Tribal Early Childhood Research Center

Building Capacity by Supporting Networks of University and Community Partners

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Agenda

- Background
- Introduction to the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center
- Using Social Network Analysis in Tribal and Community Based Participatory Research
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
Limitations in Current Research and Evaluation Base

- Limited research available to guide our understanding of early childhood in Tribal children
- Limited availability of interventions with evidence base for Tribal communities
- History of research and evaluation conducted in Tribal communities
Limitations of Research Regarding Cultural Understandings

- Cultural appropriateness of early childhood measures
- Cultural influences in development
Challenges in Conducting Research in Tribal Communities

- Obtaining a representative sample considering diversity among tribal populations
- Small pool of researchers who are prepared to conduct culturally and scientifically rigorous research
Opportunity

Work together in a different way

Work toward meaningful change
Community-based *Participatory Research*

From researchers/evaluators *acting upon* a community to answer a question……To researchers/evaluators *working side by side* with community members to:

- Define the questions and methods
- Implement the research/evaluation
- Disseminate the findings and apply them

(The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group, 2006)
Tribal Participatory Research

- Collaborative research designed to meet the needs of tribal communities and avoid or minimize issues of exploitation and power disparities.

- Emphasis is on social change and community empowerment using psychosocial interventions designed to reduce behavioral health disparities and to support healthy development.

Fisher & Ball, 2003
Introduction to the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center
TRC Partners

University-Based Investigators
- University of Colorado Denver AMC
- Johns Hopkins University
- Michigan State University

Tribal Program Partners
- Child Care Steering Committee
- Head Start Steering Committee
- Home Visiting Steering Committee

Tribal Early Childhood Research Center

Federal Partners at ACF
- Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
- Office of Head Start
- Office of Child Care

Other Partners
- Training & Technical Assistance Providers
- Tribal Community Leaders
- Other researchers/experts
TRC Goals

Consultation, Collaboration, Community

Research & Measurement

Information Dissemination

Evaluation & Research to Practice

Training
The Heart of the TRC!

Consultation, Collaboration, Community

- Research & Measurement
- Evaluation & Research to Practice
- Information Dissemination
- Training
Using Social Network Analysis in Community Based Participatory Research
General Research Paradigm

- Most research focuses on:
  - Individual attributes
  - Discrete groups
  - Isolated dyadic interactions
Social Network Analysis

- Research paradigm (Wellman, 1998)
  - Focus on patterns of relationships
- Two key components
Social Network Analysis

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- Two key components
  - Nodes: Actors
Social Network Analysis

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- Two key components
  - Nodes: Actors
  - Edges or Arcs: Relationships between actors
What Social Network Analysis Informs in CBPR

- Levels of collaboration within and across organizations
  - Patterns of existing relationships
  - How these patterns change over time
  - Identification of influential “connectors”

(Hawe & Ghali, 2008; Neal et al., 2008, Valente et al., 2010)
Network Structure & Combining Networks

(Ed Morrison, Strategic Doing, 2012)
Goals for Social Network Analysis in TRC

- Descriptive study of:
  - How connected are TRC network members? Are relationships reciprocated?
  - Are these relationships bound to partner type (U or C)? Are relationships bound to program (HV or HS)?
  - Is there an individual or a group of individuals who serve as the “hub” for the TRC network?
  - Is there an individual or a group of individuals who serve as “boundary spanners”.
Methods
On-line survey of whole network

Who do you talk to about Tribal early childhood research or evaluation activities?

Sent to 54 TRC partners

51 completed the survey (94.4%)

Partner type
- 24 community partners
- 21 research/university partners
- 9 federal partners

Program
- 24 Head Start
- 26 Home Visiting
- 4 both

Gender (9 males)

AI/AN (21 Tribal members)
Results
Connections in the TRC Network: Density

- Density = 0.273
- Proportion of present to possible relationships
Connections in the TRC Network: Reciprocity

- Reciprocity = 0.535
  - Proportion of present relationships that are reciprocated
Connections in the TRC Network by Partner Type
Connections in the TRC Network by Program
TRC Core/Periphery

Fitness = .616

(Borgatti & Everett coreness approach, 1999)
Node Degree of Core/Periphery

- Indegree: Number of nominations
  - 4 nodes with Indegree 30+
    - Researcher PI’s and ACF
  - 4 nodes with Degree range of 20 – 29
  - 27 nodes with Degree range of 10 – 19
Hub and Core
TRC Boundary Spanners

Between = 80+
Discussion
The TRC as a Network

- Tightly connected network given network size and context for the work characterized by many reciprocated relationships
- Clustering more evident for program affiliation than for partner type
- A group of individuals emerged via core/periphery analysis and this appears to indicate active involvement in the network
- Use of degree and between values point to individuals who serve as hub/core (n=8)
- Many of those who serve as hub/core also serve as boundary spanners (n=6)
Strengths

- Connections between community partners and university partners have been a primary focus of the TRC
  - Built through annual program specific in-person meetings, community consultations, and communities of learning
  - Emphasis placed on including community partners in the research planning process

Valente et al., 2010
Cross-Program Network

- To increase the connections across program affiliation, the TRC has discussed conducting an in-person meeting for all TRC partners.
Questions or Comments
TRC Contact Information

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A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities

Child Welfare Evaluation Virtual Summit Series