

KNOWLEDGE HUB

BULLETIN 16



Shared Wisdom from Projects

March 2020

We are pleased to focus this issue of the bulletin on two projects that are wrapping up at the end of March 2020:

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

TransFormed: Addressing partner violence from Two-Spirit, Nonbinary, and Trans perspectives

The Knowledge Hub team had the opportunity to discuss lessons learned and recommendations on conducting trauma-informed, community-based research with members of the FGM/C and TransFormed projects. Their shared wisdom included:

- Build community relationships
- Actively involve community members and participants in all aspects of the research
- Use the vocabulary of the community when discussing the issue
- Connect and build on work being done in the community

Engaging members of the community who are either directly impacted by violence/trauma or passionate about the issue was a key deliverable for both projects and defined what success meant for them.

The FGM/C project led by [Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre](#) engaged women impacted by FGM/C, community leaders, service providers to enhance supports for survivors of the practice. The TransFormed project led by [The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence against Women and Children \(METRAC\)](#) engaged Two-Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans perspectives in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who have experienced intimate partner violence to develop resources and improve supports for survivors.



[Watch the Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\) Project Video](#)

“Success for us was when we engaged the women impacted by FGM/C through digital stories.”

– FGM/C Project Member

“We have had a lot of successful moments in the projects. For instance, we anticipated engaging 75 two-spirit, non-binary and Trans folks but we ended-up engaging over 150!”

– TransFormed Project Member

Members of both projects will be presenting their work at our [Trauma and Violence-Intervention Research Conference](#) in June 2020.
Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about their research and interventions!

BUILD COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The ability to partner effectively with other individuals and organizations is essential to the success of any community-based project. Building effective relationships requires patience as it is a process that takes time, especially if the end goal is to build trust among project and community members. Both projects were very pleased with the number of new connections, collaborations and relationships that were formed as a result of this work.

Additionally, these projects were aware that there might be misconceptions around the topics they are addressing and recognized that ample time must be built-in to effectively communicate the goals of their projects to community members and get people on board.

“FGM/C is a sensitive topic to talk about and we had to attend community events to identify community leaders. Once identified, we have put a lot of effort in communicating the goals of the project to them while taking the time to clear up any misconceptions that they may have.”

– FGM/C Project Member

ACTIVELY INVOLVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH

Developing and maintaining trust is best accomplished when community members see themselves represented in the project. For example, it helps when the person involved in the community outreach is a member of the community. Another helpful strategy was having members of the communities that a project is working with inform every aspect of the project from planning to implementation to evaluation and reporting.

Peer-led focus groups were also found to be very helpful for data collection as they mitigate the power differential between the researcher(s) and participants and increase the likelihood of establishing trust and openness to sharing. One project is engaging peer leaders to assist with the data analysis as well.

USE THE VOCABULARY OF THE COMMUNITY WHEN DISCUSSING THE ISSUE

Inclusive language is constantly evolving and preferred terms could change many times over the course of the project. It is recommended to engage community members in identifying the language that best represents them.

For instance, the term “survivor” might not be reflective of the participants that a project is working with and it is best to check-in with them about how they

identify. Also, selecting the pronouns that align with a person’s self-determined identity is a powerful way to demonstrate a commitment to creating welcoming and inclusive spaces. An organization’s existing mandate might require revision to ensure that it is inclusive of the communities engaged, or hoping to be engaged with it.

“We had to change our project’s title to really reflect who came to the table and who responded to our call out. We also revised our organizational mandate so that’s its more inclusive of the people we are serving and representing.”

– TransFormed Project Member

“Sometimes the women we work with don’t like to be referred to as “survivors”. One woman said, “we are strong despite what happened to us”

– FGM/C Project Member

CONNECT AND BUILD ON WORK BEING DONE IN THE COMMUNITY

Projects took the time to research the existing work that is being done within the community around the topics they were addressing. This allowed them to network with these agencies, benefit from their resources, extend their reach, and build credibility.

For example, project members recruited participants and spread awareness about their projects by attending groups run by other community members.

In conclusion, members of the Transformed and FGM/C projects are excited about the work they have accomplished while acknowledging that there is still more work to be done within their areas of research. In particular, more inclusive research is still needed to ensure that members with intersected identities are fully represented.



KNOWLEDGE HUB TEAM

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