



“Our Journey Together”

An Overview of Partnership Development Between the UNM NMCARESHD Community Engagement Core and Shiprock (Diné Nation) Community

2011

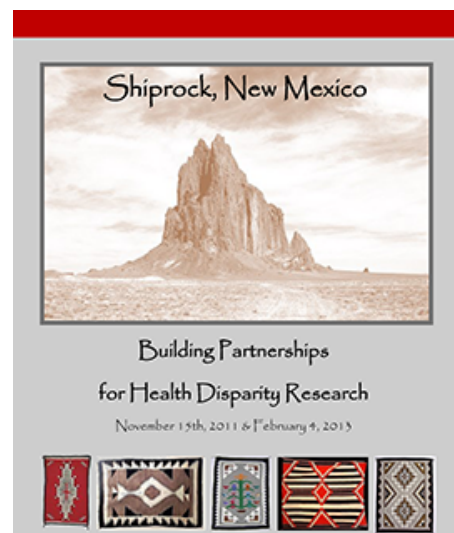
The first year focused on building a good working relationship with the community partners and multiple meetings with the Restoring and Celebrating Family Wellness Committee (RCFW) took place during their monthly meetings. The goals of the NMCARESHD as well as the Community Engagement Core (CEC) Aims were shared and discussed with the community.

- Two primary CEC community engagement liaisons, Lucinda Cowboy and Clarence Hogue, attended several RCFW committee meetings to provide introduction and orientation of the NMCARESHD goals and aims. During these meetings the concept of the *Intercultural Healthy Disparity (IHD) Scholars* was also introduced and the invitation was made for anyone interested to apply. The committee members also helped with the recruitment of the IHD Scholars for the first community dialogue/training that was planned for November 2011.
- NMCARES Health Disparities Center Community Engagement Core provided a one day dialogue/training on “*Building Partnerships for Health Disparity Research*” on November 11, 2015 and was held at the Shiprock Indian Health Services – Northern Navajo Medical Center.

2012-13

The work continued on developing the partnership and identifying the Intercultural Health Disparity (IHD) Scholars and the key community partners that UNM could work with in the coming years on established goals. The community engagement liaisons continued attending the meetings of the RCFW.

- The first Shiprock report that was developed was a joint report on two very important meetings that took place on November 15, 2011 and February 4, 2013. The November 2011 meeting was the initial dialogue and the February 2013 meeting focused specifically on identifying the key areas the UNM-community partnership can work together to further develop action plans and next steps.



- On February 4, 2013, the CEC and the RCFW coalition members discussed and identified community needs centered on training/education and research capacity building. Ideas on specific training/education and technical assistance that could support the needs were also discussed.
 - A. Community Training/Education needs:
 1. Community-Based Participatory Research
 2. Historical Trauma –to include Dr. Larry Emerson
 3. Building Infrastructure for Grant Development and Management (include Grant Writing as needed)
 4. Health Disparity Research
 5. Qualitative Data Analysis (to align with Native American tradition of storytelling)
 6. Basic computer skills
 - B. Community Technical Assistance needs:
 1. Evaluation - Data has been collected for the past six years from the monthly workshops and conferences provided by the RCFW coalition. The coalition members expressed their interest in having NM CARES Health Disparity Center work with them on understanding the benefits of doing evaluation and the different ways to evaluate activities and programs.
 2. Data Usage - Coalition members expressed basic technical assistance needs on using excel for data collection and tracking. Also, ways of understanding and using research data.

- The community IHD Scholars attended and presented at the the Annual NMPHA/NMCARES Joint Health Disparity Conferences 2012 & 2013 held in Albuquerque, NM. The 2012 presentation focused on engaging diverse community in health disparities research and the benefits of research to communities, this was a panel of community partners both from Shiprock and also the Border region. The 2013 presentation was sharing about the work of the RCFW coalition and sharing some of their best practices.

- Of the technical assistance needs identified above from the Shiprock partners, the one that came up time and time again was **evaluation**, specifically evaluating the impact of the RCFW’s work in the community. At the annual NMPHA/NMCARES Joint Health Disparity Conference in April 2013 the Shiprock partners met with NMCARESHD CEC and Research Core to discuss ways this need could be supported.

