Transcript: *iTHRIV Learning Shorts, Team Science with Community Partners: Engagement and Trust*

[Music]

Deron Campbell, PhD: My name is Deron Campbell. Again, I'm the director of community health programs with the Inova Health System and who do I have with me today?

Kris Miller: My name is Kris Miller and I am the Partnership Manager in iTHRIV in Charlottesville, Virginia.

No Speaker: How important is community engagement before beginning a research project?

[Music]

Kris Miller: I think it's important to engage community members wherever you are. So, if you've gone past the point of, I have an idea, and you're at the point of writing the proposal, or you're at the point of recruitment, do not think you have gone beyond where you need to be to engage community members. Right? Engage them wherever you are. It's wonderful to have them at the table starting out, but it's as advantageous to have them anywhere along the pathway of research. Up until the point of you've collected all your data. You know what the results are. How am I going to get it out to the people? If you you're at that point right now? Invite them in. Invite them in then for the dissemination of how should we go about doing this.

Deron Campbell, PhD: I completely agree, but I would like to start at square one.

Kris Miller: Okay.

Deron Campbell, PhD: How about, I don't know anybody that likes uninvited guests, right? We don't like them knocking on our door. We don't like them coming to dinner unannounced. So, I don't think community members will want you coming into their community uninvited, unannounced, and not and them not understanding why you're there and what you're doing. And that's just a respect and comfortability thing, you know. That's creating a safe space for both the researcher and the community member and it is showing someone that they are of value. Even before, you sort of, denote that or place that expectation, because that's technically what you're doing in the research project anyway. So, yeah, I would like to start by not being an uninvited guest and making it awkward. Like, work on building that relationship from the beginning and understanding how valuable the community member and their perspective is to what you're doing.

Kris Miller: I agree.

No Speaker: How important is building trust with community member?

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Deron Campbell, PhD: I would encourage someone to just understand how important and valuable trust is period. We never, you know, often times in our processing or understanding of what we're trying to do, or what we're trying to include in this, you know, example we're talking about community members. We're trying to increase their presence, trying to increase their proximity to these conversations and you know, to research. But at the end of the day, you know, trust is something that we feel as early as our childhood, right? We create trusted relationships with our parents, with our environments, with our schools, with how we learn. You

know, trust is necessary in order to really push and promote our experience. And so, just in understanding how valuable trust is to you and how you employ it in your daily process or experience. Someone can take that little iteration and then transform that to the community member also, so that you understand why it is important that you are building trust and creating buy in. And, you know, creating a secure and safe presence versus just coming in and bulldozing someone's thoughts and ideas or delivering sort of an intervention or plan that no one ever ask for. So, you know, trust is more important than you think. So, just think about that first, you know, lollipop that you sucked and how much trust it took to do that. You can absolutely understand how important it is for community member to trust your approach, your perspective, of what you're doing when it comes to research.

Kris Miller: I would, I completely agree. I would say from a research's point of view, become trustworthy. Right? Become the type of person that someone can actually trust. Be humble. Learn about your community as a disease or as a location, and learn about the location of where you're doing your research. Was it a health system or a medical center that has a past that is, has treated people differently? Did the town where you do your research have a past where the people from the medical center participated. So, know your history, be humble, be trustworthy.

No Speaker: Could trust be improved by including the community members on the research team?

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Deron Campbell, PhD: I think it can assist in building trust. Elevating trust I think, depends on the intention over time and how you, you know, intend to lead something, intend to incorporate community. How, again, how valuable you make them feel as being a part of the process. And we are going to have to be intentional with engaging community members as researchers, as scientists, in the understanding that we are building a better future that incorporates things like trust, and respect, and mutual accountability, and confidentiality, and safety as standards in research. But we are not there yet. So, I think that we should continue to work on the relationship. Incorporate the community member and you know, make sure that they feel value, with the intention that we're contributing to a better future in research, where we should have a lot of these barriers removed. Through good intention.

Kris Miller: Be transparent.

Deron Campbell, PhD: Yes!

Kris Miller: Do what you're say you're going to do. That's kind of about building trust, right? And about being trustworthy. It doesn't happen overnight and it may never happen right. But again, if you have that goal in mind of spectacular research, research that um resonates with the community, research that is inclusive, then spending time to build the trust, spending time to build relationships, inviting people in early is all worth it.

Deron Campbell, PhD: I agree. I agree, we're focused on you know building a better future.

For more information about iTHRIV and team science, please visit our website.