

Highlights and Key Lessons



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Principle	Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Research Funding

Key Highlights

- Explored how conflicts of interest in applied research often show up as subtle pressures from funders, partners, or institutions, not just financial ties.
- Used a Northern Saskatchewan housing case study to examine real-world ethical challenges including community consultation, data ownership, and influence over outcomes.
- Introduced five core values that support ethical research in complex settings: Trust, Transparency, Power, Integrity, and Reciprocity.
- Participants worked through the case from multiple perspectives — including community partners, funders, ethics advisors, and student researchers — to reflect on how competing priorities can be managed responsibly.
- Key takeaway: Ethical research doesn't mean avoiding tension. It means being thoughtful, clear, and accountable in how we manage it.

Focus of the Session:

Explored how to identify, disclose, and manage conflicts in applied research, emphasizing ethics as a lived practice rather than a checklist.

Key Framework

Five Anchors for Managing Conflicts:

1. **Trust** – Building relationships with communities and partners to sustain credibility.
2. **Transparency** – Acknowledging that conflicts of interest aren't inherently wrong; concealing them is.
3. **Power** – Recognizing power imbalances and ensuring inclusion in decision-making.
4. **Integrity** – Upholding honesty, even under pressure to present results favorably.
5. **Reciprocity** – Ensuring research benefits are shared; communities should experience value, not extraction.

Case Study: Pinehouse First Nation

- Highlighted complexities in community–industry partnerships (Cameco & Orano uranium mining).
- Raised questions around **conflict of interest, stakeholder input, and reciprocity** in research involving marginalized or impacted communities.

Key Learnings

1. Conflict is Inevitable, Not Negative

In applied research, managing conflict is part of the process—it reflects the complexity of real-world collaboration.

2. Ethics Is an Ongoing Practice

Ethical conduct evolves through conversations, consent processes, funding decisions, and mentorship—not static policy compliance.

3. Transparency Builds Credibility

Communities and partners value honesty over perfection, open communication fosters trust.

4. Power Dynamics Must Be Acknowledged

Ethical research requires questioning who speaks, who decides, and who benefits.

5. Reciprocity Strengthens Relationships

Applied research should give back—through capacity building, shared data, or community benefit.

6. Integrity Protects Long-Term Impact

Standing up to scrutiny and resisting external pressures preserves the credibility of both the researcher and the institution.