Leveraging Community-Academic Partnerships to Address Critical Health Issues

Dennis P. Watson, PhD
IU Fairbanks School of Public Health

Rhiannon Edwards, MS
Public Advocates for Community Re-Entry
What is a community-academic partnership?

- Collaborative alliance
- Seeks to improve well-being of a community
- Improves community capacity by leveraging strengths of partners

See: http://ctb.ku.edu/en
“...Effective partnerships require features such as reciprocity, shared planning, power and resources, good communication, and clear goals.”

What unique strengths do community and academic partners bring?

Community
- Intimate knowledge of the problem
- Strong preexisting relationships
- Dissemination savvy

Academics
- Abstract/General knowledge of the problem
- Research and evaluation expertise
- University infrastructures
- Students
Benefits of community-academic partnerships

Community
- Research and evaluation legitimates problems and solutions
- Broadens potential funding sources
- More sustainable programming

Academics
- Facilitated access to research participants
- Your work gets read!
- Your work gets taken to the next level!
- Snowballs into other projects
Issues to be aware of

**Community**
- Time often more critical
- Strict research designs might not always be practical or possible

**Academics**
- Community-engaged work is not always reward
- Usually going to want the most rigorous design possible
- Not always the best at disseminating
Questions to ask when at the beginning

Community
- Can this researcher meet deadlines?
- Can the researcher communicate in a community context?
- Does the researcher have the relevant experience?
- Is the researcher willing to participate at a level you feel comfortable with?

Academics
- Does the organization have the capacity to participate?
- What resources can the organization contribute?
- Does the organization have needs you can fulfill?
- Am I willing to participate at the level to community is comfortable with?

Prison Substance Use & Re-entry

- Higher rates of Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- Lack of evidence-based programming
  - Drug courts
  - Focus on post-release
- Marion County 3-year recidivism 45.9%
Indiana Access to Recovery

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) - Funded
- Indiana ATR four target groups
  - Women who are pregnant or with small children;
  - Military personnel;
  - Methamphetamine users;
  - Felony offenders
- Voucher-based
- Use of recovery consultants
- Evaluation shows positive outcomes
- SAMHSA does not renew due to cuts in program
“CIRSC will assist central Indiana Hoosiers to achieve optimum physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being by providing access to integrated services to meet the needs of individuals and families”
Whose at CIRSC’s table

Executive Committee
• Public Advocates for Community Re-Entry
• Drug Free Marion County
• Liberty Hall
• Bethlehem House

Other Stakeholders
• Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
• Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction
• The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Steps taken in building the coalition

- Seed funding
- Strategic planning
- Develop bylaws
- Program development
  - Develop priorities
  - Identify strengths and weakness of ATR
- Seeking out stable funding
- Grant development
Filling the Service Gap

S Substance
U Use
P Programming for
P Person-Oriented
O Oriented
R Recovery and
T Treatment

Continuous learning & development
Scaling-Up
Question

• What are some problems you may be working to address in your community or as a researcher?
• Can you think of ways partnering with a university or community partner might benefit your work?
Useful Tool #1

http://ctb.ku.edu/en
Useful Tool #2

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide

Nonprofits today are being pressed to demonstrate the effectiveness of their program activities by initiating and completing outcome-oriented evaluation of projects. This guide was developed to provide practical assistance to nonprofits engaged in this process. In the pages of this guide, we hope to give staff of nonprofits and community members alike sufficient orientation to the underlying principles of "logic modeling" to use this tool to enhance their program planning, implementation, and dissemination activities.

Feb. 2, 2006

Useful Tool #3

https://sustaintool.org/
Contact:  
Dennis: dpwatson@iu.edu  
Rhiannon: redwards@paceindy.org
Research Collaborators

Brad Ray
Co-PI
SPEA

Huiping Xu
Biostatistics

Michelle Salyers
Psychology

Lisa Robison
Public Health

James Hill
Computer Science