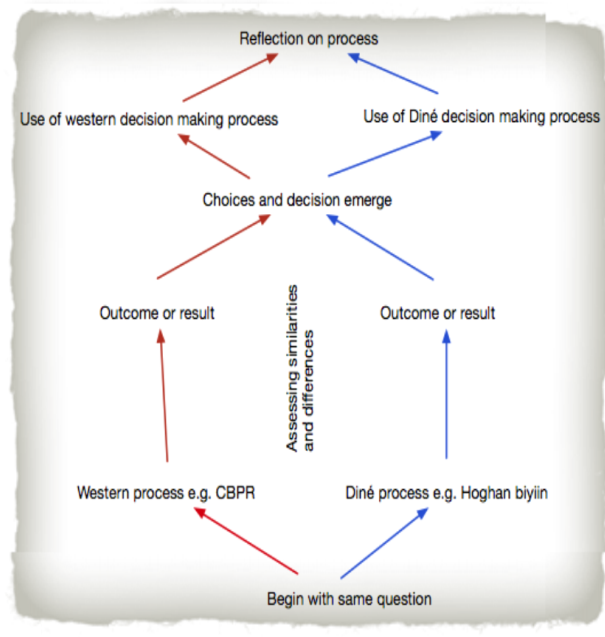
- In May 2013, the CEC community engagement specialists had the first conversation with Dr. Larry Emerson, a well-respected community cultural consultant to talk about supporting the Shiprock community in providing training on Historical Trauma from a Navajo perspective. This was a critical discussion as it laid the foundation of what was to transpire in the next year and a half. Some of the key points laid out by Dr. Emerson were:
 - A. Invite Diné researchers who have articulated Indigenous-centered research philosophy and/or methodology. It would be nice to hear their stories. These could be researchers like

Dr. Herbert Benally, Shiprock Diné College, who completed his research regarding concepts of Diné wellness and balance. While conducting his research with Diné medicine people, he articulated what these people understood to be "research methodology" in his dissertation. Dr. Charlotte Davidson, Director at South Dakota State University - American Indian Education & Cultural Center and Adjunct Faculty, College of Education & Human Sciences (Teaching, Learning, & Leadership Department) at SD State, who articulated a sense of Beauty Way methodology in her dissertation. Dr. Gilbert Brown's dissertation entitled: WHOLENESS AS A WELL-DIRECTED PERSON: NAVAJO NARRATIVES THAT REVISIT THE WORK OF KENNETH BEGISHE. Dr. Teena Descheenie, lives in Farmington, grew up in Bisti area, just completed her dissertation on Diné leadership that is commonly referred to as "activist".

- B. Can a gathering bring together the stories and journeys of Diné researchers to describe their challenges, successes, barriers and celebrations regarding the practice of Diné and/or Indigenous-centered research? Can NM CARES Health Disparities Center document these stories to describe themes inherent and intrinsic in their stories that would, in turn, be of value to the documentation of emerging Diné research philosophy and methodology?
- C. If a gathering took place in Shiprock, what would happen if a context - communicated via inspirational, decolonizing and creative story and journey way of knowing - regarding emerging Diné and/or Indigenous research philosophy and methodology was described? Participants would break into work groups facilitated by experienced researchers and/or activists: for example: 1) research philosophy, 2) conducting literature reviews, 3) describing data collection methods, 4) describing data interpretation approaches, 5) describing data outcomes, 6) describing conclusions and significance, 7) describing dissemination issues. The group can convene into one large session to describe overall process and its significance to Native communities. One goal would be to facilitate a gathering in which local folks generate their own descriptions of what research might mean to them. If experienced researchers were facilitating, then the whole group could shape meaning - though preliminary - to the concept of Diné and/or Indigenous-centered research. The process should be inspirational, uplifting and promising. It should help engage our self-doubt, our sense of what knowledge is, our sense of "ways of knowing, being, and becoming". For example, it should address basic questions like 1) As Diné or Indigenous people, how do we know what to know? 2) Who am I? 3) Am I my tribe's vision of itself? 4) Why do I need to know what to know? Follow up by NM CARES Health Disparities Center can ensue.
- D. Can a group of local people pilot a small Diné-centered demonstration research project to gain experience in research and to follow up on that research, following guidelines and principles they evolve as well as those evolved from other Indigenous researchers?
- E. In Diné-centered research the goal is typically harmony and balance, wholeness (mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, intuitive), kinship and community based etc. This tends to apply to areas like health, education, economics, linguistics, language revitalization, political awareness and so on.
- F. Some books of interest to consider: Linda T Smith's Decolonizing Methodology in Research; Greg Cajete's Look to the Mountain, Shawn Wilson's Research is Ceremony, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Knowledge and the Sacred, the Wherata Declaration document of Maori researchers

