Partnering with Indigenous Communities to Design and Implement Strength-Based Health Interventions
“Valley of the Flowers”
“Valley of the Chokecherries”
“The Good Camp”
Overview

- Introduction
- Community-Based Participatory Research
- Indigenous Methods
- Example: Guardians of the Living Water
"Education is your most powerful weapon. With education, you are the white man's equal; without education, you are his victim, and so shall remain all your lives."
Messengers for Health
Community-Based Participatory Research

“A collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community and has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change . . .”

W.K. Kellogg Community Health Scholars Program
Adapting Western Methods to Indigenous Ways of Knowing
Indigenous Methods

- Relationships
- Respect
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility
- Relevance
Protecting Our Water Sources
Relevance

- Community Partners:
  - Identify health topic
- And work together to
  - Design intervention approach
  - Plan evaluation
  - Implement program and evaluation
  - Propose dissemination plans
Relationships
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include</th>
<th>Include key community leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>Provide direction and advice for all areas of program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have</td>
<td>Have a variety of experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>Benefit from shared Expertise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintaining Engagement

Trust is integral to the success of the partnership.

Trust is built between project partners and expanded throughout the community.

Recruitment and retention require a variety of communication strategies.

Children and Families often have multiple obligations.
Building Trust—Managing Expectations

- Requires attention to expectations and needs of each partner
- Benefits from long-term partnerships
- Respectful approaches can help overcome conflicting priorities
Respect
Social and Political Contexts

- Appreciate Tribal sovereignty
- Acknowledge history of colonization
- Address stereotypes
- Recognize complex jurisdictional issues
Centering Crow Cultural Values

- Integrating Western and Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Respecting storytellers and stories
- Developing new methods for analyzing data
Centering Crow Cultural Values

- Integrating Western and Apsáalooke Ways of Knowing
Recommendations

Incorporating culture vs. Being culturally centered

Involve partners in all phases vs. community-driven

Adding community empowerment as intervention objective
Reciprocity

Reciprocity is another central value for our programs and for my commitment to my work. It is always important to bring back what we learn in community.

This means making sure the community has access to the results of the program.
Responsibility

• My role in the community and in the project

  • Make sure program is valuable to the community.

  • Make sure that program is conducted in culturally centered manner.

  • Make sure program is sustainable.
Taking Action
Sustainability

- Programs that disappear may increase distrust in this program and in future programs
  - Funding challenges
  - Building capacity in the community
Relevance
Respect
Reciprocity
Responsibility
Relationships
Lessons Learned

1. Strong cultural foundation to build upon
2. Strong support for youth
3. Some resources—also competing priorities
4. Range of leadership supporting efforts
5. Impact of large rural land-base
Lessons Learned

- Complexity of environmental health literacy initiatives
- Cross collaboration and efficient partnerships
- Authentic Involvement of Youth
- Integration of Indigenous and Western Science
“You have the strength of the clan system of the Crows’ powerful culture that’s here, very powerful. You know it’s the love of our people as Apsáalooke, of Crow people....It’s so strong there are no words to describe how strong it is,”
• **Crow Agency Public School**: Jonna Chavez, Jason Cummins
• **Crow Tribe Cultural Committee**: Grant Bull Tail
• **Little Big Horn College**: Christine Martin, David Yarlott, Frederica Lefthand,
• **Montana State University**: Cierra Tredway, Marilla Harris-Vincent, Deborah LaVeaux, Ruth Robinson, Emma Stihler, Yuhuan Xie, Lexie Kyro, Catalina Rosales and many others
• **GLW Steering Committee**: Sara L. Young, John Doyle, Charlene Johnson, Mari Eggers
• **Consultants and Advisors**: Suzanne Held, Rima Rudd, Shelly Valdez & Jill Stein
Acknowledgements

This project was funded through the American Indian/Alaska Native Clinical and Translational Research Program: U54GM115371. and the Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity Montana (CAIRHE), grant P P20GM104417[PI: Alex Adams], sponsored by the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences.

We also acknowledge funding from through the IHART Program funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health Grant: R25MH084565.

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.
References


