Application of Culturally Responsive Evaluation to the
Lived Experience Advisory Group

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ABOUT ME
Qualitative researcher in public health with training in theory-based behavior change, community and youth engagement, and tobacco use prevention

PASSIONS
Social justice, equity, community, self-compassion and healing
Objectives

Learn about the LEAG

To learn about the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) for the Maternal Telehealth Access Project (MTAP), and learn how MTAP applied CRE in planning the LEAG

Overview of CRE

To provide an overview of culturally responsive evaluation, benefits of culturally responsive evaluation, and best practices for carrying it out
GEDI History

DIVERSITY
The goal of the GEDI program is to increase the number of evaluators of color and traditionally under-represented groups in the field of evaluation.

CULTURAL CAPACITY
Improve the capacity of evaluators to work effectively in racially, ethnically and culturally diverse settings.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS
Stimulate evaluation thinking concerning under-represented communities and culturally responsive evaluation.

The Maternal Telehealth Access Project (MTAP) is a collaborative initiative aimed to increase access to perinatal services and supports via telehealth, including increasing the capacity of providers to offer and provide quality perinatal care services via telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MTAP Evaluation
The MTAP evaluation consists of workgroups (UNC, GHPC, R4E, LEAG) led by Deitre Epps – CEO of Race for Equity. The evaluation is based upon the Results Based Accountability framework and applies the core principles of Culturally Responsive Evaluation.
About the LEAG

Any solution to expand telehealth services must be informed by and responsive to the lived experience of people giving birth.

The Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) will consist of a collection of 8-12 community members with unique knowledge and skills, who will provide recommendations and key information to the Maternal Telehealth Access Project evaluation team at every stage of the evaluation.

Using a culturally responsive and equity-driven framework, advisory group participation and engagement in the evaluation process will lead to better quality and use of the findings.
What does ‘Lived Experience’ mean?

In the context of MTAP, lived experience refers to community members with recent experience with pregnancy or perinatal services, their families, and their network of support (doulas, lactation consultants, etc.), who are most impacted by maternal and infant morbidity, mortality, and racial injustice.

We will prioritize the voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color, including geographically marginalized or rural community members that are not normally heard or at the table.

People with lived experience may or may not have used/received telehealth services.
Defining Culturally Responsive Evaluation

**CULTURE**
A cumulative body of learned and shared behavior, values, customs and beliefs common to a particular group or society

**RESPONSIVE**
A continuously interactive, reflective, dynamic and participatory approach that intends to be oriented to the needs and experiences of stakeholders

**EVALUATION**
The determination of merit, worth or value of a program, project

**CRE**
An evaluation approach or model to guide quality and principles of evaluation, that attends to culture during the various phases of evaluation

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Hood, Hopson, Kirkhart., 2015
The CRE framework is consistent with other frameworks that describe the phases of an evaluation. However, it is **how** evaluators approach and carry out the steps that distinguishes CRE from other frameworks or approaches.
CRE Framework

Cultural Competence

A set of skills, both academic and interpersonal, that recognizes the importance of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups.

Requires individual and organizational reflection on worldview and perceptions held about people from different cultures—and how that may impact evaluation.
Validity

Evaluating with validity requires cultural competence

MULTICULTURAL VALIDITY
To draw valid conclusions and make trustworthy recommendations, evaluations requires that diverse voices and perspectives are honestly and fairly represented throughout all stages of the evaluation.

VALIDITY THREATS
To properly engage in CRE, allocating time and monetary resources is critical.

Inaccurate or incomplete understandings of culture introduces systematic error that threatens the validity of the evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES
Cultural competence fosters trustworthy understanding and minimizes error grounded in cultural biases, stereotypes, and lack of shared worldviews among stakeholders.

Identify strategies to justify necessary resources and overcome institutional barriers that often maintain or even perpetuate cultural inequities and ineffective evaluations.

Hood, Hopson, Kirkhart, 2015
CRE Framework

1. Prepare for the Evaluation

Evaluators have a responsibility to educate themselves on the context.

Evaluators must reflect and name their own assumption, experiences and biases about the evaluation contexts and cultures.

The team should have a connection to the lived experiences of the community and contexts.
MTAP Evaluation

CRE Preparation and Progress

- Weekly LEAG planning team meetings
- Culturally Responsive Engagement Steps to guide LEAG planning, timeline and activities
- Lived Experience Advisory Group literature review
- Community partnerships to support LEAG engagement and nominations

What is an Advisory Group?

