Building and Sustaining Meaningful Community-Campus Partnerships

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Objectives

community-higher education partnerships - tools for continuous improvement

• Solidify understanding of asset-based community development as a foundation for partnerships
• Solidify understanding of principles of partnership
• Use the above as tools to analyze challenging situations
• with the ultimate goal of improving and enhancing community-higher education partnerships
Overview of session

- Review Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) as a core foundation for partnerships
- Review CCPH Principles of Partnership
- Review and discuss challenges to authentic partnerships
- Wrap-up – lessons and final comments

Asset Based Community Development

A Modest Introduction
Why A B C D?

• Opportunities disparity (for marginalized populations and communities)
  – Inconsistent and shrinking funds/resources
  – Shrinking political will
  – Victim-blaming
  – Unsuccessful social policies
  – Communities and their residents are disempowered

Why A B C D?

• Consistent with “democratic” principles
  – Empowerment
  – Social justice
  – Citizenship
• Allows engagement with diverse communities
• Supported by practice
My first lesson in Mapping Assets

Traditional development vs ABCD

- Needs, deficiencies, problems
- Negative mental map
- Client mentality
- Resources go to social service agencies
- Undermines local leadership
- Dependency
- Separates community
- Outside in

- Capacities, assets, dreams, strengths
- Optimistic mental map
- Citizen participation
- Minimizes bureaucracy, resources to community
- Builds local leadership and confidence
- Empowerment
- Builds connections
- Inside out
## What’s wrong with the old way?

- Deficiencies – define the entire picture
- Problems become discrete units – not interlocking pieces
- People become clients – “them” vs “us”
- Resources ($$) goes to agencies, not to the community
- Programs target individual needs, not community needs
- Gives message that solutions come from outside
- Individuals don’t connect with each other
- Deepens the cycle of dependency

## What’s good about A B C D?

- Begins with what the community/individuals have
- Can begin/be sustained without funding, grants
- Builds leadership
- Builds internal connections – no “them” vs “us”
- Builds connections between community and the outside
- Issues and solutions defined holistically – as they are experienced
- Self-sufficiency/empowerment can be built
Outside in - solutions come from outside, self-definition – broken, dependent on agencies

Inside out - solutions from inside, community fabric is built, self-definition - resourceful

**Asset-based perspective - Determinants of health**

McNight & Kretzmann

- Individual behavior
- Social support
- Physical environment
- Economic status
- Health system

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Hear the difference

- “Our purpose is not to help people. Our purpose is to build a different kind of neighborhood for us all.”
- “Everything we do is intentional. It all serves to build reciprocal, supportive relationships.”
- “We are committed to building a stronger, more diverse community, a community that extends hospitality and welcomes the contribution of everyone. A strong community is where everyone contributes: young, old, disabled or otherwise. Participation creates a happier, healthier, more productive community.”
- “Building relationships is what it’s all about. The networking, the one-on-one relationships – that’s what builds inclusive neighborhoods for everybody.”

From Rans, SA, Green, M Hidden Treasures: Building Community Connections by Engaging the gifts. 2005 ABCD Institute

Principles of A B C D

- Asset-based
- Full participation/full contribution
  - Everyone is important
  - Mobilize all gifts, all creativity
- Relationship-driven
  - Builds capacity, creative solutions
- Internally focused - local solutions
  - More successful
  - More efficient use of resources
- Creates citizen space
Categories of Assets

- **Individuals**
  - Skills, talents, capacities
  - Dreams, visions
- **Associations**
  - Families,
- **Institutions**
  - Businesses, schools, libraries, police, fire, non-profits
- **Physical environment**
  - Greenspaces, transportation
- **Local economy**

ABCD - building blocks

- **Primary** associations, organizations, local businesses
  - Located in the community
  - Controlled by the community
- **Secondary** public institutions, social service agencies, parks
  - Located in the community - *but*
  - Controlled from outside
- **Potential** public capital, philanthropic organizations
  - Located outside the community
  - Controlled from outside
A B C D Processes

- Map of community’s assets
- Individuals mobilize, contribute gifts, talents
- Internal connections
  - Develop a vision, “common good”
  - Define and solve problems
  - Multiple pathways for leadership
- External connections
  - Reinforce internal strengths
  - Appropriate to community’s vision

A B C D and Service Learning

- Core principles of social justice and equity
- Respect for the community and its individuals
- Paradigm shift – missionary mentality
- Paradigm shift – community-driven vs research-driven, funder-driven
- Conceptual framework/tools to understand communities
Teaching A B C D

- Teach the core principles of ABCD
- Mapping exercise
  - Community of origin
  - Current community
  - Project community
- Simulations
- Key informant interviews
- Through the eyes of...
- Community walks

What do students learn from asset-based approach?

- Appreciate strengths of individuals, how they keep themselves healthy
- Understand community resources and how they provide for citizens’ well-being
- Understand how community residents perceive their health and define their concerns
Institutionalization of service-learning will depend on the “transformation of a set of elitist, self-referential academic assumptions”

Zlotkowski, E. 1995

**Principles of Partnership**

(handout from Dick)
Challenges to Community-Higher Education Partnerships

• Game-plan
  - Divide into groups of 3-4
  - Discuss each example of “what’s not working”
  - Use Principles of ABCD and Principles of Partnership as guides (where useful) to understand challenges and potential solutions

Challenges to Community-Higher Education Partnerships

• Wrap-up
  - What are the lessons learned
  - Are the Principles of Partnership and ABCD useful in understanding problems and finding solutions?
  - Are there additional general lessons and principles that should be added?
  - Any “take-home” points to highlight? (Ah-hah’s)