

Community-Engaged Participatory Action Research as an Integral Part of MSW Research Curricula

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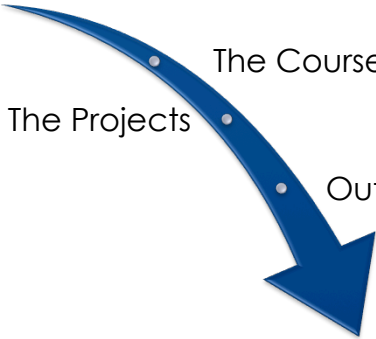
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1865 THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

2 Agenda

Our plan for today...



Overview of CEPAR

The Course

The Projects

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Community-Engaged Participatory Action Research



Research Methods for Social Work



5 Overview of the Projects

Engaging Community Partners



6 Alison's project

What happens next? Exploring child protection outcomes in a cohort of opioid-exposed infants



Leah Agren, Meagan Foss, Jennifer Koch, & Alison Mitchell
MSW students, University of Maine School of Social Work

Faculty Advisor: Jennifer Middleton, LCSW, PhD
Assistant Professor, University of Maine School of Social Work

7 Alison's project

Participatory Action Approach Community Partnership

**UMaine School
of Social Work**

**Eastern
Maine
Medical
Center**

**Office of
Child &
Family
Services**


- Further explore this vulnerable population.

- Shared data
- Alliance between School of Social Work, EMMC, and OCFS to support substance-exposed infants and their families

8 Alison's project

- ❖ Since 2001, Maine has had the highest rate of opioid abuse in the country, resulting in a rise of opioid-exposed infants.
- ❖ Statewide, Maine is experiencing dramatically increasing rates of substance-exposed births, from 165 drug affected babies reported in 2005 to 927 reported in 2013 – an increase of about 18%.
- ❖ EMMC recorded 173 opioid-exposed infants born in 2011, representing a little over 10% of births that year, and a 27% increase within two years.

9 Alison's project



Methodology

Exploratory and descriptive study

→ Secondary analysis of existing case data →

UMaine IRB approval &
EMMC IRB approval

← Convenience sample:
173 opioid-exposed infants
born at EMMC in 2011

Identified sample containing 173 infant names and dates of birth transferred from EMMC to OCFS


OCFS data query to identify any matching records, identified sample including matched data transferred back to EMMC, de-identified by EMMC partner, transferred to students

Students analyzed de-identified infant data, describing:

- child protection outcomes
- characteristics of household composition and family composition

10 Sarah's Project

Indicators of Trauma-Informed Practice: Measuring the Impact of the Sanctuary Model among Youth Residential and School Programs in a Mid-Atlantic State



Sarah Harvey, Reva Kominsky, & Dan Torinus
MSW Students, University of Maine School of Social Work

Faculty Advisor: Jennifer Middleton, LCSW, PhD
Assistant Professor, University of Maine School of Social Work

11 Sarah's Project

Community Partnership

A community of inquiry

School of Social Work: Professor coordinated partnership and enlisted MSW student researchers

The Collaborative: 15 agencies contributed data, one agency head helped to facilitate the project

ANDRUS: Served as a liaison with the Collaborative

12 Sarah's Project

The Four Pillars of the Sanctuary Model

TRAUMA THEORY

SANCTUARY COMMITMENTS

S.E.L.F.

