GACD Implementation Science e-Hub

FUNDAMENTALS PROGRAMME

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MODULE 2 | LECTURE 2B

Community participatory action research

Ruth Verhey

Zimbabwe

Ruth Verhey

Lecture overview

- What is it and what are challenges of research in communities
- Historical aspects of CPAR
- Principles
- Applied examples and learnings
- Key messages

Challenges in academic and community relationships

Who brings what to the table?

Implementers = activists and changemakers, holding systemic knowledge, how much are they uniformly representing a community?

Researchers = making a commitment, self-conscious actor and participant in development, are they not inherently holding (a) power?

Idealism which ignores the objective class interests of the researcher as well as the oppressed themselves can simply posit liberation as an attitude of mind. The *oppressed* and the researcher somehow transcend their classes and mutually partake in a spiritual *communion* whose basis is a common humanity. While the experience may provide romantic passages for the researcher's future book, it leaves the *oppressed* in much the same state of affairs.

Bryceson et al. (1982)

Community participatory action research

> Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is an **innovative research paradigm** that combines knowledge and action to improve community health and reduce health disparities … CBPR provides a framework to **equitably involve community members**, researchers and other stakeholders in the research process, recognizing and maximizing the **importance of their diverse contributions** … Its aim is to create positive, transformative and sustainable change together **with, for and in communities**.

Collins SE et al. (2018) Am Psychol. 73(7):884-898.

History of Community participatory action research

- 1970: Social research and social justice
  - Fight against the oppressor researching the oppressed
- Put research into action faster
- Inclusion, diversity, equity
- Idea of objectivity and value-neutrality is questionable

Principles of community participatory action research

The goal is better health equity

- Community-driven patient-centered health care = healthy individuals
- Problem-oriented
  - What conditions influence the maintenance of the problem and how can they be influenced?
- Collaboration
- Bottom-up approach

Who is (in) the community?

Develop a relationship and recognition of mutual interest

Who is inviting whom to collaborate?

Experience the community and learn their language

Ask for trust (awareness of responsibility)

Community and their needs decide research agenda

Hear the community's voice

🛠 Tools to involve more members:

- Stakeholder mapping
- Advisory boards
- Theory of Change workshops
- Focus group discussions
- Surveys

- Ideal = community approaches research team
- Formulate research question together
- Develop grant together

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Community involvement

- Greater involvement = stronger implementation
- Inclusive advisory board membership for community members
- Cyclical and iterative
- Mutual decision on who does what (equitable)

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Accessibility and usefulness and impact of results and/or products

Who can evaluate these?

Other considerations

Gaze?
Positionality?
Cultural understanding?
Funding?
Political reasons?

Dissemination in all directions

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Continued collaboration

- What could this look like?
- What does it take to have sustainability?
- What voltage drop is acceptable?
- What are the limitations of the collaboration?
- Where do resources come from?

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Please take a moment to think of how to answer these questions

Create longstanding engagement

- Keep showing up and build social networks
- Support and accept sustained change
- Allow respect and recognition for frustration

Critical appraisal

Is it less scientific?

- Create a clear link with implementation research

Is it *really* participatory and is there equality?

- "Someone (with skills, time, resources) needs to start the project"
- Researcher as a guide or consultant
- Where does the funding come from and who accounts for it?

Erin Gottsacker / The Ohio Newsroom

The Chauncey Public Library is just one room, but it's a gathering space for community members.

"This library, we call it Chauncey's living room because it's just where people come to hang out," said youth services librarian Ellie Hamrick. "It's small and intimate."

But people here deal with big problems.

"People are navigating grief and housing insecurity and food insecurity and anxiety and just all the things that we deal with — the heavy, heavy stuff," she said. "But there's no health in Chauncey, period, so just having someone to listen, I feel like has been really, really important for people."

Over the past year, Hamrick has seen the program rise in popularity. These days, some teens have even started their own version of the friendship bench.

"They just will go talk to each other," Hamrick said. "And some of the older teens are kind of mentors to some of the tweens."

It's exactly the program's intention: to strengthen people — and whole communities — one conversation at a time.

Ohio, USA

- Department for community health
- Adaptation of training material
- Theory of Change workshop
- Training (May 2022) and ongoing practice and support
- Small and slow implementation, funding for three supporters (Community Health Workers), dissemination of outcomes, received more funding
- Offering own trainings

Statehouse NEWS BUREAU

WKSU HD1
Weekend Edition

Erin Gottsacker / The Ohio Newsroom

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Learnings

- Funding available
- Established and experienced in getting more funding
- Ongoing collaboration, discussions and learning together for more than two years
- Less scientific approach

London

Nigerian Association creates pilot program tackling stigmas, barriers surrounding mental illness and addiction

Program provides free training in problem solving therapy

Angela McInnes · CBC News · Posted: May 23, 2022 1:58 PM EDT | Last Updated: May 23, 2022

From left to right: Dr. Ruth Verhey, International Friendship Bench lead, Dana Elsaleh of the Muslim Resource Centre, and Henry Orewa, program coordinator for Friendship Bench Nigerian Association of London and Area.

Ontario, Canada

- Immense effort to create community awareness
- Activism and idealism
- Theory of change workshops
- Training

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Learnings

- Lack of funding
- Coordination of services missing
- Very diverse community

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Bucaramanga, Colombia

- La Comuna 14 and School of Nursing
- Translated material with a group of Colombian medical professionals
- Overall interest in the topic
- Many Theory of Change workshops
- Community leaders very vocal, determined and experienced in starting initiatives, connected
- Continued collaboration

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Learnings

- Working on funding for sustainability (specialist knowledge)
- Is relying on volunteerism acceptable?
- Needing to work on evaluation and capacity building
- Ongoing community and university engagement needed

Program for social connection in ethnocultural francophone minorities

Ontario, Canada

- Canadian mental health association and Francophone health organisation led
- Focus on social connection and loneliness
- Community participatory approach – consultations, FGDs, ToCs
- Received grant to implement the program

Program for social connection in ethnocultural francophone minorities

Ontario, Canada

Learnings

- Early interaction with community members
- Understand diversity of newcomers
- Community members holding cultural, linguistic, experiential understanding influence program implementation

HEAL TogetHER

Chicago, USA

- Collaboration between academic and community organization
- Sista Afya is small and already well established
- Trainees responded to training announcement
- Wish to have community support for Black women by Black women to improve mental health, social connection
- Pilot study
- Collaboration with other community organizations

HEAL TogetHER

Chicago, USA

Learnings

- Consultant brings a model and a training
- Theory of Change workshop with training participants*
- Mutual learning and working towards adaptation
- More than just skills-based training, building of community of practice, cohesion, movement

*A collective community rooted in and transformed by joy and healing with equitable resources and restorative practice

Key messages

1. Listen
2. Invite all to mutually learn
3. If you want to walk fast, go alone, if you want to walk far, walk with others.
4. Stay and keep listening…

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