Focus Group Guide for Partnership Evaluation and Self-Reflection (May 2017)
"Engage for Equity: Advancing Community Engaged Partnerships"

This focus group guide is a tool for evaluation and self-reflection by CBPR and community engaged research partnerships to strengthen their understanding of their own partnering practices, including facilitators and challenges, and the outcomes they've achieved or desire to achieve. This guide could be conducted by one of the partners or by an outside facilitator. These questions (or a subset) can be used on an annual basis to assess where the partnership is now and where you'd like the partnership to be in the future. Questions can be adapted to focus on a current research project. The goal is to provide an opportunity for partnership members to collectively interpret their collaboration and the issues that the group would like to address that would help strengthen their work together. For further information on the **Engage for Equity** at the University of New Mexico with national partners**,** see: http://cpr.unm.edu/research-projects/cbpr-project/index.html

☐ **Introduction**

First, we want to thank all of you for taking the time to participate in this focus group discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to learn about the partnership between _____ (academic or research institution partner) and _____(community/ies partners), to learn about what kinds of things are important for you be able to work together well. These questions are asking about your perspectives from your different points of view about what is working well in this partnership, what are the challenges, and what changes you'd like to see. We'd like you to think back to your experiences working in this partnership. Some of the questions ask about your current research project, but most focus on the partnership. You've all been asked to participate in this group based on your involvement in the partnership and we expect that this discussion will last about 90 minutes.

☐ **I. Current Activities**

We'd like to start off by asking you to share with us where your partnership is at now in terms of the work you're doing.

1. What kinds of initiatives are you involved in now?

2. Thinking back, what were the initial goals of this research partnership?

3. Have the goals of the partnership changed over time? If so, how?

☐ **II. CBPR General Partnering**

Researchers use the term CBPR to describe this kind of Academic-Community partnership where ideally everyone has an equal level of involvement in the work. Can anyone share some thoughts about how this approach is working in your project?

4. What kinds of things are working well in your partnership?

5. What are some of the challenges you've faced? (examples?)

☐ **III. Partnership/Group Dynamics (Power, Trust)**

Paying attention to specific partnership processes, such as power and trust, is always important. While one goal in a CBPR or this kind of research partnership is to make sure everyone can contribute equally, the reality is that this is often difficult.

6. Can anyone share their thoughts about how this is working here?

    a. (If conflicts or conflict resolution has not yet been addressed, you can probe: for example, there may be times when there is conflict or not everybody agrees. If this has happened, can you discuss how your partnership addresses conflict).

7. Often in these types of partnerships, partners come from different backgrounds, especially partners from the university may not share similar cultural, racial/ethic backgrounds as the community partners. How do you think these differences have impacted your partnership?

8. In a larger sense of addressing power and privilege, can you provide examples of ways your partnership has addressed these issues well?

9. Thinking over all the work you've done, can you share how the experience and knowledge from the communities has influenced your partnering processes?

10. Turning to trust:

    a. Can you discuss how you perceived the level of trust at the beginning of the partnership?

    b. How do you see trust now? If it has changed, how would you characterize it now and what do you think helped make this change happen?

☐ **IV. Skills and Resources:**

11. What benefits or skills have each of you gained as a result of participating?

12. What benefits or skills do you think your organizations, whether from community agencies or the research University, have gained as a result of participating?

We would like to end this focus group with talking about your partnership and project outcomes.

☐ **V. Outcomes:**

13. Thinking about partnership outcomes, what would you say have been the most important outcomes or achievements for the partnership?

14. We know sustainability may always be a challenge, where do you think things stand in terms of sustainability for the partnership? What would make the partnership more sustainable?

15. Thinking about your current research initiative or project, what outcomes or benefits have you seen or do you expect to see?

16. Do you think the community is aware of the benefits or intended benefits of the project? How?

17. Do you think this project has contributed to any practice or policy changes at the community level? If so, how?   What strategies were used to promote this change?

☐ **VI. Summary**

18. Lastly, where do you see the partnership going from here? Are there areas that could be strengthened in your work together?   Is there anything else you'd like to add?

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for sharing your thoughts and experiences with us here today. Your time and devotion is truly appreciated. Many Thanks!!

For more information, contact Dr. Nina Wallerstein, nwallerstein@salud.unm.edu; adapted from Research for Improved Health (RIH) study, Focus Group Guide, 2011:
http://cpr.unm.edu/research-projects/cbpr-project/research-for-improved-health.html