

## **UCONN/CRA Workshop #1 Report**

### **Introduction**

The Department of Public Health Sciences and the Community Research Alliance (CRA), a network of collaborating service and health promotion organizations in central Connecticut, hosted the first of a series of workshops on May 18, 2020. The purpose of the series is to initiate an ongoing dialogue between faculty and community organization representatives about the potential for research collaborations. The potential end result will be joint ventures, and a group platform for discussing research experiences and results.

The organizations participating in the workshop all have some experience in research collaborations. The joint goal for the first workshop was to introduce participants to one another, including sharing past community research experiences and areas of interest, discuss advantages and challenges of community research partnerships from the community and faculty perspective, review and discuss partnership guidelines, and plan for upcoming workshops.

### **Outcomes**

The first workshop was 2.5 hours, conducted virtually due to current COVID-19 guidelines. There were 22 people in attendance, including 2 that were listening only; there were 12 faculty participants and 8 community participants. The workshop consisted of facilitators representative of UCONN and the CRA, the program is attached. Topical interests among participants were: Substance use, Maternal and Child Health, Food Security, COVID-19, Elderly, and Environmental (pollution). During the workshop, and by the number of interested participants, it was clear that both academic faculty and the community organizations represented were interested in conducting community research that was beneficial to both sides.

The workshop covered research partnership guidelines, developed by the CRA with input from faculty, which outlines specific factors that contribute to an equitable research partnership. In addition, the need for this conversation was supported by data collected by the CRA from community organizations that had negative experiences in past research partnerships. The identification of constraints from the community and the academic perspective, sparked an initial conversation that highlighted why partnerships sometimes do not work out even under the best of circumstances, and the importance of spending time and building trusting relationships prior to pursuing funding, to help mitigate some of these challenges.

The results of an evaluation survey completed by 15 attendees are attached.

According to the evaluation survey, participants felt that the workshop provided helpful introductions to potential faculty and community partners. Some takeaways were: 1) there is more work to be done. 2) the importance of developing trusting relationships to be able to respond to funding announcements. 3) CBPR is a great way to bring research in the community and influence change.

## **Next Steps**

The next workshop will be developed according to feedback provided on the evaluation survey. We learned that most participants found the introductory workshop helpful, but were primarily interested in finding and developing research partnerships as well as having more discussion time. Only two respondents expressed an interest in collaborative research design questions or developing a researchable topic. There was a consensus among members of the planning group that we will continue with the same group of participants to continue to build upon skills and to facilitate research partnerships among participants. The next workshop will be held in September 2020.

Attendees were:

### **University:**

Deborah Cornman  
Lisa Kenyon-Pesce  
Jane Ungemack  
Angela Bermudez-Millan  
Stacey Brown  
Shayna Cunningham  
Judy Lewis  
Greg Rhee  
Megan O'Grady  
Julie Robison (for a short time)

### **Community**

Grace Damio  
Kim Radda  
Mark Jenkins  
David Reyes  
Judy Tallman  
Robyn Harper-Gulley  
Martha Page

### **Facilitators**

Doug Brugge  
Chavon Hamilton  
Candida Flores  
Jean Schensul  
Stephen Schensul