An advisory group is a collection of individuals with unique knowledge and skills that support the advancement of an organization’s mission. The Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) will serve to make recommendations and provide key information to the evaluation team. Advisory group participation and engagement in the evaluation process will lead to better quality and use of the findings.

Why do we need an Advisory Group?

The goal of the Maternal Telehealth Access Project is to ensure that people in need of maternal health services during the COVID-19 pandemic are receiving quality care services. Telehealth is one solution. However, any solution to expand telehealth services must be informed by and responsive to the lived experience of people giving birth. As we assess the efficacy of this effort, we will invite and convene an advisory group of 8-12 people who are pregnant or postpartum and people supporting them, such as loved ones, doulas, childbirth educators, lactation consultants, and community leaders.

Who should make up the Advisory Group?

Throughout the month of August and early September, we will accept nominations from a diverse pool of candidates, some who have accessed maternal health services via telehealth and others who have not, that meet considerations such as:

- Comfort speaking and sharing about maternal health and telehealth
- A commitment of 5 hours per month to participate in monthly Zoom calls or correspond over email/social media
- May have prior experience serving on an advisory board/planning committee
- Ability to connect to or learn how to connect to Zoom or other platforms for online meetings

What are the expectations for Advisory Group members?

Throughout the next 9 months, we will offer opportunities to Advisory Group members such as, and not limited to:

- Share the history and experience of their community to ensure efforts are responsive to community-level cultures
- Highlight how to deliver the Maternal Telehealth Access Project in a just and equitable manner
- Ensure the evaluative questions focus on the actual strengths and needs of the community
- Offer guidance on how to collect data in various communities
- Assist with interpreting and disseminating results to community members and other stakeholders

What will Advisory Group members gain from this opportunity?

Advisory group members will provide valuable input on a national telehealth service project to improve equity in maternal health. In partnership with the evaluation team, group members will gain opportunities to network with others involved in maternal health. Advisory Group participants receive up to $1800 paid over the course of the advisory group.

When will the Advisory Group start?

The Advisory Group meetings will start in September 2020. To get involved please contact:

Zachary Epps
M-TAP Evaluation Assistant
zacharystjohnnepps@gmail.com

RACE for Equity

link to nomination form:
www.go.unc.edu/LEAGnomination
CRE Framework

2. Engage Stakeholders

Respectfully enter the community
Connect with community partners

Make agreements with the community around trust and respect for the process

Listen to stakeholder concerns, involve them in the process

Spend ample time building relationships through continuous and on-going engagement at a level that is meaningful and appropriate to stakeholders
How is MTAP involving community partners?

Community partners are on MTAP leadership, and work directly with and in the community.

The LEAG planning team held meetings with MTAP community partners to hear their feedback and input on engaging LEAG members in a respectful and culturally responsive manner.

Our community partners agreed to:
- Review LEAG nomination materials
- Support LEAG engagement and nomination activities
What did we learn from community partners?

How can we intentionally work towards collaborative relationships that are not traumatizing to our work?

- Who will interact with LEAG members?

- Be mindful and transparent about advisory group inclusion and exclusion criteria:
  - People who experienced extremely traumatic birthing journeys or stillbirth/infant loss may not want to participate in this group if talking about maternal health and telehealth experiences may trigger past trauma
  - While we aim to include a diverse group, we are not currently providing translation/interpretation, but recognize that language justice is an important aspect of CRE
Engaging LEAG members throughout every step of the evaluation

- Continuous Engagement
- Conducted LEAG Orientation in October
  - Co-developed a shared vision
  - Reviewed evaluation questions
- Monthly LEAG convenings informed by CRE
Key Takeaways

Preparation is Key!

- Involve community partners who are directly tied to the community and the evaluation in decision-making and on-going thought-partnership.

- Build a culturally competent evaluation team that has a meaningful connection to the lived experience of the stakeholder community.

- Identify and prioritize the stakeholder community that is most impacted by the issue to be addressed by the program.

Dean-Coffey, 2017
Final Thoughts

“Without addressing racial equity, any broader achievement of equity will be elusive”

Important actions:
• Reflect on our history because it sheds light on the implicit and explicit beliefs, values, and intentions that frame our current approaches and frameworks
• Interrogate the ways in which values, assumptions, and beliefs (particularly those related to race) influence our evaluation work
• Explicitly name and address racism
• Hold each other accountable to this work
Thank you!

RESOURCES

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (2011)

DEAN-COFFEY (2017)
