

E-Learning Series Live Discussion



On February 2, 2023, CBRCanada members joined presenter Dr. Ameil J. Joseph, Associate Professor for McMaster University's School of Social Work and Academic Director for Community Engaged Research and Relationships, for a webinar and live discussion on health equity advocacy through community mobilization and solidarity. Within this E-learning event Dr. Joseph explored the pervasiveness of racism within the Canadian healthcare system, and focused on how this impacted vaccine accessibility for racialized communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Joseph shared how he moved the dial on this issue to induce change through community solidarity and action to establish a priority COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Hamilton for Black and racialized communities.

During the live discussion, participants considered the tensions present between their roles as researcher and as activist. Reflections on the challenges in finding balance, building community relationships, upholding transparency, rising above institutional barriers, and, in Dr. Joseph's words, "countering the weight of the hate", highlight the primary insights shared in the live discussion.

How can we engage in community-based research with action & advocacy as our primary aim?



1

Finding Balance

- Balance the aims of research and action so that we benefit both the development of scientific knowledge and community well-being
- Balance what stories are shared about the community – share both the community struggles and the community successes
- Balance what stories we tell about our research – make sure to share the challenges, mistakes, and lessons learned within research projects, not just the research highlights and outcomes



Upholding Transparency

2

- State the power dynamics at play within the structures and institutions, such as universities, involved in research
- State the limitations we face due to personal capacities or institutional boundaries
- State how long and in what capacity we as researchers can commit to involvement in community action after the research component ends
- State the challenges of engaging in action & advocacy, such as personal backlash, to new researchers to prepare them for what they may face



3

Challenging Institutional Barriers

- Challenge the culture of competition within institutions, researchers, and communities that creates barriers to collaborative work and collective action
- Challenge the barriers to meaningfully engaging community in institutional research settings, such as advocating for fair & equitable compensation for community members
- Challenges institutions to recognize the impact of their colonial roots, and to decolonize their approaches to research
- Challenges universities to reward, not punish, community activism and action by faculty members



Countering the Weight of the Hate

4

- Use the power and privilege researchers hold (particularly tenured faculty) to shield those without power and privilege from institutional or community backlash
- Use supportive networks or communities of practice of researchers as safe spaces to discuss and overcome hate and backlash that comes from engaging in activism
- Use the resources within institutions to build the capacities for these supportive networks for researcher activists
- Use the strategic capital that exists around activism as shared knowledge to arm new researcher activists - don't recreate the wheel

5

Building Community Relationships



- Build strong rapport with community members as a foundation for community-based research and action
- Build mutually beneficial partnerships between researchers, activists, and the community to advance action and advocacy
- Build accountability to the community and to each other through the research partnerships that are formed

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