



Research Brief

Lessons learned in developing a model for academic-community partnered rapid qualitative research

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Overview

In Worcester, Massachusetts, community members and academic researchers worked as equal partners to test and apply a rapid qualitative analysis (RQA) approach. This collaborative approach was implemented during the Worcester Community Food Assessment (WCFA), where it guided the analysis of community conversations to identify community-driven solutions for food insecurity. Community partners were trained and supported by an academic team to co-lead the analysis process, placing equal value on community and academic expertise throughout all stages of research.

Researchers wanted to know

1. What are the practical steps that academic-community teams can follow for productive and equitable qualitative research partnerships?
2. What are potential challenges that team might face and strategies for overcoming these challenges?

Study

The purpose of this study was to create a model for academic-community partnered RQA that could be replicated. The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with all eight participants involved in the RQA for the community food assessment (5 academic, 3 community) to understand their experiences working together. Using rapid qualitative analysis, we created a 5-step model that described the process they used: 1. Planning 2. Training 3. Data Collection 4. Analysis and Synthesis 5. Dissemination. Participants reflected on their experiences, identifying challenges, benefits, and suggestions for improvement.

Bottom Line

A 5-step model was developed to guide academic-community partners to use rapid qualitative analysis. This model enhances research relevance, fosters trust, builds capacity, and includes underrepresented voices throughout the research process. The model can be applied by other teams seeking to conduct similar work, supporting deeper engagement of community research.

Contact

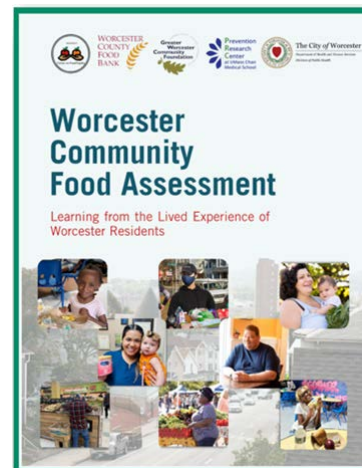
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Source

Goulding M, Borg A, Minkah P, Branley C, Desrochers O, Schwartz E, Uribe P, Powers D, Rosal M, Lemon SC, Ryan GW. Lessons learned in developing a model for academic-community partnered rapid qualitative research. Prog Community Health Partnersh: Res, Educ, Action. In press.

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Spotlight on Results:

Model:

- Step 1: Planning
 - Community identifies priorities and collaborates with academic partners to define research questions, choose data collection methods, and assign project roles.
- Step 2: Training
 - The academic partner provides accessible, example-based training on rapid qualitative methods for community partners, allowing time for discussion, bidirectional learning, and multiple sessions as needed.
- Step 3: Data Collection
 - Determine the qualitative data format and assign roles for recruitment and data collection.
- Step 4: Analysis and Synthesis
 - Organize logistics for analysis and synthesis by creating and using a summary template, compiling data into a matrix, and conducting group meetings to produce final results.
- Step 5: Dissemination
 - Share and use findings.

Challenges & Strategies for Success

In this process, it is necessary to use terms that are understood by everyone and come to consensus about interpretation of qualitative responses. Strategies for success include valuing lived expertise, establish strong partnerships and shared ownership, providing hands-on training, practice and support; ongoing communication and coordination.

Call for Action

Academic-community teams can use a 5-step model to quickly analyze qualitative research interviews and group conversations together. Training and ongoing communication are important to using this method to support more equitable and impactful research.