regarding health and wellness, AIHECs work on Indigenous evaluation, Dr. Ted Jojola's work on Indigenous planning, etc. There is a bunch of literature now emerging on the topic of Indigenous-centered research.

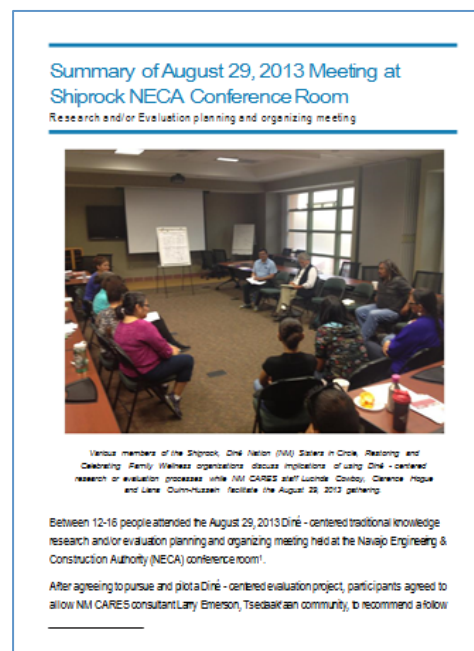
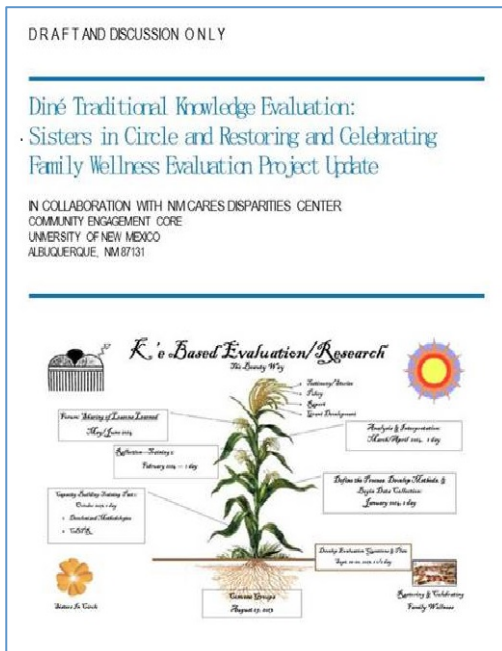
- Dr. Larry Emerson, community cultural consultant began his consultancy work with UNM-CEC during June-August 2013. The CEC, Dr. Emerson and a few members of the RCFW had several meetings to discuss and explore together how applying decolonized methodologies & Indigenous knowledge could yield different outcomes for evaluating community concerns. The figure below describes two paths that can be compared, one that focuses more on a westernized thought process and the other that relies more on Indigenous knowledge.



The focus of Dr. Emerson's consultant work included:

1. Provided technical assistance, training and facilitation to the NM CARES Health Disparity Center CEC and community partners in the Shiprock area and surrounding communities.
2. Collaborated with the CEC to assist the Navajo (Diné) communities to convene a team of "Intercultural Health Disparity Scholars" and engage them in a process of translating their top health concerns and holistic wellness goals into culturally/linguistically harmonized potential evaluation project(s). The "scholars" team comprised of students, community health promotion and public health workers, cultural health leaders, academically trained Diné researchers and other allied partners from the Diné College and UNM Health Sciences Center.
3. Developed a training plan and provided technical assistance on the topic of "decolonized health research methodologies" that is used worldwide for fostering dialogue and trust in which the goal is creating actionable and culturally-relevant knowledge to address social problems.

