

Utilizing a Community Advisory Committee to Define Future Community Efforts for the Healthy Gulf, Healthy Communities Project



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Key Elements of our Community Participatory Research Model

❖ Identifying Community Partners

- Strategies for identifying potential partners included identifying organizations already known to HGHC staff, referrals based on known agency staff (snowball sampling), and identification of consortia of agencies and organizations
- Selected organizations and agencies serving residents and communities between South Alabama and the Big Bend region of Florida
- Identified those providing support for preparation, response, recovery, and long term mitigation efforts associated with disasters
- Reflected a range of organization types (governmental, NGO's, faith-based organizations and consortia of organizations)

Holding a Community Forum in April, 2012

- ❖ Remote across HGHC sites for partner convenience
- ❖ Video conference capabilities at each site allowed face to face within site and remote conference across sites
- ❖ Presentation of initial research findings and methods by research core staff
- ❖ Identification of key issues and challenges related to disaster recovery and mitigation confronting our partners and the citizens they serve
- ❖ Identification of potential members of the Community Advisory Council—self and partner nominations



Role of HGHC Community Advisory Council

- ❖ Help with recruiting participants for HGHC research
- ❖ Train staff/volunteers to help with research process
- ❖ Provide HGHC team with insights into communities including identifying gaps/needs as well as determining other key community members
- ❖ Help in the development of an outreach program based upon research findings
- ❖ Work with outreach to determine best way to reach target communities
- ❖ Apply outreach tactics and tools to the communities they serve
- ❖ Work with researchers to apply findings to gaps/needs in the communities

Conducting an Environmental Scan with Members of the CAC—August 2013



- ❖ HGHC investigators interviewed 9 members of our CAC from across the HGHC sites (South Alabama-Big Bend of Florida)
- ❖ Interviews were conducted either at the CAC members' base or at a time and location convenient for them
- ❖ The goal was to identify their perspectives on the work of HGHC thus far, to determine their concerns regarding ongoing recovery from the DWH disaster, and to solicit their ideas about our way forward in building resiliency.

Analyzing Results of Community Forum (April, 2012) and CAC interviews (August, 2013)

- ❖ Initial content analysis by multiple readers from the HGHC project investigators
- ❖ Themes were identified with supporting excerpts from transcriptions of the forum and interviews
- ❖ Themes were presented to partners and CAC members for participant checking.



Results of analysis of Community Forum Transcripts & CAC Members' Environmental Scan

Challenges:

- ❖ Ongoing consistent and elevated levels of requests for assistance following the DWH disaster
- ❖ Changed demographic and profile of typical clients reflect an impact on a wider range of individuals within affected communities and reflect the disparities in health and wellness within these communities
- ❖ Lack of clear plans and resources for sustainability of services to support ongoing levels of need and health and wellness disparities within and among communities
- ❖ Lack of coordination of projects and programs being initiated from outside the region with local organizations and agencies
- ❖ Lack of clear and reliable communication regarding the DWH disaster and disasters in general and associated risks.

Results of Analysis of Community Forum Transcripts and CAC Members' Environmental Scan

❖ Strategies for action:

- Develop networking opportunities, partnerships and connections among policy makers and politicians, other community service and faith-based organizations, County Extension and Sea Grant, across the region and across states
- Develop a way to share what's working and not working with other agencies and organizations
- Develop MOU's or Letters of Commitment among organizations that activate in times of disasters

Results of Analysis of Community Forum Transcripts and CAC Members' Environmental Scan

❖ Strategies for action:

- Work with community organizations to develop proactive tools to jointly disseminate accurate and factual information
 - Develop central messages, key talking points, trusted spokesperson
 - Establish relationships with media before crisis occurs
 - Plan for crisis communication
 - Monitor media to determine what's being covered, by whom and how
 - Use a variety of media (e.g. science cafés, faith-based organizations, social media/Web to convey messages)

Results of Analysis of Community Forum Transcripts and CAC Members' Environmental Scan

❖ Proposed next steps:

- Based on the challenges identified and the strategies proposed by our partners and CAC members, the HGHC COD team has refocused efforts to include:
 - developing a regional network to support NGO development and community resiliency;
 - providing training for communities to foster consortium building;
 - identifying best practices by our partners for mitigating vulnerability and building resiliency among populations in our region; and
 - exploring development of a regional community organization incubator and community resiliency center.

Results of Analysis of Community Forum Transcripts and CAC members' Environmental Scan

❖ Proposed Next Steps:

- We are meeting in February with our CAC members to identify goals and objectives of such a center. In addition to NGO's and faith based organizations, we are including the County Extension Agents across our research sites and the Florida Department of Children and Families

