

Learning Lab ID # LL13

Promotores (Community Health Workers) as Partners in Research: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Katrina Kubicek

ABSTRACT:

To address our national goal of “achieving health equity, eliminating disparities, and improving the health of all groups”, innovative approaches are needed to fully engage diverse communities in the conduct and dissemination of research. Engaging the community in this process can have a positive impact on this gap. Community members can serve as catalysts and “change agents” in efforts to develop, evaluate and implement interventions designed to improve human health across a wide range of human diseases and conditions. Many have found that Promotores – individuals who have close ties to the communities in which they serve – can be effective partners in research when evaluating health interventions. Through their close relationships in their communities, Promotores have built trusting relationships, something invaluable for public health research and promotion. Over the last several years, our team has seen an increase in interest from researchers wanting to integrate Promotores into their work. As a result, there are many questions, uncertainties and requests for consultations and work to determine what roles are most relevant for a Promotor or Community Health Worker. The goal of this learning lab is to help clarify some of these questions through a presentation and roundtable dialogues. We will discuss the Promotor model and the emerging trends of: 1) integrating Promotores into research teams; 2) examples of what works; 3) challenges when integrating Promotores in research; and 5) lessons learned. Our work in the last 5 years has allowed us to learn more about the capacity of Promotores as partners in research recruitment, data collection and consultants in the development of data collection tools and recruitment strategies. This experience has led our team to hire four Promotores as permanent staff members.

SCHEDULE OF SESSION

10:00 – 10:45 – PPT Presentation

10:45 – 11:15 – 4 Guided Round Table Discussions- these breakout groups will discuss some of the challenges that our team has encountered in the integration of Promotores in research. The group will discuss ways in which these challenges can be addressed or avoided in their academic/research settings. Examples of challenges include: 1) Identifying Promotores, 2) Training and 3) Support/Supervision.

11:15 – 11:30 – Report Back

STATEMENT OF RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGED WORK

Engaging the community in research requires the development of sustainable academic-community research partnerships that are culturally relevant and address topics of importance to the communities. One potential avenue for these critical partnerships may be the integration of Promotores into research projects.

Learning Objective: Participants will identify ways in which Promotores (lay community workers) can form part of the research team.