Implementing a Community / Patient Scientist Academy to Engage Underrepresented Populations in Research
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Learning Objectives

By the end of the lab, participants will be able to:

1) List the two main objectives of the community / patient scientist academy
2) Articulate at least three key concepts covered in the academy
3) Describe at least two interactive exercises used to engage participants in the academy

Abstract

Community members and patients often feel intimidated by research and may have difficulty seeing the importance of their role as research participants and/or advisors and partners in the research process. When community engagement (CE) leaders of the Translational Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences asked their Community Advisory Board (CAB) how to address this challenge, they recommended we implement a community / patient scientist academy (CPSA). Through this learning lab, members of our CE academic/community team will show participants how to implement a CPSA based on the model they developed with TRI CAB and CE staff members.

The CPSA is designed to engage community members and patients who are underrepresented in research, have no research background, and who may lack trust and interest in participating in research. Objectives of this 10-hour, 5-week introductory course about research are to: 1) increase community members' and patients' understanding about the research process, and 2) to increase access to opportunities for them to influence and participate in research. Content of sessions includes basic information about: 1) research definitions, the research process, different types of research, research partnerships, how research questions are formed; 2) study design; 3) the grant review process; 4) study implementation and dissemination; 5) ways to be involved in the research process and in the TRI; with a 6th session for the graduation ceremony. In session five, participants are given the opportunity to indicate their interest in being involved in TRI or other research activities (e.g. community review boards, patient and family advisory councils, reviewing grants, etc.). Sessions include a brief presentation of key concepts followed by one or two guest researchers invited to discuss their research, focusing on the key concept for the session (e.g. study design, implementation, etc). Researchers share informally in small groups of participants, explaining their research and answering questions. Key concepts from the previous week are reviewed each week using interactive exercises. A pre and post knowledge and feedback survey is administered each week to evaluate learning and identify ways to improve the course. CPSA graduates are now participating in TRI's research-related activities.

Learning lab presenters will give a mini-session demonstration and engage participants through illustrative interactive exercises. Session leaders will walk through the CPSA toolkit and guide participants in a problem solving exercise addressing barriers and challenges they might face in implementing the CPSA.

Session Schedule

Time	Content and Exercises
15 Mins.	**Introductions** – This includes a structured speed networking exercise with prompts and timed responses. (Introduce yourself and tell what you hope to get out of this session)
20 Mins.	**Team Presentation** - Overview of CPSA content. Review of Materials in Toolkit and what local sites need to implement the academy.
20 Mins.	**Shift and Share Exercise** – Presenters will share their experience developing and implementing the CPSA with participants in small groups to illustrate the exercise used in the CPSA. Discussions will focus on illustrating community and academic perspectives, challenges to implementation, and most successful approaches.
15 Mins.	**TRIZ Exercise –** Team presenters will guide participants in small group problem solving exercise on how to address barriers and challenges they might face in implementing the CPSA.
15 Mins.	**Debrief TRIZ and General Q and A**
5 Mins.	**Closing Remarks and Session Evaluation**

Relevance to Community Engaged Research

This learning lab teaches participants how to implement a basic, introductory research academy for community members and patients. Learning how to use this resource is highly relevant to community engaged research because of its potential for bridging the gap between researchers and those they seek to engage. Through personal contact with researchers and by creating a safe space for exposure to concepts presented in lay language using interactive exercises, this tool can demystify a process that is often highly intimidating to those not involved in research. In addition to increasing the likelihood for future engagement as participants in research, the academy can create a pool of community members and patients who can be called on to be involved in research in deeper ways (e.g. through community advisory and/or review boards, as community grant reviewers, in recruiting others to research, or as research partners or co-investigators).