

Duquesne University

## Duquesne Scholarship Collection

---

Graduate Student Research Symposium

---

2020-04-21

### Engaging professional advocacy through community-based participatory research and community engagement

Anastasha Homa-Earl  
*Duquesne University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/gsrs>



Part of the [Counseling Psychology Commons](#), [Counselor Education Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

Engaging professional advocacy through community-based participatory research and community engagement. (2020). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/gsrs/2020/proceedings/14>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Research Symposium by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.



# Engaging professional advocacy through community-based participatory research and community engagement

Anastasha Homa-Earl, MS, NCC

Counselor Education & Supervision; Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education

## INTRODUCTION

### Community Engagement

- Community engagement (CE) and service learning as trends in higher education as a way to enhance learning (Henderson, 2017; Johnson, 2013).
- CE can elevate institutions of higher education as community assets (Graber, Chodzko-Zajko, O'Connor, & Linker, 2017)
- Combines resources and efforts between universities and communities—mutually beneficial relationship
  - Many students maintain working relationships with their CE community partners, even after their coursework commitment has ended (Henderson, 2017).
  - Students can find opportunity to grow and utilize marketable professional skills in a meaningful context (Johnson, 2013).
  - Increases civic responsibility and desire to take action, opportunity for leadership skills, and improved interpersonal skill (Fulton & Shannonhouse, 2014).

### Professional Identity, Interpersonal Collaboration, & Advocacy

- Professional obligation to advocate for clients and the profession while also creating change in the community (ACA, 2014; ACA 2018)
- Collaboration helps advocacy efforts, and advocacy and experiential learning develop professional identity (Mellin, Hunt, & Nichols, 2011; Luke & Goodrich, 2010; Myers, Sweeney, & White, 2002)
- CE provides opportunity for social justice advocacy in particular (Mitchel, 2017)

### Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

- Equitable collaboration to empower communities and amplify voices of all relevant stakeholders (Hergenrath, et al., 2010)
- CE should seek to redistribute power back to community stakeholders (Mitchel, 2017); CBPR empowers communities in collaboration with students and faculty to combine efforts and resources in a way that is actually meaningful to the population served and to the student

### Gaps in the Literature & Possible Shortcomings

- Lacking empirical recommendations for the implementation of CE and interprofessional collaboration as domains of experiential learning that can encourage advocacy
- Social justice shortcomings (Mitchel, 2017)
  - CE may fail to recognize intersectionality
  - Power differential between privileged universities and oppressed communities
  - Campuses may turn a “blind eye” to on-campus issues that mirror community issues (ex. poverty, homelessness, etc.).
- Institutional Barriers (Henderson, 2017; Johnson, 2012; Lawler, Joesphy, & Narula, 2014)
  - Intensive data collection and funding efforts
  - Time spent seeking community partners

### Goals of Present Project

- Infuse social justice topics with professional advocacy through collaboration with with community stakeholders
- Use CBPR-approach to alleviate some of the concerns presented by Mitchel (2017) to allow target population to steer the overall direction of the research.

## METHODS

### Participants

- Participants were all masters-level students within the Counselor Education program at Duquesne University.
- Participation occurred as part of a required “community counseling” course.
- Data was collected from two sections of this class: one in 2017 (n=15) and one in 2018 (n=15).
- In 2017, students partnered with five community organizations; students partnered with seven community organizations in 2018. Of these organizations, three participated both years.

### Measures

- Students submitted reflections of their CE experience following the project
- Themes within the reflections were analyzed using grounded theory.

### Student Experience

- CBPR approach to problem-solving within the communities: Students worked closely with their community partners to address community needs
- Required collaboration with stakeholders (clients, administration, etc.) to see what the concerns were within the community
- Students were active participants in designing and implementing programs that helped address the needs indicated by the stakeholders, including:
  - Designing awareness campaigns;
  - Assisting in fundraising efforts;
  - Interacting with clients;
  - Developing programing;
  - Implementing program activities and initiatives.

## SUMMARY/ CONCLUSIONS

### Limitations

- Small sample size (n = 30) means that data saturation may not have been reached and that it was difficult to collect quantitative data.
- Implementation of a program such as this requires a great number of resources and a great deal of time, requiring as large effort on behalf of both the instructor and the students.
- Sites varied greatly in terms of how they operate, administrative involvement, and resources available, which means student experience varied greatly as well.

### Implications and Future Directions

- More research is needed to examine the effects of CE across academic disciplines
- Recommendations for Practical Implementation in Higher Ed
  - Work from a model of community-driven needs assessment and collaborative partnership to develop CE projects that assist the targeted populations in ways that are empowering to the community and multiculturally competent.
  - Further explore social justice and advocacy through reflection of personal identity such as the degree and effect of exposure to privilege and oppression based on one’s multicultural identity and learnings (Henderson, 2017; Mitchel, 2017).
  - Reflection should be done by both students AND faculty (Brown, Shepard, Warren, Hesson, & Fleming, 2016)
  - Mitchel (2017) also suggests considering the college campus as a community of consideration and calls for campus-community needs to be assessed with input from stakeholders (who, in the case of the campus-community, are the students and faculty).
  - Build CE into existing coursework where possible to maximize allocation of funding and resources (Henderson, 2017; Johnson, 2012)
  - Use CE as an experimental intervention that positively affects both the stakeholder and the student-participant
- Multicultural competence is essential for students working within diverse communities and should be emphasized throughout the CE process (ACA, 2014), as should adherence to other ethical guidelines. Students should be supervised throughout the process to assist in competent practice.

