

Community-Based Data Collection in Rural, Latino and Tribal Communities of New Mexico

Liz Liliott, with Christina-Lopez Gutierrez and Martha Waller, PIRE
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Learning Objectives

- What are the challenges to data collection unique to rural and tribal communities and how they might be addressed.
- Why community engagement and involvement in data collection in rural and tribal communities is empowering to community and builds capacity and readiness to engage actively in prevention.
- How one can assist communities in “owning” their data and defining how data and results are shared with others outside of the community.

► Who are we?

- Challenges to data collection unique to rural and tribal communities
 - The role of colonialism in NM and it's relationship to data collection
 - How the lack of local data relates to lack of effective prevention efforts
 - Fear of data, what it may reveal and beliefs it may challenge
- Strategies for overcoming data collection challenges
 - Understanding the structure of power in a setting prior to collecting data
 - Understanding local cultures and ideology
- Enabling Community Engagement and Empowerment

Agenda



Who are we?



- **PIRE- Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation**
- Martha Waller, PhD. Psychology and Maternal and Child Health
- Liz Lilliot, PhD., Medical Anthropology, qualitative methods
- Christina Lopez-Gutierrez, training and technical assistance especially with CAPT and Border SIG
 - Evaluators for various federal grants to New Mexico OSAP involving community/coalition based prevention activities. (SPF SIG, SPE, SAPT block grant, PFS-II, PFS 15)
 - State & local evaluators as well as implementation of evidence based practices for prevention in New Mexico.
 - Focus on building capacity, participatory methods, rural and low resource communities of color.
 - Familiar with the challenges of working with communities and state government at same time.

What can be learned from New Mexico?





Unique circumstances: Colonial History

- Three dominant groups: Hispanic/Latino, White/Anglo, Native American/tribal with a long & troubled history of engagement. A “minority majority” state
- Reminds us that no group, especially Native American & Hispanic are any singular categories. Heightens the importance of identifying one’s location in colonial histories.
 - E.g., Hispanic/Latino- Spanish, Mexican, Immigrants, undocumented, Mexican American, etc.
 - Northern NM “Spanish” identify more closely with conquistadors than the Native Americans more closely related to them in geography & time
 - Rural America is not homogeneous culturally.
- Reminds us also to honor and acknowledge different challenges these communities face:
 - Historical trauma and consequences; boarding schools & impact on tribal communities- loss of language and cultural knowledge and trauma of forced separation of families
 - Lack of resources in tribal and rural communities resources as a consequence of structural racism

Data Collection Challenges Faced in New Mexico



Sanctuario de Chimayó

"There's no data!"

- ▶ Beginning with the SPF SIG (2005): need for local data for assessment, planning and evaluation
- ▶ Few resources overall, not just for prevention
 - ▶ Education, health services, communications
- ▶ No data available on community-level due to small populations, sub-community, or tribal status
- ▶ Low capacity & readiness for accessing, understanding, and using data at the community level
 - ▶ Fear of the term 'data' itself – 'not our area' – only the realm of evaluators/epidemiologists/researchers – people who don't get us.
 - ▶ Fear of what data may reveal about a community, a department, an agency, an individual's performance.
 - ▶ Fear that it may challenge long held beliefs and understandings in the community.
 - ▶ Fear of an outsider using data to define us with no understanding or appreciation of the context.
- ▶ Our approach was shaped by this necessity for data and this broader context. We needed to obtain data where data were hard to find, but also develop overall capacity in data-driven prevention.



So why should I care that there are no data?

- ▶ Communities without good local data are generally disenfranchised in other ways.
- ▶ Communities without data are typically communities with no strategic prevention implementation (and therefore, probably not effective prevention services).
- ▶ Advocating for data collection is part and parcel of advocating for data driven and evidence-based prevention.



Española/Santa Cruz "Vienvenidos"

- ▶ So we decide we need data.
- ▶ The next challenge is to define who are we collecting data from? Who is our community?
- ▶ How you define your community has implications for who & how you are targeting for your prevention efforts.
 - ▶ Is your community defined by race/ethnicity, geographic or political boundaries or something else?
 - ▶ Are there people who influence or interact with your community in important ways even if you do not consider them to be members of it?