4. Assisted the community IHD Scholars to explore plans for new or expanded intervention research or evaluation in their communities.
 5. Co-developed with the CEC and community partners the content and processes for a one day dialogue to introduce and discuss a training idea on the topic of “Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonized Methodologies” to the two community groups identified, RCFW and the Sisters In Circle (SIC) and other interested parties. The training would be geared towards learning more about how to apply a Diné centered approach/ methodology to conducting research/evaluation and one that would foster a health and wellness indigenous research network among the intercultural health disparity scholars doing work in the Navajo communities.
 6. Co-facilitated with the CEC the one-day dialogue held on August 29, 2013 in Shiprock, NM and completed a written summary and evaluation of the proceedings to be used as a discussion document, to support moving the project forward.
- In June 2013, the CEC provided a workshop titled “Health Disparities 101” at the Shiprock Summer Youth Conference to an audience of youth and adults. The objectives of the workshop were to:
 1. Understand what the difference is between healthy disparity and health equity
 2. Identify a health concern in your community that you feel is a health disparity
 3. Understand what community resources are available to achieve health equity
 4. Understand what career paths are available in the health disparity research field
 - The K’e based approach/model was introduced during a community group gathering, co-facilitated by NMCARESHD CEC and Dr. Emerson held on August 29, 2013 at the NECA conference room in Shiprock, NM
 - Dr. Emerson developed a report of the August 29th gathering shown below.



It was recommended at the August 29th gathering that Dr. Herbert Benally would be the trainer at the next gathering which would focus on the Indigenous research dissertation done by Dr. Benally and to share his knowledge and experiences with the two community groups, RCFW and Sisters in Circle.

- In October 2013, Dr. Herbert Benally began consultant work as a trainer with the CEC to develop a one-day training on “Diné Research Methodology” and to share his own research experience on using Dine Centered decolonized methodologies & Indigenous knowledge.

The focus of Dr. Benally’s consultant work included:

1. Developed and provide a training on “decolonized methodologies and K’é centered evaluation/research” to the NM CARES Health Disparity Center CEC and community partners (IHD Scholars) in the Shiprock area and surrounding communities.
 2. Assisted the CEC in engaging two Intercultural Scholars Teams (Sisters in Circle and Restoring & Celebrating Family Wellness Committee) to engage and convene on Navajo (Diné) process of evaluation/research by using the Philosophy of Navajo (Diné) Balance.
 3. Provided follow up technical support and coaching to Sisters in Circle and Restoring and Celebrating Family Wellness Committee members to develop their evaluation/research questions.
- On October 25, 2013, a one-day training was held in Shiprock, NM with the two community groups - RCFW and SIC as well as the CEC to learn about Dr. Benally’s experiences with doing Indigenous/Diné research and his dissertation work. At the end of that training day, the possible next step of doing a Spring 2014 Seminar was discussed and the role of Dr. Benally would be to have him continue teaching about his research model in greater depth with the community scholars. The group agreed they would benefit from getting a more in-depth training to better understand the application of Diné research knowledge.

2014

This year focused on the planning and implementation of piloting a Diné Indigenous Research Seminar/Training and trying to understand the implications of taking this approach to doing evaluation/research. A core group of community partners made the commitment to take part in a series of seminar classes over the course of several months.

- The Diné Indigenous Research Seminar/Training began on March 1, 2014 and six sessions were completed on May 10, 2014.

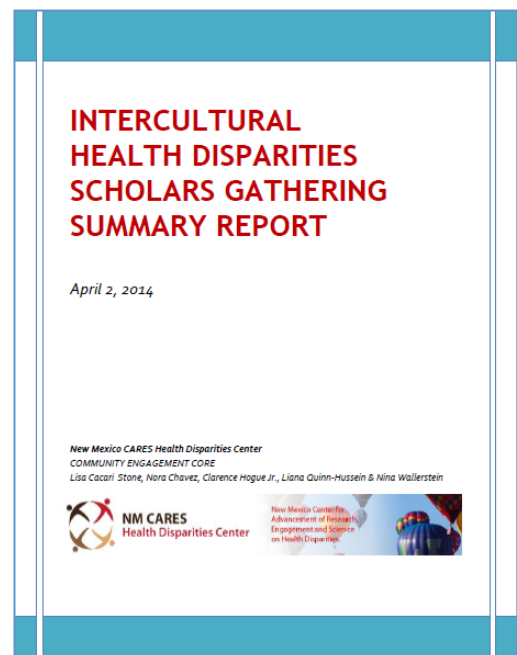
The focus of Dr. Benally’s consultant work as the seminar trainer included:

