

Collaboration, data sharing, and integration within community-university partnerships: Evaluating family support programs.



Virginia A. Johnson, Jennifer Dashiell, James R. Cook, Ryan P. Kilmer & Laura Lovato.

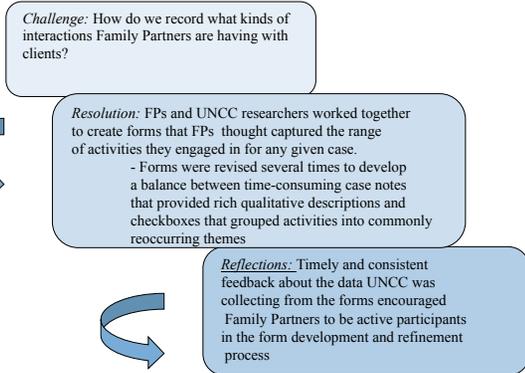
Overview

In community-based participatory research (CBPR), community members are viewed as equal partners at all stages of a research project. This poster discusses the advantages and challenges of using CBPR with two different Family Partner Programs in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Since August, 2010, the Community Psychology Research Lab at UNC Charlotte has, with funding from NIMH, examined the roles and the impact of the Family Partner Program (FPP) implemented by two agencies: Urban Restoration (Urban) and Thompson's Child and Family Focus (TCFF).

Evaluators at UNCC developed a database to track both the amount and type of work being conducted by Family Partners (FPs), so that the factors that relate most strongly to positive child and family outcomes could be identified.

Implement Structures that Facilitate & Support Research Activities



Lessons Learned

- **It was important to create a partnership based on openness to learning from one another**
Example: FPs were open to learning from evaluators how to collect and send data electronically. UNCC listened and responded to FP feedback to make the forms easier to complete.
- **Continual communication about the partnership made it a more effective and mutually rewarding partnership.**
Example: UNCC joined Urban's and TCFF's *already* scheduled monthly meetings. This provided UNCC with the opportunity to gain immediate access to the Family Partners and the data without disrupting their routines. Joining the Family Partners at their monthly meetings helped to foster a collaborative relationship as well as provided the Family Partners with direct resources for questions and/or information.
- **Sidebars and missteps were used as opportunities to build mutual respect and trust among partners**
Example: FPs were supposed send UNCC case closures so families could be contacted about their experience. After several months of not receiving case closures, FPs explained that they never officially close a case. Instead, they view their support to families as ongoing. Therefore, the partnership worked together to determine a more useful guideline for when family information should be sent to UNCC for family follow-ups.

Family Partners

Family Partners offer community support services to families before, during, and after their engagement with Child Protective Services.

Family Partners:

- Attend Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings
- Support families in court proceedings
- Connect families with community resources
- Provide emotional support
- Advocate for families across child serving systems

This family support model emphasizes:

- (1) family empowerment and strengths, not deficits
- (2) the provision of resources to all family members, building their capacity to address their needs

Develop Technical and Organizational Capacity

