



A researcher's guide to

## COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is a research approach that combines the knowledge and action of researchers and community members in order to achieve social change to improve community health and reduce health disparities. The approach aims to involve community residents in the full research spectrum (from conception – design – conduct – analysis – interpretation – conclusions – communication of results) in order to influence change in community health, systems, programs or policies.

### Advantages of a CBPR-approach



#### Increasing Knowledge

A CBPR program increases understanding of the social and economic complexities that motivate the behavior of individuals and affected families.

By giving communities greater insight to the research process they can apply and use the outcomes of the study in a more effective way.



#### Building Bridges

CBPR builds trust between researchers and communities and helps bridge culture gaps.

A stronger relationship with the community will minimize recruitment & retention barriers related to the fear of being exploited and treated like a guinea pig.

Future cooperation is more likely to take place and be mutually beneficial.



#### Improving the research process

By establishing a stronger relationship with the community, researchers can get important input from the community on how to make the research method more user friendly and culturally appropriate.

# Is a CBPR approach right for you?<sup>2</sup>

Some questions you need to ask yourself:

- Would my research benefit from community involvement?
- Do the potential benefits of my study outweigh the potential burdens a CBPR approach would place on the community?
- Does my staff have the necessary skills (often acquired through cultural humility training) to develop and maintain community relationships?
- Am I willing to include community members throughout the entire research process?
- Do I have the time and resources necessary to develop and maintain community partnerships?
- How will I define "community"? Will the people I categorize as belonging to the community agree with my categorization?



## CBPR: Where to Start?<sup>3</sup>



### 1. Initial Research

Try to find out if others have done previous research in your area of interest; by doing so, you might find information on partnerships and/or communities of interest.

You may also want to get to know more about issues that are important to the target community. This could be done by, for example, attending community meetings.



### 2. Key informant interviews

After conducting initial research you should have identified a group of people conducting research in your area of interest (or people working in fields that may overlap with yours). Try to organize a meeting with these individuals to brainstorm on ideas about partnerships. Make sure to be prepared with important questions.



### 3. Meeting with potential partners

When meeting with potential research/community partners, start by introducing yourself, give some background on your work and why you are interested in working with them. After some initial small-talk, try to find out their background, what they're working on, etc. See if they have any previous partnership experience & if they are interested in participating in your proposed partnership.



# How can a CBPR-approach increase minority recruitment and retention for clinical trials?



- Research suggests that recruitment and retention of community members is maximized as they become invested partners from start to finish.

- Be sure that they are present in the full spectrum of the research process and the community's concerns are taken into consideration.

- CBPR researchers approach community members as partners, not as subjects.

- Having community partners play a role in recruitment may significantly improve the effectiveness & retention of minority participation in research, as it adds trustworthiness to the researcher and the study.

## Educate, engage & inspire the community

✓ Maintain regular, transparent communication between community and academic leaders.

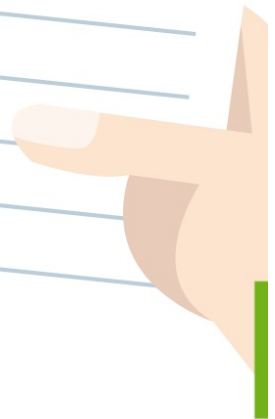
✓ Formulate mutual goals, roles, and rules of engagement.

✓ Work together with leaders and/or focus groups from the community to design and implement tests and hypotheses.

✓ Community partners should receive financial and other resources that facilitate their participation.<sup>5</sup>

✓ Involve community members in the analysis and interpretation of data, presentations and manuscript preparation, and on determining how the results will be distributed.

✓ Disseminate the research findings to the communities where the research was conducted. Feedback from the community can shed light on pros and cons, likes and dislikes, which can be helpful when conducting future research.



## REFERENCES

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