

### What is This?

This toolkit was developed in conjunction with my dissertation, Adversaries into Allies: A Call to Action for Turning Settler Colonial Museums into Indigenized Spaces. This toolkit is based on findings from a qualitative research study that included museum site visits and conversations with museum practitioners. This research found that Indigenous community members need allies within museums to feel safe, seen, and welcome in spaces. This toolkit's goal is to help the next set of museum leaders, decolonizers, and accomplices learn to look at their institution and work critically, and enter into a space of allyship for Indigenous communities.

## How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be a series of reflective exercises. It will challenge the user to think critically about the settler colonial museums they currently work in or want to work in, and look at how to make the changes needed to move into a place of allyship. This toolkit is designed to be done through multiple sessions, not in a singlesession. This toolkit can be a personal or group reflection.



Aztalan State Park in Jefferson, WI (2019)

	Mus	eum Evaluatic	on Tool	
		(Page 1 of 3)		
Mus	seum Name:			
Dat	re of Visit: Time	:	Admission Cost:	
1.	Were there examples of Fryberg a	nd Eason's (circle a Omission (not there		
	Commissi	on (Stereotypes/mis	conception)	
	A	uthentic Represente	ation	
2.	Overall, did the museum cover the	e 3 prongs of Decolo	onization according to Lo	netree:
	Privileging Native Stories	Collaborating w	vith Native Communities	Truth Telling
3.	Where in the Ladder of Engageme	ent did this museum	fall (Circle):	
	-	Shared Author		
		ECIPROCAL RELATION		N
		- Consultation	_	
			TOKENIS	Ν
				_
			NON-PARTICIPATIO	N
	OMISSION			
4.a)	Was there a land acknowledgeme	ent?		
	□ Yes □ No			
4.b)	Was there Action behind the land	acknowledgement	Ś	
	Yes No			
	Was it in a prominent place?			
	Yes No			
4.c)	Land acknowledgement notes:			
5)	Was the Indigenous Content throu Throughout Limited	ghout the museum	or limited only to one are	aŝ
6)	What topics did the Indigenous ex	hibit(s) cover?		

	Auseum Evaluation Tool	
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- )	(Page 2 of 3)	
/.a)	Did they work with Tribal partners in the exhibit(s)?	
7.b)	Did they name what partners they worked with (List below, or "N/A")?	
8.a)	Were the labels written in first person or third person?	
8.b)	From which lens were the labels written?	
9)	Was there any mention of NAGPRA work?	
10)	How did the Museum display Native artifacts and objects?	
11)	How did the Museum bring in further education or connections to Indigenous communities?	
12)	Was there any examples of traditional knowledge or community knowledge being shared in the exhibit?	
13)	Were their elements of harm-reduction or trauma informed practice?	
14)	Were there Indigenous languages used in the museum space?	
15.a	Did the Gift Shop have Indigenous materials?	
	Were they ethically sourced?	
15.b)		
	Were they appropriate to have?	

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	Museum Evaluation Tool	
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Overall Exhibit Not	əs:	
Additional Natory		
Additional Notes:		

	Self Audit	file
	(Page 1 of 2)	
	tool is to help you evaluate your institution. Take time to think critically and be candid. Your wers will help with your action plan.	
1.	Where, if anywhere, are Indigenous stories being told at my museum?	
2.	In what tense do we use when discussing Indigenous people? Are we only using the past?	
3.	Does my museum have ancestors or belongings in its holdings?	
4.	Do we have any sacred items or cultural items that should be back in the community on display or in our holdings?	
5.	Do we acknowledge all Indigenous people of our lands or only a select few?	
6.	Do we acknowledge the role our museum, or all museums, played in colonization?	
7.a	) Do we actively work with Indigenous community members?	
	Yes INO	
7.b	) What does that relationship look like?	
7.c	) Is our relationship only transactional, meaning our only interactions are paying them for programming or paying them for providing a one-time only stamp of approval?	
7.d	) Do we only talk to Indigenous community members about NAGPRA?	
	□ Yes □ No	
	) Do we actively give Indigenous community members decision-making powers?	
7.e	□ Yes □ No	

