BEYOND BLACK, BROWN AND WHITE:
Evaluation in Diverse Communities in the 21st Century

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Overview

• GEDI internship experience
• Initial lessons learned
• Post-GEDI reflection and practice
GEDI Host Agency

- Planning Council for Health & Human Services
- Milwaukee, WI
- Community-based non-profit founded in 1965
- Planning, research, and evaluation services
- Clients/partners include local government, foundations, and social service agencies
- Staff of 7 + interns and consultants
- Participatory approaches and strong relationships with internal evaluators
Internship Activities

• Literature review

• Data analysis

• Report writing

• Evaluation Institute development

• Evaluation capacity building*
Final Internship Project

- Collaboratively develop and pilot a measurement tool that was:
  - acceptable and culturally-responsive
  - feasible given limited resources
  - easily integrated into regular practice
  - sustainable over the long term

- Make recommendations for modifications and future implementation
(Some) Initial Lessons Learned

• Funders need education and support, too

• Make sure there’s a program before you try to evaluate it

• Bigger isn’t always better

• There’s a world outside the university*

• Participatory processes can be frustrating but rewarding*
Now What?
Life After GEDI

• Center for Urban Population Health

• Founded in 2001

• Partnership between UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, Aurora Health Care

• “Working together to improve the health of communities”

• Assets-based approach, building capacity, bi-directional

• Staff of 15 + interns and Center Scientists
Post-GEDI Reflection & Practice

• Culturally competent evaluation requires that we see beyond what we presume to be obvious about those with whom we work and ourselves,

• That we conscientiously engage in an ongoing and collaborative process of unlearning, learning, and relearning,

• In order to avoid reinforcing inequities and perpetuating imbalances of power and privilege,

• And to foster self-determination and the capacity to self-name and self-define.
Question Assumptions

• Your assumptions about yourself and others
  • “Community” ≠ one homogenous group, contextually informed
  • “Culture” isn’t just about “race” or ethnicity, e.g. organizational
  • Why do you do what you do in the way that you do it
  • How do you know what you know
  • Who is expert in what
  • Just because someone looks like you doesn’t mean they “speak the same language”
  • Just because someone looks different than you doesn’t mean they don’t
Gather & Share “Data”

- Find out what IS relevant to your clients/partners

- Talk about constraints, don’t assume you know what they are going in

- Seek to understand each others’ identity(ies), worldviews, values, priorities

- Continuously clarify expectations
Implementation

• Practice humility
• Use assets-based, participatory approaches
• Avoid tokenism and paternalism
• Integrate capacity building
• Strive for transparency and honesty
• Acknowledge and address the elephant(s) in the room
• Invest time in the process, i.e. don’t just say “this isn’t business as usual,” make sure it isn’t
• Be intentional
Thoughts?
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