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**Connecting Community to Research: A Training Program to Increase Community Partnerships in Research**

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Connecting Community to Research: A Training Program to Increase Community Partnerships in Research
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Background
• Community Engaged Research (CEnR) emphasizes the need for community members to partner with researchers in order to address health disparities.
• We created the Connecting Community to Research (CCR) training program to provide opportunities for community members who reflect our diverse population to learn more about partnering in CEnR.

Purpose
• To increase the number and diversity of community members who are informed about, ready and willing to engage in the research process.

Training Development
• From July to December 2015, we partnered with a 12-member Advisory Board of community engagement professionals to design a training to introduce community members to CEnR.
• The CCR training was adapted from existing Tufts University CTSI curriculum, Harvard Catalyst curriculum, and a CDC storytelling template.
• Loco-regional projects were identified and presented to trainees as opportunities to engage with researchers after trainings.

Training Program
• Original Goals:
  • 6 trainings over 9 months
  • Various community settings
  • At least 60 community members trained
• Training sessions:
  • 1-2 hours
  • Didactic and interactive components
  • Group size from 3-6 trainees
  • Designed for trainees with little to no prior knowledge of research

Curriculum
Activity | Objective
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Advocate vs. Researcher | Explain the roles of advocates and researchers
What is Research and Why Do We Do It? | Overview of the Scientific Method and Community Engaged Research
Storytelling | Convey how storytelling can effectively influence research
Opportunities | Provide regional opportunities to participate as a research advocate

Participants

![Figure 1: Race of Participants](image)

![Figure 2: Age Range of Participants by Gender (N=82)](image)

Outcomes
• 94% understood how research could address a community concern
• 82% understood how to use their stories to inform research
• 53% intended to participate as an advocate in research

Opportunities
• 2 trainees joined Institutional Review Board
• 2 became advisors on Patient Advisory Groups
• 2 became proposal reviewers
• 39 trainees signed up to receive quarterly newsletter

Lessons Learned
• Training curriculum must be flexible to adapt to:
  • the size and research experience of group
  • accessibility to technology
  • time constraints
  • Ample time should be devoted to Storytelling to allow participants to both work through and share their stories.
  • A quarterly newsletter functioned as an important way to keep all trainees informed of current opportunities to partner with researchers.
  • A one-time training does not cultivate lasting partnerships between community members and researchers which takes time to establish.

Conclusion
• This introductory level awareness training generated positive results.
  • The results demonstrate that additional trainings, with varying levels of skill development, may be needed to further empower community members to engage as partners in research.

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