

JERHRE NOTES

Concepts, Tools, and Resources for Solving Ethical Problems in Human Research

ETHICS & COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Key ethical values of community-based participatory research (CBPR) are the balancing of power between partners, addressing community-identified needs, and building community capacity. Although these ethical values exist, community partners often find themselves in a secondary position to their institutional partners for reasons such as unequal access to resources or the tendency for these partnerships to mirror the power differentials in greater society. Postma's study (2008) of an environmental justice CBPR project demonstrates how one can critically evaluate partnership processes to determine the extent to which egalitarian relationships are achieved. Her techniques included:

- Document review (i.e., transcripts of partnership meetings) to track how partners negotiated such aspects as how the research would build community capacity.
- Participant observation of the partnership process to supplement the document review.
- Applied conversational analysis to tabulate conversation moves, speaker frequency, and facilitation strategies.
- Discourse analysis to assess the differences by which the partners defined environmental justice.

Her study revealed significant departures from egalitarian relationships and provides a model for evaluating CBPR partnership processes.

Postma, J. (2008). Balancing power among academic and community partners: The case of El Proyecto Bienestar (The Well-Being Project). *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 3(2), XX-XX.

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