1. Developed and provided a Spring training institute on traditional Navajo/Diné Research Methodology and Analytic Method to members of the NM CARES Health Disparities Center Community Engagement Core and the community partners (IHD Scholars) in the Shiprock, NM area that comprise of members of two community groups --- *Sisters in Circle* and *Restoring and the Celebrating Family Wellness Committee*. The institute will

be comprised of six--- one day trainings over a course of about 3 months. The IHD scholars team are comprised of community health promotion and public health workers, cultural and traditional health leaders, academically trained Diné researchers, students and other allied partners from the Diné College and UNM.

2. Taught and mentored the Navajo/Diné community scholars described above to examine and reify ancient and historical research practices, and engage the scholars in intensive and critical discussions that will enable them to use Indigenous---centered research in their research careers and professional fields.
 3. Taught concepts deeply connected to Navajo/ Diné research methodology such as epistemology, duality principles, metaphysics, ethics, and economic, social, political, and environment systems. Furthermore, the course will examine the origin, organization, and movement of knowledge and how that framework of dynamic knowledge impels all to remain and proceed in harmony.
- A MOA agreement was created to establish the terms and conditions for the use of, sharing, and protecting the intellectual property of Dr. Herbert Benally's model and that its use in the seminar be copyrighted and the dissemination be limited to the purposes of furthering the work of the NMCARESHD CEC and their community partners only. This included materials and/or handouts given to the scholars group that participated in the seminar. The MOA was signed by the CEC co-Directors and the Dr. Benally in April 2014.
 - The community IHD Scholars attended and presented at the annual NMPHA/NMCARES Joint Health Disparity Conference 2014 held in Albuquerque, NM. The community partners and CEC co-presented on the *Diné Indigenous Research Pilot Seminar/Training* to share about its benefits and implications and expectations.
 - On April 2, 2014, the community IHD Scholars attended the statewide gathering of IHD scholars for cross cultural sharing of their work with other communities that have been working with NMCARESHD CEC. The event was held in Albuquerque, NM. A summary report of this gathering was completed shown here.
 - Two additional seminar classes were held during September to October 2014 to finish the work that was not quite completed in May 2014.
 - The following Diné Research Methodology Seminar Overview was provided by the trainer Herbert Benally, PhD.

A. Seminar I: March 1, 2014



1. Facilitate: The Dine researchers discussions of intellectual property right and Navajo cultural protocol as it relate to Navajo traditional cultural knowledge,
 2. Drs. Larry Emerson and Benally spoke on the nature of colonization and the need for decolonizing methodologies. Some concerns with western research methodology were the adequacy for researching indigenous people outside their worldview, hence research on indigenous problem were often fragmented and report shelved. This research problem opened the discourse on Navajo research methodology a research module that considers the people spirituality and their holistic worldview.
 3. Overview of Navajo epistemology origin, scope, organization and how it is lived.
- B. Seminar II: March 15, 2014
1. Presentation: Dr. Benally explained that Navajo epistemology is rooted in Navajo cosmology. In the beginning when the parts of the day were identified and placed mother earth placed four principles (knowledge) with the parts of the day e.g. bike'ehgo da'iinaanii (knowledge that guides life) with Dawn, and nihigaal (sustenance) with day, aha'ana'o'niil (the gathering of families) with evening twilight, and hodilzin (rest, contentment and reverence for creation) with the night. These four areas of knowledge were placed to regulate and guide man's thoughts and behavior. Navajos live these principle in their daily life, for instance prayer were offer at dawn, and sheep let out to the pasture, and when the evening came all returned to their home and family and retire when the night fell to rest and showed reverence for all creation.
 2. Dr. Benally explained the composition and nature of these four thematic areas of knowledge and following his presentation the group discussed the epistemology and the thematic areas of knowledge.
- C. Seminar III: March 29, 2014
1. Dr. Benally explained when the four branches of knowledge associate with the diurnal process work in concert creates a balance life Which he refer to a "balancing construct", when an individual applied these four areas of knowledge they would find balance a good life.
 2. Dine researchers with the guidance of the trainer examined the nature of balance and imbalance by illustrating that when a person applies spirituality, sustenance, family/community and home/environment they would achieve balance but if they neglect anyone of these areas they would experience imbalance.
 3. The researchers studied and analyzed how these areas of knowledge also created an inner balance such as mental, physically health, emotional wellness and maintaining a healthy home and environment.
 4. The researchers as a group decided to identify the core values for family wellness using this balancing construct.
- D. Seminar IV: April 12, 2014
1. The group continue the discussion of the nature of balance and continue identifying core values for family wellness: a) Family and Spirituality (knowledge that guides life), b) Family and Work (sustenance), c) Family and family/community interpersonal relationship, Family and Home /environment.
 2. Dr. Benally explain how these areas of knowledge are inter-dependent and inter-related that when one of these area is weak or absent the whole is weaken resulting in imbalance. Balance is achieve when an individual lives these areas of knowledge such as

