concepts, and practices of Reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
- Supporting Indigenous peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the Reconciliation process are essential.
- Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust-building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
- Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canadian society.

ⁱ "What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015)
https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Principles_English_Web.pdf