SANCTUARY TOOLKIT

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Sarah's Project

The Seven Commitments

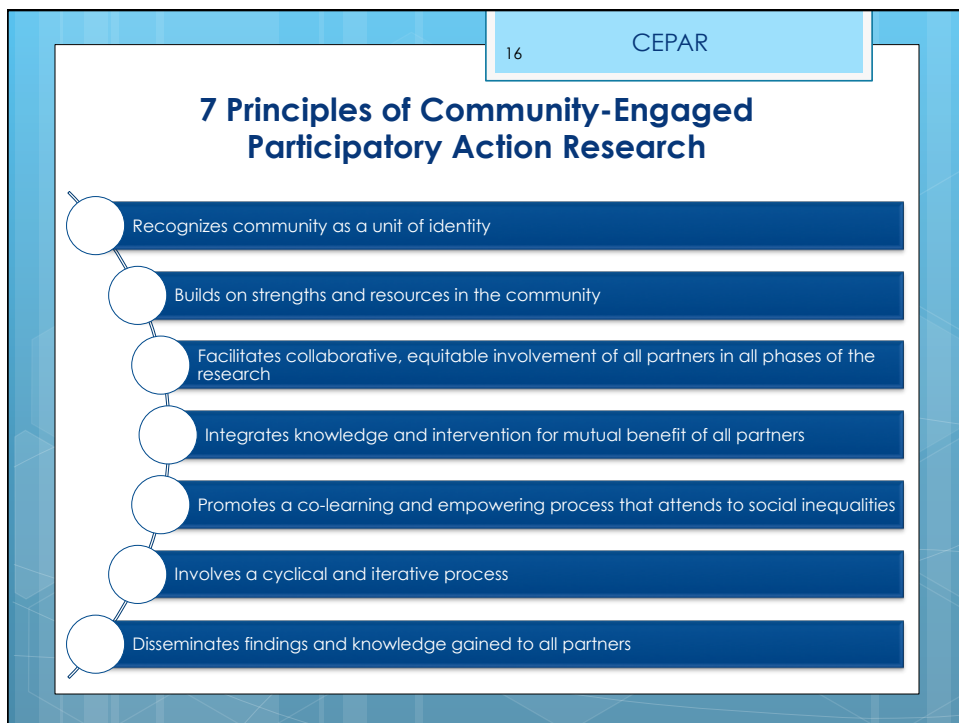
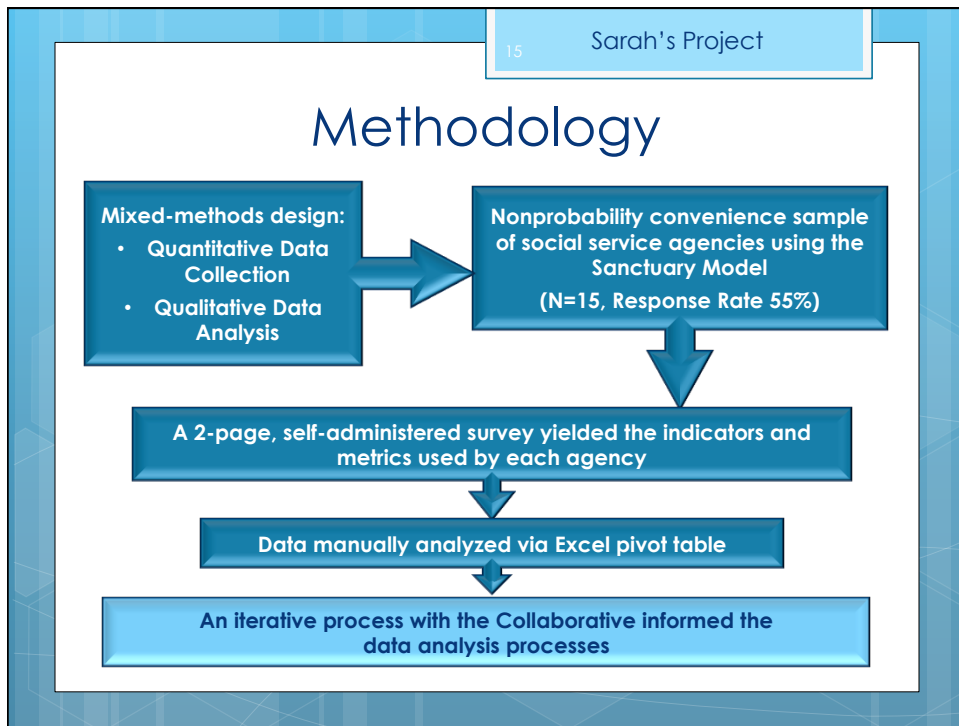


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Sarah's Project

- In social services, there is an increasing focus on substantiation of program effectiveness through the use of evidence-based practices and outcomes measurement.
- “Outcome studies...vary widely in scope and suffer from an absence of control or comparison groups, poorly defined service units, sampling problems, and improper selection or measurement of outcome criteria, and most importantly, improper aggregation of results.”
-Butler, Little, & Grimard (2009)





17 Student Perspective

Challenges

Alison:

- Capacity-building among partners
- Systems development
- Long-term process

Sarah:

- Geographic distance
- Reluctance to complete survey due to skills gap and other agency constraints

18 Student Perspective

Benefits

Alison:

- Local relevance of the issue being investigated
- Building on existing strengths and resources
- Facilitating a collaborative partnership
- Disseminating results to partners and broader community

Sarah:

- Co-learning
- Strong relationships and support from partnering agencies and ANDRUS
- Motivation and engagement were enhanced
- Iterative process provided greater insight on our data

Lessons Learned



- Relationships are important
- Maintain emphasis on meaningful & useful projects
- Get input from partners on the project deliverables

- Prepare students for the project selection process
- Smaller is better
- Limit IRB exposure
- Teaching assistant can help bridge learning

Questions?



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