Partners in Research: Faculty Training on Community Engaged Research

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Seminar Topics

1. Is there a need for community engaged research and what is the benefit?
2. What are common challenges in CBPAR partnerships?
3. How can sound group dynamic processes (communication, shared decision making, and conflict resolution) overcome common challenges?
4. What are the nuts and bolts of initiating a CBPAR project including financial and IRB issues?
5. What ethical issues are involved in developing and implementing CBPAR projects?
What has your experience been working on research projects with “community”? 
Topic 1: Is there a need for community engaged research and what are the benefits?
Background

- Since 1994, NIH has required that all research involving human subjects include a plan for enrolling minority racial/ethnic groups, but recruitment rates remain low.
- Suspicion of research is common.
- There has been poor uptake of evidence based programming.
Gaps in Applying “Best Practices”*

- Between efficacy in research studies & effectiveness with underserved groups
- Between research and appropriate adaptation for underserved groups
- Between success in achieving behavior change in affluent/educated and those less so
- Between research and local relevance

*Green, LW, Am J Health Behavior, 2001
Need New Methods to Address:

- Low recruitment and participation of diverse ethnic groups in research
- Application of research findings that make a difference for population health especially in vulnerable communities
Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)

“CBPR is a partnership approach to research that equitably involves all participants in all aspects of the research process where each person shares his/her expertise in order to enhance knowledge and develop interventions that will benefit the whole community.”

Israel et al 1998.
The Spectrum of Research

Entirely Participatory

• Community selects priorities and research question
• Power and decision making is shared equally
• There is a co-learning and co-production of knowledge
• Empowerment and capacity building is core

Entirely Researcher Driven

• Researcher selects research question
• Power and decision making is in the hands of the researcher
• The researcher is the expert
• Knowledge production is primary

Task Force on Community Research (2009). University of Minnesota
Degrees of Community Engagement in Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBPR or CBPAR</th>
<th>Collaboration with community, but researcher driven</th>
<th>Community placed research</th>
<th>No community engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community involved in all aspects of research</td>
<td>Community sponsor on researcher defined project</td>
<td>Recruitment from community organization</td>
<td>Secondary data analysis, possibly basic science</td>
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CBPR Assumptions

- Potential to create more relevant, sustainable research outcomes
- Interventions strengthened by community participation, insight and theories
- Translation of interventions to diverse settings enhanced and made more sustainable by CBPR
- Added health value from participation
Barbara Israel- Key Principles

1. Focuses on community
2. Builds on community strengths and resources
3. Facilitates collaborative partnerships
4. Integrates knowledge and action
5. Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequities
6. Involves a cyclical and iterative process
7. Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners

Israel et al, 2008
CBPR Definition of Community

- Community as a unit of identity characterized by:
  - Identification with and emotional connection to other members
  - Common symbol systems
  - Shared values and norms
  - Mutual (but not necessarily equal) influence
  - Common interests
  - Joint commitment to meeting shared needs
- May be geographical or group with a sense of common identity and shared fate
- CBPR attempts to identify existing communities and strengthen this sense of community through collective engagement

Israel et al, 2008
Topic 2: What are common challenges in CBPAR partnerships and how can we address them?
What challenges have you experienced with CBPR?
Key Challenges to CBPR Partnerships

- Trust
- Decision making
- Challenges of power-sharing
CBPR Scenario

- Divide into groups
- Read through the scenario sections as instructed
Take a moment to discuss with others 3 reasons why community partners in the scenario might not trust researchers.
Challenges to Developing...  

**Trust**

- History of bad experiences with researchers
- Historical and recent injustices and racism in research
- Lack of understanding of other partner’s priorities
- Differing levels of commitment to the project
- Actions are not consistent with words
Take a moment to discuss with others 3 decision making issues which might arise in the scenario.
Challenges to Dealing With...

**Decision Making**
- Partners have different goals, values, priorities
- Clashing organizational cultures
- Lack of clear process for making decisions
Take a moment to discuss with others 3 power sharing issues which might arise in the scenario.
Power Differences

- Discrimination: Racism, Sexism, Ageism, etc.
- Control of resources
- Lack of respect for expertise of all partners
Challenges often lead to Conflict

- Contrasting goals, values, priorities
- Clashing organizational cultures
- Budget difficulties or resource allocation
- Power imbalances
- Communication break down underlies many of these problems
Topic 3: How can sound group dynamic processes (communication, shared decision making, and conflict resolution) overcome common challenges?
Communication can help to address many of these challenges.

