ADDRESSING UNMET MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE NEEDS: A PARTNERED PLANNING EFFORT BETWEEN GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY AGENCIES, FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) approaches have been heralded as a promising means toward the elimination of health disparities. The CBPR approach focuses on the equitable involvement of community and academic partners throughout the research process with the aim of improving hypothesis generation and evaluation, community-informed interventions, and translation and adoption of research findings. Hence, one of the key areas of focus within CBPR is the development and cultivation of relationships between outside researchers and community members. A central issue within CBPR is how to balance the diverse, sometimes conflicting, needs and priorities of academic and community members so that synergistic collaborations that promote co-learning, mutual capacity building, and more relevant and actionable knowledge can be formed.

Interestingly, relatively less attention has been paid to the partnership building process between community members who often represent diverse segments and perspectives of the local community.

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