spiritual in-tune, having a good job, and possessing good social relationship skills and maintain reverence for home and environment.

3. The trainee continues research, discusses and recorded core values for family wellness.

E. Seminar V: April 26, 2014

1. The trainer explained that these four constellations of core values are inter-related and inter-dependent each area contributes to family wellness.
2. The group also explored how these core values relates to individual's internal balance such as; a) spiritual/mental, b) physical, c) mind/heart, and, d) home-place.
3. The Dine researchers studied how to use these core values as standard for evaluation, assessment and development.
4. Dr. Benally explain that by combing these four areas of knowledge (balancing construct) with Nabik'itsahkees (analytic process) enable the researchers to produce research that is holistic and appropriate to Navajo community.
5. The group continued identifying core values for Family wellness.

F. Seminar VI: May 10, 2014

1. In the concluding seminar the participants review the origin of Navajo epistemology the organization of knowledge that are inherent in the diurnal process as bike'hgo da'iinaanii (spirituality, ethic and morality), nihigaal (sustenance, livelihood), aha'ana'o'niil (family and k'e - inter-personal relationship) and hodilzin (reverence and stewardship for home/environment) and how these areas of knowledge guide human thoughts and behaviors. When an individual finds wellness it means the individual is confident in his spirituality, vocation, family relation and home/environment. The participants have studied each area of knowledge and are developing core values for family wellness.
2. Dr. Benally explain that Navajo sees spirituality, sustenance, interpersonal relationship and home/environment in the arts, farming, hunting, and other human endeavors. He explains research for economic development should consider these four areas of knowledge to determine if its worth pursuing. In this research one should determine if its ethical or moral or will the nature of work hurt the community or family or the environment, if it does then the project should be scrap.
3. The group continued their work on core values for family wellness.

G. Seminar VII: September 13, 2014

1. Reviewed: How Navajo epistemology with the four areas of knowledge assure an individual a balance life and if ones applies these areas of knowledge to program development one can expect to have a program that is holistic. If one is using this balancing construct to assess and evaluate program one will determine what areas of the program need improvement.
2. The trainee also reviewed the process when an individual internalizes the intrinsic values inherent in the four parts of the day he will realized and enjoy a balance life. The four areas of knowledge are also directly connect to one's mental, physical health, emotion wellness and comfort and secure in one's home-place.
3. The participants continue the long process of identifying the core values for family wellness and reviewed how these core values can serve as benchmark for a holistic family wellness program.

4. The group reviewed these four areas of knowledge as a “balancing construct’ that can be used as analytic tool and framework for assessment, evaluation and research in any discipline.
- H. Seminar VIII: Oct 30, 2014
1. Facilitation of continued discussion from Seminar VII training and more on Navajo epistemology (four branches of knowledge) and the analytical process (nabik’itsahakees) to produce a holistic research methodology.
 2. The group continue to identifying, refining and finalize the Family wellness core values.

For “A *Reflections and Lessons Learned* “of the seminar process, contact consultant Dr. Larry Emerson at emerson714@gmail.com.