How do you define “communication”? 
Communication Model

Sender → Noise → Receiver
What Makes Communication Difficult?

Context (outer blue ring):
- Cultural context of communication: verbal/ non-verbal
- Preferred communication styles: direct/ indirect
- Preferred approach to conflicts: direct/ indirect
- Assumptions & expectations about goal/ agenda/ decision making/ power

Noise (inner box):
- Garbled message: mumble/ softly/ unclear message
- Language: type/ proficiency/ literacy
- Use of academic jargon
- Non-verbal communication
### Bases of Communication

**Message**

- **Speaker**
  - Speak to be heard
  - Know your message
  - Be aware of emotions.
  - Be aware of non-verbals: eye-contact, distance, timing, posture, touch
  - Know listener’s preferred communication style

- **Listener**
  - Listen actively
  - Repeat message back
  - Ask for clarification
  - Be aware of non-verbals: eye-contact, distance, timing, posture, touch
  - Know speaker’s preferred communication style

- **Message**
  - Be clear

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Active Listening

Listening isn’t always easy. It requires:

- **Concentration:** Minimize distractions. Tell the person if it is a bad time.

- **Patience:** Let the other person tell you what you need to hear. If you’re not sure you understood, ask him/her to explain.

- **Empathy:** Put yourself in the speaker’s place, from their cultural perspective. Understand the speaker’s preferred communication styles (verbal/ non-verbal/ direct/ non-direct).
Why Do Community and Academic Partners Do CBPAR?

- Why might community partners want to become involved in CBPAR partnerships?
- Why might academic partners want to become involved in CBPAR partnerships?
Communicating to Address Challenges to CBPR Partnerships

- Trust
- Decision-making
- Power-sharing
- Conflicts
How Can Good Communication Build Trust?

- Start conversations about partnership as soon as possible
- Clearly identify priorities of each partner (and their organizations)
- Clearly identify goals of project
- Discuss prior experiences (positive or negative) with CBPAR partnerships that seem appropriate
- Assume good intentions / make good on your promises
Strategies for Building Trust

- Learn about the communities you’re working with:
  History
  Cultural beliefs and practices
  Religion/ethical values
  Socio-economic-political issues
  Generational/acculturation issues
  Preferred communication styles
  Languages/non-verbal behaviors

- Be careful that generalities ≠ stereotypes
- Be attentive to heterogeneity in community
- Practice cultural humility
- Build relationships with people over time
- Find confidants/key informants
Establishing a clear process for making decisions can prevent problems/conflict
Types of Decision Making

- **Autocratic** – leader decides without necessarily gaining or responding to input from others
- **Consultation** - leader or co-leaders decide after gaining input from others
- **Democratic** – group decides by majority rule, whether straw polling, voting, delegation
- **Consensus** – group finds a common decision that everyone can live with - “70% rule”
Strategies for Improved Decision Making

- Decide together about how to make decisions
- Make sure everyone has the same understanding about how decisions will be made
- Talk openly when making decisions
- Be aware of one’s assumptions

How Can Good Communication Help Power Sharing?

- Reflect upon and acknowledge socially defined power differentials
  - Race/ethnicity: White privilege
  - Class: Economic privilege
  - Education: Academic privilege
  - Gender: Male privilege
  - Knowledge systems: Western privilege

- Strive to lessen impact of privilege by creating an equitable partnership
Strategies For Addressing Power Inequities

• Acknowledge and value the expertise and skills of all partners
• Emphasize needs identified by community
• Talk early about financial arrangements and control of resources
• Share control of meetings/agendas
• Have transparent decision making
• Make partners co-PIs
How Can Good Communication Help Prevent Conflict?

- Establish positive communication strategies early in the beginning of the partnership
- Understand that different people have different ways of doing and thinking about things
- Talk about & resolve differences as they arise
How Can Good Communication Help Resolve Conflict?

- Assume there is a good reason for the conflict
- Identify the most likely causes of the conflict
- Work together to find solutions using a problem-solving approach without blaming/shaming

Strategies for Preventing/Resolving Conflict

- Be open and honest
- Respectfully present one’s viewpoint
- Respectfully listen to others’ viewpoints
- Negotiate solutions
Written Agreements

Written agreements between researchers and community members can guide partnership during research project.

