

Connecting with Partners: **Things to consider when approaching or being approached by potential partners**

Finding Partners

- Ask your colleagues and partners. Are there other academic partners that have worked with community-based organizations (CBOs) before? Use these experienced people (locally, regionally, or nationally) as coaches and mentors. *Note: See CBPR resources handout for how to connect with potential mentors.*
- Seek and use University contacts (ARCC staff)- understand how communities talk about research and what their incentives for collaborating are.
- Find out who's been doing work on your topic of interest. Build alliances with other academics/CBOs who have similar research ideas, areas of interest, or questions. Also consider other types of partners- health departments, public agencies.

Get to know Potential Partners

- What are each other's interests?
- Are the partners' skills and experiences adequate/appropriate for the proposed project?
- Are the partners' reputations strong within the community? Be prepared for community skepticism.
- Are your work styles compatible? Good communication/listening skills? Willing to share power/control over decisions?
- Do you like each other?
- Do you each have enough time?
- Can you commit for the long haul?
- CBPR is not for everyone or every community or every research question. Visit <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cbpr/u1/u14.php> to find other questions that are helpful in determining if CBPR is right for the potential partners.

Consider your Purpose

- Why do this project together? What is the purpose of the research? What is hoped for? What is most important?
- What impact do community partners want the research to have (i.e., community organizing, policy changes, increase funding)?
- How will all of the team members benefit?
- Ask questions of your self/organization: What level of involvement do we want in each part of the project? Do partners have the capacity (staff, time, \$, support from leadership)? What capacity-building may be needed?

Consider who needs to be at the Table

- Have deep organizational involvement- academic and community. Who needs to support and sign off? Who will do the work?
- How will members of the community be involved and/or give input? As research team members? On a Community Advisory Board?

Set the Stage to Build a Healthy Relationship

- **Build Trust and Communicate Early, Well, and Often**
 - Discuss how to create the 'glue' for your partnership: Things that help your partnership stick together like process, infrastructure and procedures that promote and sustain trust, communication, connectedness, and meaningful work efforts that ensure each partner is respected and heard.
 - Take the time to meet in person as often as you can and in each other's locations.
 - Discuss preferred communication methods.
- **Allow time for decision making**
 - Decide how decisions will be made: Who will be involved in discussion? Who will be consulted? Who will make final decisions? Who should be informed of decisions?
- **Discuss Finances**
 - How much money will your project cost?
 - How much money will it cost to support the community partners to participate? The academic partners to participate?
 - Discuss how money is allocated and managed?
- **Plan for Disagreements**
 - Maintaining balance of power throughout project
 - Community vs. Scientific Dissemination of Results
 - Unexpected or Negative Results
 - Insufficient Communication
 - Turn-over of co-PI, Project Team and/or CBO Leadership
 - Institutional Rules and Regulations
 - Lack of Financial Resources

Document these decisions in Signed Memorandum of Understanding!

- **Develop a Written Partnership Agreement**
 - Decision-Making
 - Handling Disagreements
 - Data Ownership and Future Uses
 - Distribution of Results
 - Finances
- There isn't one way of structuring partnerships – tailor the agreement to your needs

Note: For examples, <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/commbas.html#MOU>

Sources:

The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group. **Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum.** 2006. www.cbprcurriculum.info

Nunavut Research Institute & Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. *Negotiating Research Relationships: A Guide for Communities.* 2007.

California Breast Cancer Research Program Community Research Collaboration: <http://www.cbcrp.org/community/>

Resources from Community-Campus Partnerships for Health www.ccph.info

CBPR RESOURCES WEBSITE (<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/commbas.html>)

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| Principles and policies | Reports and presentations |
| CBPR course syllabi | Links to related organizations and initiatives |
| Opportunities for funding, training, and technical assistance | |

DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING CBPR PARTNERSHIPS: A SKILL-BUILDING CURRICULUM

This evidence-based curriculum is intended as a tool for community-institutional partnerships that are using or planning to use a CBPR approach to improving health. Visit at <http://www.cbprcurriculum.info>. Each of the 7 units in the curriculum includes:

- Learning objectives
- In-depth content information about the topic(s) being presented
- Examples & interactive exercises designed to trigger discussion and help better understand the concepts being presented
- Citations and suggested resources.

CBPR ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION GROUP

Co-sponsored by CCPH and the Wellesley Institute, this listserv serves the growing network of people involved and interested in CBPR and other types of community-academic research partnerships. As a resource for sharing knowledge and experience, Since it began in June 2004, the listserv already has grown to over 3500 subscribers since it began in June 2004 including community organizations, colleges and universities, funding agencies, and policy makers. Join at <https://mailman.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/cbpr>

CBPR Research Ethics and Institutional Review Board Resources:

<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/irbhome.html>

CBPR RESOURCES BY & FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Community Partner Peer Mentoring & Advocacy Website is designed as a resource for community members and community groups in their work with academic partners. Visit at <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cps.html>. One resource is a listserv focused on the community partner perspective of community-academic partnerships. To join: <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cps.html>

CBPR RESOURCES FOR ACADEMIC PARTNERS

Faculty Promotion and Tenure Tools: Online toolkit for faculty (www.communityengagedscholarship.info), sample promotion & tenure policies, other resources to further recognize and reward CBPR as scholarship

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) promotes health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions. To learn more, visit www.ccph.info

Incorporating Community-Engaged Practices into Steps of Traditional Research Projects

Research stage	Potential roles of community partners
Find partners/ form team	This is not a step in traditional research. Community partners can suggest other organizations to collaborate with. <i>See handout on Connecting with Partners for more information.</i>
Form research question	Community may approach academic with a specific question or academic may approach community. If academic has already identified the issue, community partners can still give feedback on the research questions and share community issues/priorities. If possible, partners can seek funding together- collaboratively write proposals. Community partners can review proposal drafts, suggest research questions. Community can also ensure the budget includes resources to support their participation. If proposal has already been submitted, academics can be open and share copies.
Planning the study	Community partners may give advice on appropriate research plans/methodologies. Collaboratively they may review data collection tools, discuss research participant incentives, offer ideas on recruitment, give advice on logistics and other aspects like how to tailor the research and methods to specific community or cultural context.
Conducting Research	Community partners may promote the study in the community and can be hired as part of the research team to collect data, administer surveys, deliver equipment, read measurements. This can contribute to community economic development and build skills and capacity. Partners can also discuss how the research is being implemented and address problems together.
Analyzing data	Academics often do this piece but community partners can assist and be trained to do some pieces like 'data cleaning'. Community partners can be very helpful with interpretations of the findings. They can bring important insights and perspectives to the research findings which may have not been otherwise considered. Together, partners can also discuss possible actions/interventions to address the issues identified by the research.
Sharing findings	Community partners can help to ensure that findings are also shared with the community appropriately (easy to understand language, town hall forums, fact sheets, media). Being involved in presenting findings in academic venues (journal articles, conferences) can also be skill-building for community partners.
Taking Action	This is another step that isn't usually a traditional research step. Community partners can help figure out what actions should be taken based on the findings. This may include conducting more research, translating into new or revised policies, mobilizing people behind an issue, lending support to current programs or showing need for new programs, or seeking further funding.