	Self Audit
J	(Page 2 of 2)
3. I	Do we have any Indigenous staff members?
[	Yes No
9.a) I	How is my museum showing action beyond just acknowledging whose land we are on?
-	
-	
.b)	Are we joining Indigenous people in activism?
[	Yes No
P.C)	Are we participating in land back or repatriation efforts?
٢	Yes No
0.	Are we paying our community partners who help with content?
[	☐ Yes □ No
1.a)	Do Indigenous people feel safe in our space?
[	Yes No
2.	Whose ancestral and historic land are we on and how do we engage with them?
- - 3.a)	Do I consider my museum to be decolonized?
[	Yes No
13.b)	What makes you say yes or no?
-	
-	Do I consider my museum to be Indigenized?
	☐ Yes ☐ No
-	
14.D	What makes me say yes or no?
-	

# **Conversation Starters**

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These small cards are supposed to be used to start critical conversations at museums to address colonial structures, oppression, and inequity that harm Indigenous in museums. Cut them out and bring them to your next meeting or decision-making brainstorming session.

	How do we counter the museum narrative that Indigenous people only lived here in the past?	REPRESENTATION	What are we doing to ensure Indigenous resiliency and joy are being celebrated at our museum?	REPRESENTATION	What stereotypes are we perpetuating through our exhibits, programs, and collections that reduce Indigenous people to myths?	
	Who is making decisions about how we talk about Indigenous people? Do they have the right to make these decisions?		Do we hold something in our collections that we shouldn't? Is there something we need to consider reuniting with its home community?		What harm is there in returning collections to the communities from which they were taken? Why do museum professionals feel the need to keep something that does not belong in the museum space?	
ACCOUNTABILITY	If we had a painting of a sacred ceremony, would we display it? It could give insight into a community but could also be inappropriate to share outside of its proper cultural context.	STEWARDSHIP	What do we sell in our gift shop that perpetuates harm or stereotypes to Indigenous people?	STEWARDSHIP	How have we acted as gatekeepers to Indigenous culture and lifeways?	
STEWARDSHIP	How do we re- educate museum visitors who have been taught stereotypes about Indigenous people?	STEWARDSHIP	Is our museum a place of healing or harm? How do we know?	RELATIONSHIP	How is the museum supporting Two-Spirit Individuals in our space, to feel safe, seen, and heard?	
	How am I giving room for BIPOC individuals at the Museum? Am I speaking over or for them? Or do I let them have the megaphone?	RELATIONSHIP	Who has the power at our museum? How do we message that to our visitors?	RELATIONSHIP	Who are our closest Tribal communities? Have we contacted them? How often have we contacted them?	

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### **Establishing Your Values**

Values are incredibly important to ourselves and the institutions we work at. Our guiding sense of morals often compose our "core values" – what makes us, us, and keeps us going on those hard days. Spend some time with the values on this page, or you can create your own. What are your core values? Circle what you believe your core values are (try to pick five).



Institutions often have core values, but sometimes, their praxis does not match the values on their websites and walls. Take a moment and <u>underline</u> what you believe your institution's core values are in praxis (try to pick five). How do they compare to yours? Are you working in a place that shares your values, or no?

Often, our values are in conflict with each other, even within ourselves. How can we reconcile that when doing social justice work?

#### **Skill Building**

Holistic Listening is essential for working with Indigenous communities. During my research, listening came up as the number one answer on how more people could ally with Indigenous people. Holistic listening is listening with your whole body. That means you are listening to hear, not responding. This looks like you are engaged, maybe leaning in, and you are present in the conversation.

## **Holistic Listening Activity**

Find someone that you want to hear from but often do not get to engage with. This could be a co-worker in a different department, a community member, or someone you have not connected with in a while.

Ask them to tell you a story, aiming for 10 minutes. During this time, practice holistic listening. This means no thinking of what you are going to say next, not letting your mind wander, or getting annoyed. Your task is to listen, with every fiber of your being.

## **Removing Barriers**

#### Holistic listening might look different; some people might close their eyes while others maintain eye contact, but the main component is to stay

engaged with the

conversation.

