

Research for Improved Health: A Study of Community-Academic Partnerships

Interview Guide: Version (July 2011)

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I. Introduction

Thank you so much for participating in this interview. The purpose of this study is to take an in-depth look at participatory research **projects** and **partnerships** from diverse communities around the country. We are not here to “evaluate” this partnership but rather to learn from your experience. We hope to better understand what makes for “successful” projects that involve partnering between communities and universities to reduce health disparities.

We’re interested in your experience with this participatory research project and partnership. We’d like to hear from you in your own words about the challenges and successes in this process and about any outcomes that you feel may have come from this partnership.

You were chosen as a participant in this study because you are a partner in the _____ project (or partnership). We appreciate you taking the time to speak with us, as your experience will help us to better how these kinds of partnerships work together to address challenges and make things better in our communities. We expect this interview to take up to about 60-90 minutes of your time.

II. Individual and Project Background *(keep this section brief)*

1. I’d like to begin by asking you how you came to be involved in this partnership. How and why did you start?
2. *(If appropriate):* Can you help me understand how the community and university came together on this partnership? *(Probe: Who initiated the partnership? Did it come from academic, community or both?)*
3. Can you describe your role and the work you are doing in the partnership? *(Probe: Are you representing an institution/agency or are you participating as yourself? If yes, what does it mean for you to represent an organization or group?)*

**Optional – ONLY If Personal Motivation was not answered in Question 1 or 3.*

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4. Could you describe your involvement a little more personally -- what passions, concerns, or values specifically motivated you to work with the partnership?

III. Context for All Communities

It's our understanding that the _____ community(ies) is (are) involved in this partnership:

5. What do you think we need to know about the community(s) [or tribe] that would help us understand your partnership? (*Probe: History or current organizing or capacity building around health issues? Other issues? Strategies for addressing socio-economic conditions? (For tribes: history of self-determination in health or education? Language/cultural programs?)*)
6. To your knowledge, has the University partnered with the community on different research projects before your project? If yes, what was that experience like? (*Probe: How do researchers new to the community learn about the community's history and culture? Does the tribe/community have an orientation process? Do researchers independently learn about the community, and if so, how?*)

We'd like to ask you to talk a little about the community process for working with the university including getting research approvals and agreements to work with your community (if you were involved in this)

7. If you were involved, can you describe the approval or agreement processes for the university to work with the community or tribe? (*Probe: Were there specific concerns or conditions, i.e. requiring community benefits, data agreements, joint publication, accountability, etc.*)
 - a. For tribes, can you describe who was involved and what levels were involved in the tribal approval process?
8. Do you have a Community or Tribal Advisory Board or Boards? Can you describe them?
9. When thinking about the Community or Tribal Advisory Board(s) (or council, committee etc) what role do they take with the research? What decisions do they make? (*Probe: What power (or authority) do they have with this project?*)
10. For tribes, what decisions do the tribal leadership take with the research? What is the relationship between the tribal advisory board or governing body make?

IV. Intervention Research Questions *For Intervention Projects Only*

Since your research project is focusing on an intervention, we'd like to ask you more here about the process of developing and implementing your program or intervention _____ (*name the intervention or program*).

First, we want to ask you how the intervention has been developed:

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11. In what ways have knowledge and experience from the community (or cultural beliefs, values and practices) influenced your project?
12. In what ways has knowledge from professional articles or “evidence” and “best practices” from around the country influenced your project/intervention?
13. Have local programs or agencies contributed to the development and implementation of the project? If yes, how? (*Probe: Were resources provided to support the intervention? Was local staff given time off and allowed to participate? Was local staff expertise incorporated in to the intervention?*)
14. What outcomes or benefits have you seen or expect to see as a result of the intervention?
15. Do you think the community perceives these benefits or intended benefits of the project?
16. (If you are a Community partner): Do you think this project/partnership has contributed or has the potential to contribute to any policy or practices changes at the community level?
17. (If you are a University partner): Do you think this project/partnership has changed the way the University does business, i.e., any of its policies or practices in doing research with communities?
18. What are your plans for sharing project findings in the community? (*Probe: For example, will there be newspaper articles, pamphlets, videos, websites, toolkits? Will there be presentations at community events, dinners, staff meetings, etc.?*)
19. Could you please describe how the community (or tribe) will be identified in published project reports? And who decided how the community or tribe would be identified? (*Probe: Did the Community or Tribal Advisory Committee place any restrictions on how the tribe could be identified in published reports? And if so, what kinds of restrictions were placed?*)

V. Policy Research Questions *For Policy Projects Only*

Since your partnership is focusing on policy (and legal) changes and using “research data to influence this change,” we now want to talk more about the policy change strategies and actions you’ve used.

