

DEVELOPING ADVISORY BOARDS WITHIN COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH AMONG REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

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Background: Refugees as a group have experienced a disproportionate amount of trauma, experience on-going resettlement and acculturative stressors, and have been shown to be at a heightened risk for psychological distress. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) and intervention strategies demonstrate great promise to address health disparities, especially among vulnerable communities, in part because of co-learning relationships between academics and communities that ensure initiatives are relevant and meaningful. Community advisory boards, with adults and/or youth, are one such mechanism through which communities and academics engage; such advisory boards, however, are understudied in the CBPR literature.

Objectives: This paper aims to extend current knowledge by examining best practices for use of community and youth advisory boards to achieve mental health equity among refugee communities.

Proposition: Using case examples from the longstanding partnership between Boston Children's Hospital and the Somali community in Boston, we describe two community advisory boards – one adult and one youth – and suggest best practices and principles for meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Potential Outcomes: In order to improve outcomes in refugee communities, public health and mental health research and intervention should aim to engage refugees as active partners on advisory boards. Employing trauma-informed care principles through cultural humility, respect for community norms and preferences, and acknowledgement of acculturative and linguistic differences comprise best practices in establishing and maintaining meaningful community advisory boards.

Implications: Inclusion of trauma-informed community adult and youth advisory boards in refugee mental health research and intervention ensures that the work is relevant and meaningful to those who are intended to benefit from these efforts.

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Learning Objectives: Based on the categories checked above, write two learning objectives. Each learning objective should contain one behavioral verb related to selected category:

- 1) Participants will be able to define community-based participatory research (CBPR) and explain how community advisory boards can embody CBPR principles
- 2) Participants will be able to describe at least three principles for best practices in establishing and maintaining meaningful community advisory boards

References:

Newman SD, Andrews JO, Magwood GS, Jenkins C, Cox MJ, Williamson DC. Community advisory boards in community-based participatory research: a synthesis of best processes. *Preventing Chronic Disease* 2011; 8(3): A70.

Miller AB, Issa OM, Hahn E, Agalab NY, Abdi SM. Developing advisory boards within community-based participatory approaches to improve mental health among refugee communities. Under review.