**Hear Here!** 

Oftentimes, we set barriers for ourselves without needing to. With museum programming, we often say no to ideas before even giving them a try. Thinking about your own work, think of a project you wanted to try but were afraid to or thought there might be too many institutional barriers. Write down some of those institutional barriers, they might be things like leadership does not like new ideas, or we tried it before and it did not work or parking is difficult. Then try to think of people in the museum or community who can help address those things. When there's a way!



# **MUSEUM INDIGENIZATION LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT**

On the following page you will find the *Museum Indigenization Ladder of Engagement*, which has been created for this toolkit based on the ladder of civic participation introduced by Sherry Arnstein. This ladder serves as a roadmap on how to move museums into a place of Indigenization.

Starting at the bottom of the ladder is Non-Participation, meaning there is no participation with Indigenous communities. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:

- <u>Omission</u> Your museum has no Indigenous content.
- <u>Unchecked Stereotypes</u> Your museum might talk about Indigenous people but the presentation is rooted in stereotypes. As an example, this could include only representing Indigenous people in the past.

The next section is Tokenism, which is when Indigenous people are involved but not in an equitable way. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:

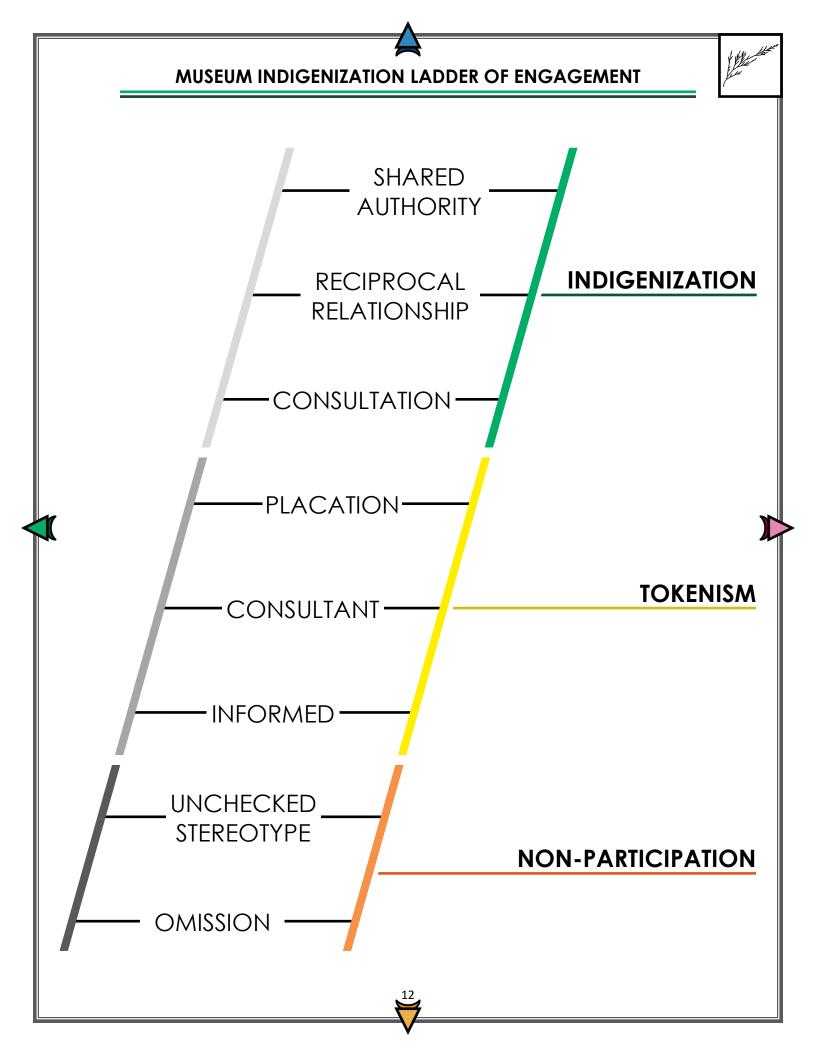
- <u>Informed</u> You may let Indigenous communities know they are represented in the museum without asking for or listening to their input.
- <u>Consultant</u> Your museums might hire one Indigenous person to give their input or give a "rubberstamp" approval to their programming or exhibit.
- <u>Placation</u> Your museum pays "lip-service" to Indigenization, meaning that your institution might listen to Tribal or Indigenous partners, but do not make the changes needed to transform into an Indigenizing space.

