

Community-Academic Research Partnership Checklist

Community-engaged research (CEnR) takes time. The process is challenged in times of crisis. Here is a checklist of key guidelines to consider when establishing and maintaining a community-academic research partnership. All parties should enter a partnership with the intent to be honest, transparent, accept truth beyond comfort, and remain respectful.

Developing a Partnership

- Bring many sectors and perspectives to the table
- Discuss expertise across the table to cross-fertilize ideas and skills
- Sustain a commitment to each other -- academics be present in the community before and beyond research
- Establish trust with each other through listening to understand, communicating clearly and honestly, and sustaining mutual respect and commitment
- Evaluate the project and partnership in the beginning, middle, and end

Managing the Research Team

- Define and list individual and team roles, responsibilities, and tasks
- Create a flow chart displaying equal accountability with the community and academic PIs
- Establish a contact person for appropriate issues/concerns
- Respect community expertise, influence, and power
- Discuss and budget for dissemination in both community and academic outlets
- Check in monthly, quarterly, annually, and post-project on alignment; realign project, if needed
- Ensure team's contact information is current and use preferred, agreed-upon communication methods

Forming Research Questions

- Identify community concerns and interest
- Clarify community-identified research priorities
- Validate academic interest and priority in alignment with community climate
- Establish limitations to narrow scope and develop obtainable project scope

Establishing Protocols

- Outline how power will be shared (i.e., money, staffing, dissemination)
- Define limitations of personnel, project, scope, internal and external factors
- Establish shared language through frank conversations
- Build an iterative glossary of agreed-upon terms including language that will and will not be used
- Create and adhere to protocols for communication including mode and frequency
- Decide and document in advance how you will resolve conflict in a way that honors both community and academy

Communicating Effectively

- Ask questions to clarify understanding and agreement (i.e., Do I understand you to say....?)
- Support C.L.E.A.R. communications (communication that includes Community members integrally, is Long-term, Easily understood, All community members can access, and is Reciprocal and Responsive)
- Adhere to communication protocols established bi-directionally by the team
- Be open, honest, active, and respectful when communicating -- even when it is uncomfortable

Connecting Resources

- Collaborate with internal resources researchers, students, community organizers, community volunteers
- Invest in community training, best research practices training, and communication training