



# Partnerships for Environmental Public Health

Strengthening a Dynamic Environmental Public Health Network for Tomorrow:  
Advancing science through critical reflection

## Breakout Session Descriptions

### Contents

Capacity Building Sessions .....	2
Small Group 1. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships.....	2
Small Group 2. Logic modeling .....	3
Small Group 3. Building effective engagement around research ethics .....	4
Research Translation Breakout Sessions .....	5
Small Group 1. Strategies of Research Translation: The State of Practice .....	5
Small Group 2. Engaging with Policy Audiences .....	6
Small Group 3. Engaging with Communities of Interest to Improve Health .....	7
Communication Sessions .....	8
Small Group 1. Dialogue.....	8
Small Group 2. Messaging/Framing.....	9
Small Group 3. Web and Emerging Technologies.....	10

## Capacity Building Sessions

*The capacity building track aims to enhance the capacity of academic researchers and community representatives to advance science-based decision-making through building sustainable partnerships, integrating logic modeling practices and techniques, and promoting research ethics and principles for effective outcomes to ultimately improve environmental health for all.*

### Small Group 1. Developing and Sustaining Partnerships

*The breakout session will foster a discussion of guidelines and operating principles for achieving effective sustainable partnerships. We will emphasize the importance of equitable decision-making, resource sharing, and mutual respect as well as the challenges and benefits of partnerships from a diversity of perspectives.*

#### Discussion Questions:

Models of Successful Partnerships:

- What specific models have you used to build and sustain partnerships around community capacity building?
- Have they been successful and how successful have they been for effective sustainable partnerships?
- How did you evaluate the model or techniques used to build the partnership?
- How do you define science-based decision-making? How do we advance science-based decision-making through building sustainable partnerships?
- Have you developed training and other resources around how to effectively sustain partnerships? If so, what kinds?
- Have you replicated your model/approach to receive additional funding or resources to address new areas of research around community capacity building? If so, how? What would you attribute to your success? What were the challenges you had to overcome?
- What are the best strategies to promote these successful models? How can the PEPH network help?

Importance of Equitable Decision Making:

- How did the partnership ensure equitable decision-making between partners?
- Where there specific guidelines, operating principles or rules of participation and engagement established when the partnership was created?
- How have those rules evolved as you sustained your partnership?
- What challenges have you overcome in achieving equitable decision making?
- Are their existing challenges or gaps you would like to see addressed? What are they?
- How have you successfully handled resource sharing in the areas of intellectual property or contributions from all parties, access to research results, and funding across the partnership?

### Addressing Diversity of Perspectives:

- How important is the issue of ensuring diversity of perspectives and mutual respect for all partners in community capacity building?
- What models or approaches have you used effectively to ensure cultural competency of researchers or scientist working with communities?

#### **\*Action\***

For each of these areas, please share additional resources such as: have you published any papers on any of these topics that you can share? Are there websites or other material that can provide specific tools, models, approaches, or strategies to promote community capacity building?

### **Small Group 2. Logic modeling**

*The breakout session will facilitate a discussion on the use of logic models to support partnerships and plan effective activities, projects, training, and community engagement outcomes.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- What is a logic model?
- Why use a logic model?
- What are the components of a good logic model?  
How can a good logic model lead to a strong evaluation process?  
How can a logic model lead to designing a project or program with measurable outcomes?
- How have you used a logic model or how could you see your program using a logic model?
- Who should be involved in building the logic model?
- What do you do when you've achieved your outcomes? (How often do you revisit/revise your logic model?)
- How many logic models should you develop?
- What do you think would be the benefits of working with your organization/partners to develop a logic model?
- What would be some challenges? (Has anyone else experienced these challenges – if so, how did you address them?)

### Small Group 3. Building effective engagement around research ethics

*The breakout session aims to address the gaps in the ethical research framework currently supported by academic institutions and grantors that have not kept pace with the realities of CBPR practice. We will discuss a framework that addresses community concerns such as training all engaged on research ethnics, sharing of data, effective IRB engagement, human subject protection, and heightened relevance of ethics training to meet community and academic researcher needs.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Are university requirements (e.g. applying for IRB approval, completing evaluations, etc.) a burden on the community? If so, how are they? If not, why not?
- What are some tips for successful IRB submissions?
- Should IRB rules and review processes be modified for community engagement projects? Why? Why not?
- What are the training needs for all partners to develop, implement, and sustain community-engaged research projects?
  - Researchers?
  - Community members?
  - Healthcare/Public health professionals?
  - Funders?
- Are community review boards useful in improving community-researcher engagement and fostering ethical treatment of subjects? Why? Why not?
- How can the bioethical process and ethical oversight build trust?
- What are effective ground rules for data sharing? Is it only rules for shared authorship of journal submissions or should there be other considerations?
- What role can NIH play to reduce barriers to community engagement while preserving protection of human subjects?
- How do we prepare community partners for the potentially long process that an IRB application and approval entails?
- Recognizing that not all partnerships work well, when conflicts arise between/among research partners, what mechanisms can be established by the funder or university to address them? How do you ensure that after a grant is awarded that a partner cannot be dropped without any specified means for redress?