- Purpose of the project
- Guiding principles
- Ownership
- Participation: roles and responsibilities
- Decision-making processes
- Evaluation
- Dissemination

• Examples (see handouts): MOU, code of ethics, etc
Final Thoughts on Steps to Successful Collaborations

- Establish good communication early!
- Find a committed community partner
- Outline common goals, roles, privileges, and rules of engagement
- Make financial agreements clear
- Spend TIME on relationships/ partnerships
Topic 4: What are the nuts and bolts of initiating a CBPAR project including financial and IRB issues?
Financial

- Careful budget consideration is crucial in CBPR.
- Models include:
  - Subcontracting
  - Dividing budget
  - Fixed price contracts
- There are positives and negatives for each approach
Recall that generally IRBs look for:
- Social / Scientific Value
- Scientific Validity
- Subject Selection
- Informed Consent
- Confidentiality
- Risk/Benefit Ratio(s)

Each of these IRB application sections may have unique considerations in CBPR projects.
IRB Considerations in CBPR

- **Social/Scientific Value Of the Approach**
  - CBPR is a unique way of doing research, and IRBs are often not familiar with it
  - May have political overtones
  - Focused on action (i.e., not only knowledge)

- **Social/Scientific Value Of the Project**
  - Community / Academic partnership
  - Emancipatory potential

- **Scientific validity as in any research study**
IRB Considerations in CBPR

- **Subject Selection:** “Researcher” and “Subject” roles may be indistinct
  - Community “researcher”/Community “subject”
  - Academic “researcher”/Academic “subject”

- **Informed consent:**
  - Consent forms should be developed in partnership
  - Particular attention to community participant comprehension
  - Particular attention to voluntariness in community context
IRB Considerations in CBPR

- Confidentiality related to Project Participation
  - Participation in Action/Planning groups is generally public

- Confidentiality of Project Data
  - Data from project participants
  - Data from project recipients

Tai Mendenhall, PhD
IRB Considerations in CBPR

- **Risk/Benefit ratios**
  - Consider potential impact(s) of negative or unflattering findings
  - Consider risk of political consequences and/or institutional backlash(es)
  - Highlight individual risks/benefits
  - Highlight community risks/benefits
  - Highlight anticipated beneficent changes and actions

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IRB Considerations in CBPR

- An ongoing and longitudinal relationship with the IRB is preferable to “one-time” applications and proposals
  - Only apply/propose what you can predict
  - Submit changes of protocol when/as indicated
  - Ask questions; seek consultations
  - Be transparent with both the community and the IRB

Tai Mendenhall, PhD
Promotion and Tenure

- CBPR takes time and this can be an issue for P&T
- Check your department’s tenure code
- Community Campus Partnership for Health has a “Community Engaged Scholar Toolkit.” http://www.ccph
Topic 5: Review ethical issues in developing and implementing CBPAR projects
Ethics and CBPR

• The ethical practice of CBPR requires researchers to be vigilant about the way the partnership is developed, implemented, and sustained.

• The following questions are adapted from the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
Ethical Issues: Who is community?

- Is it ethical for community members to come from only a few neighborhoods or social identity groups, thus benefiting some communities more than others?

- Do academic researchers have a responsibility to seek participation from all communities, or just work with the groups who are the most outspoken or easiest to work with?

- How “voluntary” is participation in research sponsored by community organizations?
Ethical Issues: Approach to Research

- Is the research project justified?
- Who benefits from engaging in the research and how?
- Does the project include actionable outcomes?
- Are there potential risks to communities?
Ethical Issues: Partnership Roles

- When should a researcher take ownership of critical measurement or methodological questions?

- When might community member’s input on design issues feel burdensome?

- How will you balance inclusivity of data analysis with privacy concerns?

- How does “equity” in practice translate so that divisions of labor are not exploitative to any one partner?
Ethical Issues: Dissemination

- How do research results get re-presented and whose voices are heard?

- Are the findings presented in an accessible and meaningful way for community members?

- What if research findings reinforce negative stereotypes?

- Would it do more harm to the community to report such findings?
Seminar Sponsors/Funders

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