



Manitoba Advocate  
for Children and Youth



**2025**



## What is Relational Accountability?

Relational accountability is an Indigenous and decolonial approach to partnerships, rooted in the understanding that all relationships – between people, communities, lands, and knowledges – are reciprocal, interconnected, and interdependent. This understanding of relationality expands the idea of transactional or extractive relationships to emphasize respect, responsibility, accountability, and reciprocity. It is not just about what we do, but how we do it: in ways that honour relational commitments, uphold cultural values, identify and disrupt inequitable power dynamics, colonial structures and processes, and foster trust and integrity in our interactions. Relational accountability requires us to commit to an ongoing process of reflection, open and meaningful communication, and action that centres Indigenous knowledge systems, anti-colonial actions, and community priorities.

## Purpose of this Commitment

This commitment is intended to make visible the accountabilities that can be expected in the partnership. It acknowledges that our work is not just about fulfilling responsibilities or completing the project we are collaborating on, but also about deepening relationships, fostering mutual learning and benefit, and ensuring that all voices are valued and heard. This commitment sets the foundation for a respectful and ethical partnership that aligns with Indigenous and decolonial principles of collaboration and collective care.

## Guiding Principles

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**RESPECT:** Honouring each other's knowledge, time, and lived experiences.

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**RECIPROCITY:** Ensuring that all partners benefit from the relationship in meaningful ways.

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** Recognizing the shared commitment to community well-being and ethical engagement.

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**RELATIONALITY:** Acknowledging that our working partnership is rooted in connection and relationship.

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**RELEVANCE:** Ensuring that our work together meaningfully contributes to the needs and priorities of the young people and communities that MACY serves.

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**REPRESENTATION:** Ensuring that young people, their families, and their communities have opportunities to identify and share what is important and relevant to them.

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**TRANSPARENCY:** Engaging in open, honest, and continuous communication.

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**ANTI-COLONIALISM:** Actively resisting and rejecting colonial power, dominance, and ideology, and centring Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of being at every opportunity.

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**CONSENT:** Ensuring that all partners understand what it is they are sharing, what it will be used for, and in what spaces.

# How Will We Know We Are Being Accountable?

We will know we are upholding relational accountability when:

**Trust is fostered and maintained** through transparent, respectful interactions.

**Feedback and reflections are invited and acted upon** in ways that honour diverse perspectives.

**Commitments are followed through** with integrity and care.

**Power imbalances are recognized and addressed**, ensuring all voices have influence in decision-making.

**Activities align with community priorities** rather than imposed agendas.

**Partners feel supported, valued, and heard**, and tensions are addressed in a good way and with care.

# Partner Check-In Process

To meaningfully reflect on partners' experiences of relational accountability, we commit to:

## Relational Reflection Sessions

MACY will engage partners in at least one facilitated reflective conversation to discuss their experiences of accountability and reciprocity, strengths in the relationships, and areas for growth.

## Ongoing Informal Touchpoints

Regular check-ins (e.g., monthly or quarterly, as collaboratively agreed) through phone calls, emails, or in-person conversations to ensure continuous communication and responsiveness to emerging needs.

## Community-Based Reflection Circle

Where applicable, community members will be invited to share their experiences and reflections in a relational setting that aligns with Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

## Documentation of Learnings

A shared, non-extractive documentation process will capture key insights from check-ins to ensure ongoing learning, adaptation, and responsiveness. This can be made available to the public if it is collaboratively decided that lessons learned could have broader benefits.

## Commitment to Action

Where gaps or challenges are identified, a collaborative plan will be developed to address them, ensuring that accountability is not just about reflection but also about action.

**MACY recognizes that this commitment is a living document that will be revisited and adapted as needed to reflect our evolving relationships and shared responsibilities.**



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