**NDIGENIZATION** 

- The last section is Indigenization, which means you are centering Indigenous people at your museum. This section is comprised of the following characteristics:
- <u>Consultation</u> Your museum regularly sits down with Indigenous partners for conversations on how to bring Indigenous content into the museum or what objects to return in the collection.
- <u>Reciprocal Relationship</u> Your museum and the Indigenous community help each other and have a two-sided relationship that is based on trust and respect.
- <u>Shared Authority</u> Your museum is willing to include Indigenous people at the decision-making table or curate an exhibit in their space.

This ladder of engagement shows how museums currently interact with Indigenous communities and what is required to move up the ladder to develop better relationships with Indigenous community members.

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معيل	Reflection:
	hink about the first time you saw Indigenous content in a museum. What was it? Vhat information did you learn? How did it make you feel?
M 	Vhat could have made that experience better?
_	
Κ	What is something you wish you knew about Indigenous people when you were in 12 schools that was taught to you? How can you take that information and put it n a museum?
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#### **Reflection:**

How can you, working or associated with a museum, create opportunities for people to authentically and appropriately learn about Indigenous people? Keep in mind who is telling their stories- are they or is someone for them?

How can you be a better ally to Indigenous people?

How can you bring your core values to the table and advocate to ensure Indigenous people are being portrayed authentically in your museum? How can you ensure your museum is practicing truth telling to combat the settler colonial origins?





#### You made it this far! Congratulations!

Now is the time to take thoughts and turn them into actions. As you start the work of Indigenizing your museum, it is important to remember you cannot change your institution overnight. Remember that even small steps are still steps in the right direction.

Revisiting the Ladder of Engagement on Page 12 of this toolkit, develop an initial action plan to ensure that your museum is moving toward a place of Shared Authority. Detail the end goal that you hope to achieve at your museum when working with Indigenous community members; is it an exhibit, a program, repatriation, or something else?

Next, working backwards from your end goal, what activities need to be completed to get you there? Use the space provided on the next page to write out the high-level descriptions of these activities.

Some things to consider as you develop your initial Action Plan:

- Who is going to be necessary to implement your plan within your institution?
- Who is going to be necessary to implement your plan <u>outside</u> of your institution?
- How much will your plan cost to implement? Where is the funding coming from? (i.e. no cost, out of existing budget, next year's budget, fundraising, etc.)
- What is a reasonable timeline to implement your plan?
- What do you need to learn?
- Who do you need to teach, and who is the appropriate person to teach them?
- What is the specific harm or gap you're trying to address with each activity?
- Are there any existing laws (i.e. NAGPRA) that can strengthen your argument for change?

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	Create an Action Plan	A BERT
Final Activity	Description:	
	Stakeholders (People/Departments):	
	Realistic Timeframe (Circle One):DaysWeeksMonthsYeaCost (Circle One):NegligibleMinorMediumMadeback(Existing Budgets)(New Budgets)(Fundred)	ajor
Previous Activity #1	Description:	
	Realistic Timeframe (Circle One): Days Weeks Months Yea   Cost (Circle One): Negligible Minor Medium Ma   (Existing Budgets) (New Budgets) (Fundred)	ajor
Previous Activity #2	Description:	
	Realistic Timeframe (Circle One):DaysWeeksMonthsYeaCost (Circle One):NegligibleMinorMediumMa(Existing Budgets)(New Budgets)(Fundre)	ajor

If you run out of room on this sheet, please continue elsewhere using your preferred method!

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#### Self Care:

Doing justice work, or heart work, is hard. Ensuring that people are seen as full people and not stereotypes or misconceptions can be a challenge. But it's worth it. And more museum workers and visitors of color need allies like you to ensure their voices are being heard, and they are represented in the spaces we occupy.

Take breaks in the work. Go for walks. Have conversations with other allies. Find the beauty in art. Do not work too hard; you will burn out. We have only one vessel, and only when that vessel is overflowing can we help others. What will you do to overflow your vessel?

I challenge you to make something beautiful. A doodle, a poem, a collage in the space below and keep it as a reminder to take time for you. The work will always be there.