Crime and Violence in Indian Country: The Myths, the Facts, and the Importance of Research

with
- Twyla Beth Baker-Demaray, Fort Berthold Community College
- Michelle Chino, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- Thomasine Heitkamp, University of North Dakota
- Ada Pecos Melton, American Indian Development Associates
- André B. Rosay, Executive Visiting Research Fellow, National Institute of Justice (NIJ) & Director, University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center

Moderator
- Christine Crossland, NIJ
Who is in the audience?

• Do we have any:
  – tribal leaders and/or council members?
  – criminal or tribal justice staff (e.g., prosecutors, law enforcement, probation officers)?
  – victim service and behavioral health specialists?
  – researchers, evaluators, graduate students?
  – practitioners who are partnering with researchers?
  – researchers partnering with practitioners?
  – federal, state, or private science agency staff?
  – tribal citizen who has participated in a research study?
What are the barriers to research in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages and what, if any, strides have been made despite these challenges?

Twyla Beth Baker-Demaray, Fort Berthold Community College
Thomasine Heitkamp, University of North Dakota
“Barriers to Research...?”

Lack of academic education on tribal sovereignty, role of trauma, understanding cultural differences

Inflexible scientific process that creates dissonance

Inattention to need for reciprocity

Romanticized—even hostile—media images that damage relationships

Lack of attention to shared partnerships and community engagement

Misguided Intentions

Urban-based focus of RFPs and publications
A Case Study: North Dakota and Montana Oil Producing Counties
Strides Made.....?

- An Educated Research Team/Respect for Culture
- Flexibility to Adapt to Process/Be Accessible
- Tribal IRBs and Tribal Resolutions/Respect Denials
- Advisory Board (VIAB as Model)/Honouring Culture and Tradition
- Tribal Liaison assigned to Research Campuses
- Use of Tribal Colleges to Enhance Reciprocity

Baker-Demaray (FBCC) & Heitkamp (UND) – “Barriers to Research & Strides Made: Research in Indian Country and Alaskan Native Village” – Dec 3, 2014
What models have been used by researchers that assure appropriate research practices are used?

Ada Pecos Melton, American Indian Development Associates
Addressing Gaps in the Research & How Research is Conducted

• Using culturally respectful methods & strategies
  – Listening Sessions, Tribal Consultations, Focus Groups, Oral Histories
• Marrying western and traditional scientific concepts and protocols
• Building research & evaluation capacity with tribal communities at every step of the process
Tribal Research & Evaluation Examples

• Tribal Victim Assistance Program Evaluation
• Tribal Youth Reentry Evaluation
• National Baseline Study – protocol approaches
• Tribal Youth Methods Study
Examples of Building Community Capacity via Research

- Obtaining tribal government approval via tribal resolutions, participatory agreements/MOUs/MOAs, and information sharing agreements.
- Hiring and training indigenous project staff—interviewers, interpreters, site coordinators.
- Coordinating and collaborating with tribes to: secure space, transportation, sampling lists/data, maps, data sources, and services.
- Enabling citizen-level participation (e.g., child care, trauma support, incentives, informed consent, translation of findings).
- Providing relevant training to project staff and community members.
- Providing ongoing information and updates to tribes and stakeholders throughout the process to get input from tribal communities.
How do study results impact policies and practices that ensure safety, justice, and healing both negatively and positively?

André B. Rosay, Executive Visiting Research Fellow, National Institute of Justice & Director, University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center
Impacting Policy and Practice

• To impact policy and practice:
  – Do good research
  – Disseminate research
Doing Good Research

• Begin by “setting the stage”:
  – Build trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
  – Abandon Eurocentric research process
  – Develop good research questions
  – Focus on improving tribal communities

• Maintain trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
Disseminating Research

• Reporting back and sharing knowledge
• Maintaining trust, respect, and reciprocity
• Accepting feedback
• Transferring ownership
How can research studies appropriately address crime and victimization in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages?

Michelle Chino, University of Nevada Las Vegas
Legacy of Indian Research

• Most studied minority group
  – 1% of the population but highest proportion of studies; Proportionally four times higher than African Americans

• History of research abuses
  – abuse, stigmatization and limited benefits

• Not surprisingly, Indian people are reluctant to:
  – pursue research,
  – allow research,
  – participate in research
  – trust researchers
Redefining Tribal Research

Level of community influence over decisions

We are here

Inform  Consult  Involve  Collaborate  Empower
Levels of community engagement

We were here

We will be here
Tribal-Research Partnerships

- **Western Scientific Knowledge**
  - provides structure for scientific inquiry

- **Tribal Knowledge**
  - context for problem definition, interpretation of results,
  - culturally appropriate solutions
  - Native Science

- **Native Researchers**
  - Skilled, trusted,
  - Knowledgeable about tribal context,
  - can bridge gaps
Redefining Tribal Research

Tribe

Applied

Practical

Local

Solutions

Representation

Conceptualization

Interpretation

Application

Results

Dominant Culture

Theoretical

Intellectual

Global

Generalizable Knowledge

NIJ
Partners from Start to Finish

• Connection Points
  – Priorities
  – Problem definition
  – Goals
  – Strategies
  – Stakeholders
  – Beneficiaries
  – Capacity building

• Ethical Process
  – Mutual Achievement
  – Maximize Benefits
  – Minimize Risks
  – Increase Scientific Validity
  – Relevant to Community
  – Relevant to Science
What approaches to research can lead to a better understanding of crime and violence in Native American communities and ultimately to better solutions for dealing with public safety issues?
Questions & Answers

Panel & Audience Discussion
THANK YOU