

Building and maintaining trust in a community-based participatory research project




**Messengers for Health on the Apsáalooke Reservation**

**Messengers for Health**

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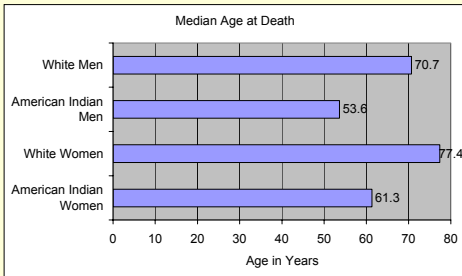
The support of the American Cancer Society is acknowledged with gratitude.

**Topics**



- Health disparities
- Research with Native Americans
- Research partnership
- Levels of trust

**Health Disparities in Montana**



Group	Median Age at Death (Years)
White Men	70.7
American Indian Men	53.6
White Women	77.4
American Indian Women	61.3

Excess death rates for Native Americans compared to whites in Montana:

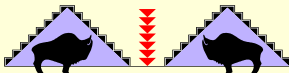
- cancer (42% higher)
- heart disease (29% higher)
- stroke (23% higher)
- infant mortality (100% higher)
- diabetes (291% higher)
- chronic lower respiratory disease
- pneumonia and influenza
- motor vehicle and non-motor vehicle injuries
- suicide

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MN/WI American Indian Cancer Conference, October 22-24, 2008 Black Bear Resort, Carlton, MN

### Why CBPR in Native communities

- History, history, history
- Promised study benefits rarely reach communities
- Study results/data not given to community
- Researchers disrespectful of cultural practices
- Studies have harmed communities



### Research Partnership



- Partnership began in 1996
- Funding began in 2001
- Focus: Cervical health and Indian Health Service



### 1st level of trust

- Initial academic and community partners
- 5 recommendations
  - Acknowledge background histories
  - Understand broader histories
  - Be present, listen, and receive
  - Acknowledge expertise
  - Be upfront about expectations



### Acknowledge background histories

- Researchers and community members are influenced by their backgrounds. Including:
  - their histories and the history of their institutions and communities
  - their assumptions and stereotypes
- Continually work toward self-understanding and self-reflection



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## Understand broader histories

- History of research between:
  - Specific community and specific institution
  - Between the community and US government
  - Broader history of the community
- Activities used in this project
  - Auditing a course on Montana Indians
  - Reading history books authored by Native people, critiques of Western research, history books on the Crow tribe
  - Having open discussions about past history of research



## Be present, listen, and receive

- Tribal communities are aware when a stranger comes into town.
- Committing to spending time each month at Crow.
- Attending social and cultural events.



## Acknowledge expertise

- Acknowledge both expertise from community *and* university partners
- Approach community members as equal partners and experts
  - Our academic partner explained intentions to community and asked community how to proceed



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## Be upfront about expectations

- Community wants to see university partners who are sincere and honest about their intentions
- Communicate expectations:
  - Publishing and presenting at scientific meetings
  - Allocation of grant money
  - Other duties of university researcher



## 2nd level of trust

- Between initial partners and greater community and academic setting
- 3 recommendations
  - Do not assume people know the project uses a CBPR approach
  - Revisit first level recommendations with potential new partners
  - Match words and actions

## Do not assume people know the project uses a CBPR approach

- Continually educate others on project history, methods, and partners.
- Choose initial partner wisely—expansion of trust relationship is facilitated by initial partners validating credibility of academic partner.
- Determine different views between and among federal and tribal policy makers.



## Revisit first level recommendations with potential new partners

- No guarantee that trust will transfer to potential new partners.
- Not everyone will want to be part of project when they learn what CBPR entails.

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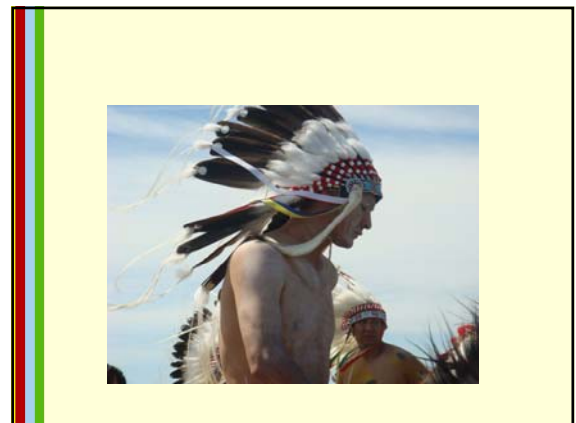


Match words and actions

- Our project gave 5 messages
  - We recognize community history
  - Project will directly benefit community
  - Community and academic partner will work together on all phases of the work
  - We will keep the community informed on the progress of the project
  - We will do all we can to continue program indefinitely

Results of trust building

- Community sat back and watched and watched and watched.
- Indication that project is trusted:
  - Recognition in community events
  - Male community members asking to develop a project focused on men's health
  - More and more community members wanting to be involved in project



Barriers to trust building

- Lack of funding in initial stages
- Distance between university and community
- People from different backgrounds working together (cultural competence)
- Coming to community from academic setting—viewing community members as experts in their own right



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Conclusion

- Applicable to community members and researchers working in partnership
- Focused on academics
- Level of safety occurs over time—may not always be culturally competent
- Trust—not the only or best way, but was integral to our project



Thank you

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