Defining Community



Unique qualities of New Mexico require us to unpack the concept of community

- ▶ “Tribe” as one’s community is not as simple as it sounds: e.g., tribal membership, those living on tribal lands, tribal members living off tribal lands.
- ▶ Counties with very low populations: e.g., more elk than people in Catron County
- ▶ And vast spaces: e.g., one community in NM consisted of 4 counties accustomed to sharing resources; one county is larger than some Eastern states; living “off the grid”; long distances required to travel to services
- ▶ School as community: e.g., students, staff/administration, parents
- ▶ Neighborhoods within counties or cities: e.g., South Valley of Albuquerque is Latino immigrant dominant
- ▶ Small populations can make identifying and targeting subgroups problematic – e.g., LGBT youth

Power influences data collection

- ▶ Representation – who speaks for diverse social sectors ?
 - ▶ Hispanic chamber of commerce leader may not have much invested in Latino immigrants.
 - ▶ Tribal members versus non-tribal members living on Tribal grounds.
 - ▶ “Youth” – being represented by Juvenile Probation in coalition.
- ▶ Who’s in charge? Who authorizes data collection is often who authorizes prevention itself.
 - ▶ Those in positions of power can have ideas more informed by ideology than by actual data.
 - ▶ Without good data collection, easy to rely upon the local leaders’ definition of the problem as well as the solution. “We can tell you who’s causing all our DWI’s”
 - ▶ Individuals (as opposed to city councils) can control a great deal of power over what happens or doesn’t happen in rural areas.

"Anglos":

- ▶ Mormons of the southwest that consider alcohol a moral weakness & at same time can see themselves as a marginalized population even when holding political power
- ▶ Santa Fe 'high culture' and political elites drinking wine
- ▶ Beer-drinking petroleum workers of the Southeast- not from NM but with a lot of cash to spend
- ▶ "Hispanics": Mexican/Latinos, Native Hispanos, Mexican Americans;/Hispanic;
 - ▶ Young Latino males were our initial target group, but they are most difficult to gather data with.
 - ▶ Undocumented get blamed for community problems when there's little evidence to support this view point.
- ▶ "Native American":
 - ▶ Some reservations are dry
 - ▶ Others the only alcohol outlets are owned by the tribe;
 - ▶ How to reach those living off reservation
 - ▶ Tribal leadership structures differ

Power is manifested differently within "homogenous" groups



Mercedes convertible with dream catcher at Taos Pueblo

In sum: Challenges to data collection

- ▶ Limited resources- E.g., communications- infrequent access to internet or frequent turn over in cell phones.
- ▶ Low capacity and/or readiness for both data collection and use of data for prevention
- ▶ Visible and invisible ideologies & power structures
- ▶ Geography, environment, and timing (e.g., wild dog packs; weather-related obstacles; community events calendars)
- ▶ Data collection methodology and representation
 - ▶ Small sample sizes and lack of anonymity/stigma (insider or outside collecting data)
 - ▶ Representation (Does this represent our community and in what way?)

Snowstorm in Dulce, Jicarilla Apache Nation headquarters

Strategies to address data collection challenges

Or, an anthropologist's toolkit for data collection





Why an anthropologist?

- Awareness of issues of culture, language and power in any community
- Aware that no community is easily defined by geographic boundaries.
- Aware that any community will be diverse within it, (no one person can represent a community as a whole).
- Aware of rituals and rites that are important to a community (fall football in the rural Southwest!)
- Aware that one can never gather all the necessary data in any one community; that data collection is a constant process as culture always changes.
- Aware that we are all affected by culture and ideology – seek to think reflexively (know what you do and don't know, & believe, values)
- Cultural competency in data collection is key.

Image: Happy's Café, Carlsbad, NM

Learn the challenges before you try to collect data

- ▶ Talk with community members who know the community in all its diversity (subgroups that are less obvious)
- ▶ Ask about any previous data collection efforts
- ▶ When are people mostly likely to be receptive to data collection?
- ▶ Realize that the best times for data collection may not coincide with 9-5 work day.
- ▶ Get a school calendar (esp sports), community calendar, tribal calendar
 - ▶ Are there key dates for economy? Eg., Agricultural, ranching, mining?
 - ▶ On payday many people come to town to shop,
 - ▶ immigrant labor in laundromats on weekend.
 - ▶ When are public libraries (with internet access) most often used?





Learning the challenges

- ▶ Gatekeepers and insiders, champions who know the history of the community
- ▶ Learn the resources in the community that you can leverage if needed
- ▶ Prioritize your data needs and plan well but build in flexibility to the process
- ▶ Are there groups of limited English language ability?
 - ▶ Do not assume that you can collect data when you have no language access
- ▶ Who might belong to the stigmatized groups or those who have no voice and how can we respectfully (and confidentially) learn from them?

