

HIA + community organizing A model for HIA success



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HIP loves community organizers – Why?



- Make an impact on issues people care about
- Use research for action – effective, strategic dissemination
- HIA projects get started with the sole intention of actually using the research that is generated
- Decrease inequities
- Work together to build civic agency
- Impact structural racism
- Public health staff are also community members

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Impact structural racism – by this I am saying that there is something within our very institutions that excludes communities of color, no matter how well-meaning we are. The only way we can start to address this is by including those voices in our discussions in a deep, meaningful way.

My example is that I work with public health departments across the country who want to impact inequities and want to do good community engagement. But, when I push them to have a member of the community on their HIA Advisory Committee, somehow it never quite happens – too busy, not enough time, we'll do it next time, etc.

- WISDOM – Treatment Instead of Prison HIA



WISDOM – prison ministry; saw changes over time with more and more people being incarcerated for very little; saw the devastating impact in people's lives, saw the racial imbalance in who was being incarcerated.

Wanted to work on a solution that existed – treatment alternatives to prison

Because they are community organizers, they had a well-thought out campaign that the HIA could fit right into

Used the HIA as a way to elevate the discussion as the researchers gathered data

Picked a strategic Advisory Committee that included public health at different levels, academics, agency staff, corrections, public defenders.

Disseminated the HIA findings and recommendations in a media and public speaking campaign

Had set up the expectation of that the findings would be released in a statewide speaker's bureau, motivating their public

Also had many meetings over time with different stakeholders.

All part of their campaign

Remember...



- Reasonable expectations – don't promise too much
- Reasonable expectations – don't expect too much
- Readiness – make sure your community partners are well-informed about what HIA is
- Organize – create your workplan together
- Relationships – primary importance
- Funding – we all need funding to support our work

- New and convincing data to be used as part of an organizing campaign
- Build leadership and recruit new members
- Build new relationships and strengthen existing ones with collaborating partners
- Draw in funding resources
- Help to reframe the typical discussion around an issue