20. Was the policy change you are seeking an initial goal or did it become relevant during the course of the project? If so, why or what happened to make it a pressing issue?
21. We’d like to ask you about the steps your partnership might have taken to bring about policy change. How would you describe your involvement in making your policy issue important or in setting a policy agenda with policymakers?
22. Could you describe how you think data or evidence was used in working towards policy change? (When and how was data used? What was the role of the different partners in

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gathering or presenting the data or evidence? Was data presented in a way that was understood by community members?

23. Could you describe the role of advocacy and people telling their stories or providing personal testimony to create policy change?

24. *(If appropriate):* If the partnership has not yet been successful at promoting the policy/legal change you want, do you think the partnership's work improved the policy environment for this issue? If so, how? If not, is there a plan to re-initiate work towards this change again in the future? *(Probes: new mechanisms to support political partnerships, new structures for community voices at the table, policy-makers more inclined to consider impact of decisions on communities in future)*

VI. Partnership/Group Dynamics

We're interested in understanding more about how you believe your partnership works together as a group:

25. Can you describe what is working **well** in your partnership and give some examples? *(Probe: Can you describe what happens in meetings when the partners come together? Where do you meet? Who leads the meetings? If translation is needed, is it provided? Who does the translation? Who prepares the handouts? Is there collaborative decision-making?)*

26. Can you describe some of the challenges in your partnership, i.e., what might not be working so well and give some examples of what could be improved? *(Probe: Are there things hard to discuss as a group? What happens if an individual disagrees with the community's decision about aspects of a research project?)*

Now we want to ask you specifically about power relations. While one goal in a CBPR partnership is to make sure everyone can contribute equally, the reality is that this is difficult or sometimes impossible.

27. Can you share some thoughts on how power between the university and community might work in this partnership, i.e., can you provide an example of a conflict or power issue that you've had? *(Probe: Has anything ever put this partnership in jeopardy? What happened?)*

We are interested in learning more about how trust works between researchers and community members. We'd like for you to think about where your partnership started in terms of levels of trust between partners, and where you think your partnership is now.

28. Prior to this project, what was your experience with health intervention research? How did **you** feel about research before you were involved and how has your involvement affected your viewpoint?

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29. In your own words, how do you define trust for this kind of partnership? Have there been any trust issues that have affected your partnership, i.e., examples of disagreements between university and community team members that might have affected trust among members?

30. In general, how would you describe the level of trust at the beginning of your partnership and how has it changed over time? What do you think made it change?

VII. Individual Level Issues

Now we'd like to ask a few questions about individuals in the partnership to help understand what kinds of qualities you think are important.

31. Thinking about your experience in this group, what sorts of personal qualities should someone have to be involved?

32. How about for the project leaders? academic PI? community PI or community coordinator?

We would also like to hear your views about some of the cultural issues that may come up in this kind of partnership.

33. We've observed that some of your university research team members share a similar racial, ethnic or cultural background to your community members. Do you think this makes a difference in terms of the partnership or in terms of the research? If so, how?

34. What about when people share the same gender? Does this make a difference in terms of the partnership and of the research?

VIII. Partnership Outcomes

We now want to dig a little deeper into partnership outcomes that you are hoping to achieve through your work together. In thinking about the whole or big picture your partnership is dealing with:

35. What would you say have been successes for your partnership? (*Probe: Community ownership of the program? Sustainability? Community Capacities? Greater trust between partners, new skills for intervention work, new abilities to start other programs or obtain more grants, resources or take on other issues?*)

36. In what ways do you feel individual community members have benefitted from serving as part of the project team?

IX. Research Design

37. How would you describe your research approach? How do you think using a CBPR approach in your partnership has influenced this project in how it is working, or has worked, towards achieving its goal of addressing community issues?

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X. Summary

We're coming to the end now and just wanted to ask you for some concluding remarks.

38. If another group were going to start this kind of partnership, what kinds of things would you tell them in order to help them be successful?

39. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for sharing your thoughts and experiences with us here today. Your time and devotion is truly appreciated. Many Thanks!!

For more information on Qualitative Case Study Design, contact: Julie Lucero, jelucero@salud.unm.edu; or Nina Wallerstein, PI, nwallerstein@salud.unm.edu, University of New Mexico