COE Skills for the Newly Engaged

The Way We Think

We all have natural preferences in how we think. Our preferences may differ in times of stress versus rest. We may also adapt to our circumstances and our roles in life. It is important to understand differences in the ways of thinking and agendas between academics and community partners.

The way we think is linked to how we:

- Lead
- Communicate
- Approach problems

COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH CONTINUUM

Traditional vs. Community Engaged Research

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Expectations

Set Clear Expectations

Set clear expectations for a mutually beneficial partnership through structured processes such as partnership agreements and frequent scheduled check-ins.

“THE FEELINGS ARE MUTUAL”

**Mutual Respect:** Mutual respect is essential for research partnerships with community and sometimes needs to be carefully nurtured through conversations and actions to address conflicts and disappointments that might characterize previous or current relationships.

**Mutual Accountability:** Mutual accountability can enhance community engagement when all participants are willing to be accountable for achieving results through their common efforts. Everyone can take responsibility for some part of what needs to be accomplished to achieve a common goal.

**Mutual Learning:** Mutual learning reminds us that everyone has something to teach and something to learn regardless of level of education or experience.

Create a Partnership Agreement

A partnership agreement can help set expectations up front. The agreement should be created together with all parties.

Components of an agreement:

- Purpose
- Reach
- Commitment
- Timeline
- Sustainability
- Communication
- Funding
- Date Sharing
- Dissemination

**STEPS TO CREATE A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

1. Discuss each component at a group meeting.
2. Create a draft agreement.
3. Get feedback and collect comments or questions.
4. Repeat the draft/feedback loop until a consensus is reached.
5. Share the final document with all parties. Revisit frequently and revise when needed.
Mutual Respect

Show Mutual Respect

Show mutual respect using skills in effective questioning, active listening, and affirmation. Mutual Respect take time to grow – it is not automatically given.

Tips to Grow Mutual Respect:

☑️ Be patient, flexible and introspective
☑️ Be willing to learn from your partners
☑️ “Try on” a different perspective and lean into discomfort
☑️ Be willing to be uncomfortable, vulnerable, and uncertain
☑️ Always remember the end objectives/intention of your work
☑️ Listen and participate alongside your partners!
☑️ Openly process new ideas and concepts.
☑️ Show your partners how their ideas are incorporated/leveraged
☑️ Maintain confidentiality.

Researchers are NOT the experts in the community – we are guests

Effective Questioning & Active Listening

Effective Active Listening Skills

Here are some tips to improve your listening skills.

**Face:** Squarely face the person and make eye contact. This shows you are listening and helps you read nonverbal cues.

**Open:** Open your posture. Keep your arms at your sides or in your lap. Avoid crossing your arms or turning your body away.

**Relax:** Relax while listening. Avoid fidgeting or moving around so others don’t feel tense or distracted.

**Use:** Use encouraging language. Convey you’re listening with words such as “mm-hmm,” “yes,” “uh-huh,” “I see,” or “oh.”

**Ask:** Ask questions. Thoughtful questions show that you’re listening and invite people to talk more.

**Reflect Back:** Reflect back what people say. Reflecting (paraphrasing and repeating) what people say lets them know that their voices are heard. “What I hear you saying is, ...”

Effective Questioning Skills

Use the APPLE technique to ask questions that facilitate discussion.

**A:** Ask the question

**P:** Pause to allow participants to think of an answer

**P:** Pick a volunteer to answer

**L:** Listen to the answer provided

**E:** Elaborate on the answers given