**ADDICTION
OF REALITY**

Think of Power. Where are our blinders? What are the stakes?



- ▶ **State or government officials** often do not have the resources or even the ability to work closely with communities – need to be reminded of the local realities shaping prevention implementation with qualitative and quantitative data.
 - ▶ Communities can complain about their realities being overlooked (heard in anywhere that is not central NM, as the capitol and Albuquerque are in the middle of the state)
- ▶ **Community prevention leaders** – as coming from county positions or community non-profits, often from the more powerful in their community. Can be gatekeepers – for better or worse.
- ▶ **Evaluators and researchers** – need to be reminded that they can assume their “objectivity” too easily or lose it altogether with communities with whom they have worked for a long time.

Image: Ethnographer Frances Densmore with Blackfoot chief, Mountain Chief, during a 1916 phonograph recording session for the Bureau of American Ethnology.



We are all affected by culture and ideology. Think reflexively.

- ▶ US society: resistance to scientific thought and an attitude of 'everyone's opinion is valid'
- ▶ Problems can be interpreted as a product of 'outsiders' as opposed to broader processes:
 - ▶ "'Those people" are at fault for the increase in DWIs" What about alcohol promotion?
- ▶ Data can help unpack deeply held logics about community pattered behavior and asking people to question what is considered 'normal'
- ▶ Culture and ideology can be behind resistance to data collection AND prevention.
 - ▶ Reluctance to participate in YRBS – notion held by school administrators that asking questions about risky/'immoral' behavior makes youth curious to participate in risky behavior.
 - ▶ Understanding this as ideology can help you find strategies to overcome this barrier.

Culture is a highly contested arena – listen and learn from your mistakes (as we have)

▶ People can hold tightly to their values and ideologies, such that those contesting them can be accused of rudeness, insensitivity to local norms, disrespectful, or ‘culturally incompetent’

▶ While ideally avoided, learn from critique or when accused of insensitivity. This can help you better understand how to shape your prevention work

▶ Remember always that behavioral health & substance abuse are sensitive topics – asking questions can stir up bad feelings and reveal deeply held prejudice.



FAMILIES DE

JUVENILE
PROBATION
& PAROLE



Know that ultimately you will never be able to gather all the data you want

- ▶ That's ok from an anthropologists point of view, as all knowledge is partial, but when facing a federal mandate for 70% participation rate, this is problematic.
- ▶ When encountering sincere resistance to data collection, ask yourself how necessary are these data to collect? Is there another method that will nonetheless help us?
- ▶ Can it wait until after some readiness has been built?
 - ▶ Gathering youth surveys in a rural white 'cowboy' county where binge drinking is pervasive. Area schools refuse to participate in the YRBS, but have agreed to participate your youth substance abuse survey, as long as you remove the question on LGBT status.

Community engagement & empowerment

Data gathering,
data ownership,
and data sharing



Equine therapeutic presentation to youth coalition,, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce, NM



Why do we share data?

- ▶ In small community settings, people are accustomed to not seeing data about themselves. (Very true in tribal communities)
- ▶ Establish a data sharing aspect to all protocols, MOUs and MOAs.
- ▶ Sharing data and explaining its meaning educates people, brings in more stakeholders, and can even help attract more resources.
- ▶ If you don't share data, you might not be able to collect it again (esp. with schools, universities, tribes).

Sharing data helps maintain the core value of
community empowerment



How data are shared is important

- ▶ Tribal entities should have a well established and highly visible means of storing data. The tribe should have clear authority of it's use.
- ▶ Assure mechanisms for de-identifying data to the required degree (eg, for a tribe you may need to remove all geographic data in order to assure tribal confidentiality)
- ▶ Access – use shared drives to enable wide but controlled sharing of data.
- ▶ Should have permissions established to publish data that include sharing results with community (sending out a published paper is usually insufficient).

NMCS – an example

- SPF SIG required yearly comprehensive data collection at a community level
- Convenience sample with an effort towards representativeness – based upon practices established by tribal prevention programs.
- Harnessing community expertise with epidemiological knowledge to develop rigorous data collection protocols
- Prevention coalitions gather data themselves
- When funding ended, many continued to gather data.



Online advertisement for NM Community Survey 2014