

WHAT TO CALL US?

DO'S & DON'T'S

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

This is really common. There are so many terms out there, and lots of conflicting information about when it's best to use them. The reason why this is, is because there isn't any perfect consensus, so here's a guide for best practices.

Note – This is a helpful guide for non-FNMI people
DO NOT CORRECT anyone who is self-identifying!

They have reasons why these terms are appropriate for their own self-identification.

NEVER APPROPRIATE

- Savage (even as an adjective!)
- Red Indian
- Redskin
- Primitive
- Half-breed
- Squaw/Brave/Buck
- Eskimo*(Don't say this in Canada!)



GOOD TERMS & WHAT THEY MEAN!

ABORIGINAL: *not to be confused with Aborigine – a term for the Indigenous people of Australia. This term emerged in the 1980's, and is most often used to encompass all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. It's fairly generic, and many people dislike it, as it is too broad, and is increasingly being co-opted by outside groups.

INDIAN: This one is controversial, and rightly so – it has a long history, thanks to the Indian Act, and is still the legal term in Canada, to many people's surprise. It's commonly used with older generations, and is sometimes shortened to "NDN" colloquially by youth. It's generally a term that is *only used by people who identify as Indian*. It has a history of being used pejoratively, so outside of historical reference, *is best not to use if you are not one*.

INDIGENOUS: This term is used as an umbrella term for the original people of a specific place, and is the most popular for official usage. It is used all over the world, and is best used when you don't have specific knowledge of the people you're talking about. Young people sometimes shorten it to "Indig."

NATIVE: This one is somewhat controversial too, as some people use it to mean that they are simply from somewhere, versus a person who is Indigenous to that land. It also has a history of being used pejoratively, so be cautious if you're using it. It is sometimes shortened to "N8V" by Indigenous youth.

NATIVE AMERICAN: This is a common one, especially in the US. It has a lot of the same complications as Native. People who use this term do not mean "American" as in the USA, but rather the America of *Turtle Island* – the continent of North America, typically. Some well-meaning people make the mistake of assuming Native American must also mean that there is a term called "Native Canadian," but that term isn't accepted by the Indigenous people of Canada.

NAME OF SPECIFIC NATION: (**Mohawk, Ojibwe, Dene..**): This is the best option if it is ever available to you! However, it's still not always easy knowing what name for a specific nation is best! Thanks to Colonization, a single group of people can be known by many different names: for example, my people are regularly referred to by five names, with an assortment of pronunciation is Oneida, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Haudenosaunee, Six Nations, and Iroquois. Knowing when to call us by any of the five, depends on context, but we definitely prefer them to being called any of the umbrella terms. Indigenous youth often have colloquial nicknames for these terms too, so sometimes you might encounter those as well.

FNMI???

First Nations: specific term for the group of "Indians" as defined by the Indian Act. This does not include Inuit or Métis people.

Métis / Michif: a specific cultural group of people who trace their descent to First Nations people and European settlers. This is a distinct cultural group, and is not a catch-all term for people of mixed-Indigenous heritage.

Inuit: This is the term that has replaced Eskimo in Canada, and refers to culturally similar Indigenous people who inhabit the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, & Alaska.
*Some people still self-identify as Eskimo, especially in Alaska