## Research Translation Breakout Sessions

### **The Strategy of Research Translation**

What are the strategies we use to make scientific findings and knowledge available and actionable for audiences and partners outside the academic and research communities to advance environmental public health protection? These sessions are about how we identify opportunities and decide what to work on.

We know that participants have diverse projects and approaches. For some, production of knowledge in the research context may drive strategies for research translation. For others, the needs and interests of external audiences and stakeholders may drive our approaches. Perhaps it will be some of both. Research translation activities have different scales. Some focus on national audiences; others at the state level; others at the community level. Many different kinds of groups and networks can be partners and audiences.

The purpose of the breakout sessions is to discuss what we are doing and why, and to learn from the experiences of others.

### **Small Group 1. Strategies of Research Translation: The State of Practice**

The approaches to research translation incorporated in the PEPH networks have been largely defined by grant recipients. The purpose of this session will be to identify and enumerate the range of strategies used in the PEPH community for research translation. We plan to use a working document as background for the discussion, and this will be provided to those who register for this session.

During the session, our objective is to identify the range of approaches used by participants and discuss the reasons that underlie the selection of various approaches. An additional goal is to develop a publishable manuscript to provide a baseline description of the range of practices and approaches identified to begin to define research translation for the field of environmental health.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. For each of your research translation projects, what is the main purpose of the project?
  - Support the adoption of a particular policy action or intervention?
  - Motivate actions by individuals to improve their health?
  - Increase capacity of an identified audience or partner or network or group?
  - Inform discussion or deliberation about a course of action?
  - Create information materials that might apply to a variety of audiences, not targeted for any one?
  - Create training programs for identified audiences?
  - Achieve some other purpose? If so, then what?

2. For each of your research translation programs, is your primary motivation to disseminate the research of your funded program (supply side) or to meet the needs of an identified audience or group (demand side) or something different from this? Does this distinction make sense to you?
3. How do you define the scope of the findings or knowledge that you disseminate?
4. How do you define the interests and needs of your audiences or partners or groups?
5. Is your project part of a community based participatory research project?
6. Do you use a scoping process or needs assessment process to define your projects? If so, what is it?
7. How do you define success?
8. Have your research translation projects been successful? If so, what has contributed to this success? If not, what do you believe is the principal reason?
9. Who is your principal communicator or messenger for each project?

### **Small Group 2. Engaging with Policy Audiences**

We are all challenged to conduct coordinated research and translation/outreach programs that have an impact on improving public health and the communities that we serve. Research findings may be made actionable through public policies that are broadly applicable to many individuals or organizations. Such public policies are adopted by legislative bodies or executive agencies at the national, state, and local level. Often, actions at all of these levels are needed to improve public health. The policy actors, stakeholders, and networks involved in decisions about such actions are important audiences for our work.

This breakout will provide an opportunity to discuss the areas of policy development relevant to the PEPH projects. The group will discuss the roles that researchers play in engaging with the policy actors and issue networks. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss and gain feedback on specific situations they encounter.

#### **Questions for discussion**

1. Is your project interested in public policy? If so, at what scale and for what topic(s)?
2. How do you view public policy as contributing to improved public health?
3. How do you seek to improve public policy?
4. Have you identified a specific point where your research results or knowledge would be informative to policy makers? If so, what?
5. What steps have you taken to engage with policy makers or those who influence them?
6. What are the main constraints that you face? What would help you to overcome these?
7. Would you like to be more engaged with public policy development? What would help you to do this?
8. How could the PEPH network better address this area and help you to achieve your goals?

### **Small Group 3. Engaging with Communities of Interest to Improve Health**

We often think of communities in PEPH as geographic communities such as neighborhoods, towns, or cities. Environmental health is a function of place, and engaging with such communities is a valuable and significant component of PEPH.

We also recognize that there are communities that have environmental health issues and concerns and so may be valuable partners and audiences for research translation activities, but that are not defined by a geographic focus. Such networks could be groups working to improve environmental health in schools, parents concerned about their children with cancer, people affected by the diesel emissions from goods movement, or health care professionals such as obstetricians, gynecologists, or pediatricians who are asked how to avoid adverse environmental exposures. Researchers at UCSF, for example, have defined a community of interest as being people concerned about preconception and prenatal periods of development.

This session will discuss engaging with such communities of interest.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What communities or networks of interests have you identified or worked with?
2. How do we identify these communities of interest?
3. What are the information needs of these communities of interest? How have you assessed them? What are the similarities and differences?
4. How can we design research translation strategies with them?
5. Have you adopted strategies that have been successful? What makes a successful strategy?
6. How do we contribute to development of cohesive proposals to improve public health within such contexts?
7. Are there communities or networks of interest that we should reach out to and engage? Which ones and why?

