

Discussing & Addressing Challenges in Community-Engaged Research Partnerships



This role-play exercise can be a great way for a CEnR partnership to explore challenges and possible strategies to address them, laugh, and relieve stress. Other relevant resources: Documenting Partnership Roles & Agreements: MOUs & Other Tools

Choose from the following example scenarios ones that are most relevant for your partnership. Place these on strips of paper and mix in a hat. (Partnership leaders or staff can also develop scenarios or hand out blank pieces to group members so they can draft their own scenarios. Though it's best if the situations are 'anonymous' or won't make anyone feel like they're being picked on). Ask for two volunteers to pick a strip out of the hat. After reviewing the scenario, the two people "act it out" in front of the rest of the group. You can also choose to have the partnership group split up into smaller groups so more people are actively engaged. Those in the audience can "mix it up" by doing the following:

Joining in as a third/fourth party;

- Replacing one of the people in the situation; or
- Announcing "switch" to start a new scenario.

While some of the role play scenarios may lead to laughter and stress relief, there also raise serious issues which may be sensitive. Depending on the level of trust already built among people participating in this exercise, you may want to consider briefly discussing ground rules. Even though humorous interpretations of these scenarios can be a lot of fun, it is important that the exercise moderator is able to ensure that some useful and practical suggestions are suggested for each of these real-life experiences. For example, after each scenario is acted out in different ways, the moderator can ask the audience if they have successfully navigated the situation in the past and what strategies they would suggest for how to handle it in the future.

Example scenarios:

- NIH has funded your partnership's proposal! Yay! But they ask you to make a 20% cut in the budget. How does the partnership handle making decisions about the cuts?
- Several research team members are not representative of the race/ethnicity of the research project participants. A research participant feels that someone on the research team made a disrespectful comment about her race/ethnicity. How does the partnership address this situation?
- You've been working with the same person at Agency Y for 3 years who was a total delight. Recently, they quit and there's a new person on staff who's impossible to work with. What do you wish you could say to the Executive Director at Agency Y?
- Your academic partner does many presentations and writes many papers without involving you or other community partners. The academic feels like they are protecting your time and that you wouldn't be interested. How would you bring this up with your academic partner?
- You find out that one of your key survey administrators has been fabricating results for the last 3 months. What do you wish you could say to him?
- For the last 5 meetings, the same partner has arrived over 30 mins late and makes you rehash everything you have already covered: What do you wish you could say to your partner?
- Your partner has made her twelfth thousandth grammatical revision to a paper you thought was great 15 drafts ago. What do you wish you could say to your partner?
- Your academic partner said they wanted an equitable partnership but they never have time to travel to your community for meetings or events. What do you wish you could say to your partner?