## THEMES

### Advocacy

2017

Bias  
Community  
Community engagement  
Community trauma  
Empowerment  
Importance of community resources  
Lack of community resources  
Multiculturalism  
Privilege  
Trauma  
Accessibility  
Accessibility and advocacy  
Accessibility of advocacy efforts  
Accommodation  
Advocacy  
Advocacy and problem-solving  
Advocacy and resource acquisition  
Advocacy for accessibility  
Awareness  
Individual accommodation  
Lack of accessibility  
Understanding

2018

Privilege (and lack thereof)  
Complexity  
Lack of resources  
Multicultural factors  
Need for resources  
Poverty vs. culture  
Privilege  
Socialization  
Stigma  
Accessibility  
Accessibility of services  
Advocacy  
Advocacy for accessibility  
Advocacy for resources  
Advocacy through awareness  
Advocacy through remembrance  
Advocacy/awareness  
Awareness  
Evidence-based advocacy  
Hope  
Need for advocacy/awareness  
Rapport  
Systematic resistance to change

### Professional Identity

2017

Academic integration  
Details  
Empowerment through practice  
Growth  
Professional identity – title  
Professional interest  
Professional Role  
Professional role/identity  
Service learning  
Similarities between self and client

2018

Apprehension  
Awareness/understanding  
Building on prior experience  
Empowerment  
Experiential learning  
Lack of knowledge  
Personal growth  
Rapport  
Real-life application  
Relationship building  
Relationships in service of others  
Self-serving relationships  
Tactile learning

### Interprofessional Collaboration

2017

Apprehension  
Building on prior experience  
Cohesiveness  
Collaborations  
Communication  
Empowerment  
Rapport with clients  
Systematic resistance to change  
Teamwork

2018

Collaboration  
Communication  
Community  
Non-profit administration  
Nuances of programs  
Professional communication  
Social support  
Understanding

## QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Preliminary analyses of student reflections indicate 48 salient themes for the students in 2017 and 50 salient themes in 2018.
- Themes of advocacy seem particularly relevant with 23 themes identified pertaining to the topic in 2018 and 22 identified in 2017—particularly regarding advocacy for client/community concerns such as accessibility of services, lack of resources, and concerns relating to multiculturalism and privilege
- Themes relating professional identity and to interprofessional collaboration were also explored, with slightly more themes reflecting students participants’ perceptions of identity (ten in 2017 and 13 in 2018) than interprofessional collaboration (eight in 2017 and nine in 2018).
- Preliminary findings suggest that participation in this CBPR-based CE project was successful in engaging students to think about issues of advocacy, professional identity, and interprofessional collaboration. The researchers plan to further analyze the data to explore the themes more deeply

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Special thanks to all community partners who welcomed the students to collaborate with their agencies. Additional acknowledgements also to Dr. Yih-Hsing Liu for her support, guidance, and help in conducting this project.

## REFERENCES

- American Counseling Association. (2014). ACA Code of Ethics. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American Counseling Association. (2018). Advocacy Competencies. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Brown, K., Shephard, K., Warren, D., Hesson, G., & Fleming, J. (2016). Using phenomenography to build an understanding of how university people conceptualize their community-engaged activities. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 35(4), 643–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1137880>
- Fulton, C. L., & Shannonhouse, L. (2014). Developing servant leadership through counselor community engagement: A case example. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 1(1), 98–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2014.886978>
- Graber, K. C., Chodzko-Zajko, W., O'Connor, J. A., Linker, J. M. (2017). Developing leadership skills and a commitment to civic engagement during an undergraduate community-based service learning class. *Kinesiology Review*, 6(4), 317–322. <https://doi.org/10.1123/kr.2017-0028>
- Henderson, D. X. (2017). Modeling community engagement in an undergraduate course in psychology at an HBCU. *Teaching of Psychology*, 44(1), 58–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628316679958>
- Hergenrath, K. C., Geishecker, S., McGuire-Kuletz, M., Gitlin, D. J., & Rhodes, S. D. (2010). An introduction to community-based participatory research. *Rehabilitation Education*, 24(3-4), 225–238. <https://doi.org/10.1891/088970110805029804>
- Johnson, K. (2013). Creating experiential learning in the graduate classroom through community engagement. *American Journal of Business Education*, 6(1), 149–154. <https://doi.org/10.19030/ajbe.v6i1.7493>
- Lawler, J., Joseph, A., & Narula, S. (2014). Engaging college students on a community engagement with high school students with disabilities. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 7(3), 195–204. <https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v7i3.8640>
- Luke, M., & Goodrich, K. M. (2010). Chi Sigma Iota chapter leadership and professional identity development in early career counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 50(1), 56–78. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2010.tb00108.x>
- Mellin, E., Hunt, B., & Nichols, L. M. (2011). Counselor professional identity: findings and implications for counseling and interprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 89(2), 140–147. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00071.x>
- Mitchell, T. D. (2017). Teaching community on and off campus: an intersectional approach to community engagement. *New Directions for Student Services*, 157, 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20207>
- Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T., & White, V. E., (2002). Advocacy for counseling and counselors: A professional imperative. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(4), 394–402. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2002.tb00205.x>