## Communication Sessions

*Through discussion and a collective sharing of best practices, the Communication Sessions aim to elevate our environmental health communication skills, inform the development of our communication strategies, and strengthen our environmental health networks. Session topics were considered valuable in past workshops and in need of further discussion to benefit our translation and community engagement work. **Dialogue** reveals the values of our stakeholders, so we can choose effective approaches that resonate with those values and empower affected populations. **Messaging and Framing** focuses on ways to make complex environmental health topics personally relevant to our audiences. **Web Technologies** covers how we can utilize the Web most effectively for our audiences. All three workshops will identify gaps, opportunities, and how we can unite and benefit from one another as part of the PEPH network.*

### Small Group 1. Dialogue

Communication provides a dialogic means of exchanging views and involving community members directly in the issues that affect their lives. Dialogue can utilize traditional or modern communicative approaches, ultimately incorporating both science and stakeholder values into decision-making. In this session, participants will discuss their experiences in creating and evaluating communicative partnerships that support the development and/or implementation of environmental health projects and programs, tying these experiences to the broader context of action research.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. What do we mean by dialogue? What is it and what isn't it?
2. What is action research? How does it relate to dialogue and to PEPH goals and programs?
3. What are benefits of engaging in dialogic partnership- and program-building?
4. What are challenges specific to the use of dialogue around environmental health issues? What are some ways to begin addressing these challenges? What kinds of dialogic approaches are PEPH grantees currently using with stakeholders? Are these approaches created ad hoc, or are they based in existing social scientific theory and literature? With whom dialogue is taking place?
5. How can we expand the number and types of stakeholder groups we engage through dialogic, participatory processes?
6. How can approaches that value dialogue be incorporated into the overall PEPH Logic Model? Is it possible to create valid evaluation metrics without the input of partners? If not, how can we meet agency-defined evaluation needs while still respecting the importance of dialogue?

## Small Group 2. Messaging/Framing

When communicating environmental health research, framing is essential to delivering the intended message. Distinct audiences require unique frames that must be written appropriately for the context in which the messages are received. The purpose of the message must also be considered, whether the purpose is to inform policy decisions or to educate the public. In this session, participants will share and discuss the ways in which they frame environmental health messages for specific audiences. The group will also identify the gaps and opportunities for advancing work in this area to enhance the delivery and impact of our messages.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Why are you communicating about environmental health?
  - Informing decision makers?
  - Explaining the value of research?
  - Educating the public about an environmental health issue?
  - Educating the public about an environmental health issue with specific instructions on health promoting behaviors?
2. How do you use framing when developing environmental health messages?
3. What lessons can be learned from health communications research that can be applied to environmental health communications research? Where is the field of environmental health communications research?
4. How does one communicate uncertainty? What are the issues to be aware of surrounding uncertainty? What strategies have worked well?
5. What is the role/importance of mental models? What are examples of how they are being used by grantees in the PEPH network?
6. Is there value in having a unified message? What are elements of messages from environmental health research that people would want to hear that are standard in environmental health communication?

For example, should all messages have the following elements:

  - Why was the study done and who paid for it?
  - What was found?
  - What was done?
  - What is going to be done about the results?
  - What can I do?
  - How will my doctors find out the information/
7. What other challenges prevent researchers from effectively framing research findings (time, language, culture, age, gender, political, lack of expertise)?
8. What kinds of tools have been/would be helpful for people to use in messaging/framing?
9. What training/capacity building is needed to prepare researchers and others working within the PEPH networks to adequately frame their research?
10. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of messaging/framing? How do you know the message got through and was understood/internalized?

### Small Group 3. Web and Emerging Technologies

We know the Web is a powerful source for health and science information, but do we have the knowledge and skills to use Web technologies effectively in our programs? In this session, we will discuss Web tools and on-line communication strategies that leverage partnerships and increase outreach efforts. We will expand our knowledge by discussing benefits, challenges, and opportunities of selected innovative projects that use digital storytelling, interactive maps, multimedia, mobile technologies, or social network platforms. The session will wrap up on potential ways to assess impact and how to share our experiences to benefit others.

**\*Action\*** Come prepared to share specific projects or resources if you have them.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. How do we currently utilize Web technologies for research/outreach?
  - Identify why specific projects are successful.
  - Understand why some are not as successful and how to adapt.
  - What are we not doing that we want to do? Identify barriers.
  - How much time and what resources do people/programs invest to on-line outreach efforts?
2. Identify any specific issues related to Web outreach and environmental health topics and research.
  - What is helpful for us to know in relation to on-line technologies and disadvantaged or culturally diverse communities? Risk and crisis information?
3. What are the benefits and opportunities of social network platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs? What are the challenges?
4. What are ways we support our trainees/students on-line?
  - What are effective ways to showcase the training and research of students?
5. What mobile technology outreach/engagement projects are good examples for what is possible for us?
6. What are ways we have utilized Web technology to strengthen internal communication (within our Centers, and within the PEPH network)?
  - Discuss gaps, opportunities, and challenges for future directions.
7. What are worthwhile ways to assess the impact of Web and social media projects?
8. What Web technology topics have provided (and may provide) opportunities to publish?
  - How can we collaborate (and all benefit) to address gaps and questions in need of research?
  - What journals and websites are good places to gather information and share findings with others?
9. How can the PEPH network enable us in our Web technology projects?
  - What can we contribute to the PEPH logic model that would advance effective and successful Web technology projects?