Empowerment and Conscientization: Paulo Freire and Health Promotion Practice and Research

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What is Empowerment?

“Empowerment involves people in assuming control or mastery over their lives.”
(Rappaport, 1987)

“Empowerment is a social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of increase individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life and social justice.” (Wallerstein, 1992)
Personal Empowerment without Boring Seminar
I’m empowered, I’m not empowered, I’m empowered…..
Why Empowerment Important? Powerlessness

Physical and Social Risk Factors

Living in Poverty/Absolute Conditions
Low in Hierarchy
High Demand versus Low Control
Physical/Psychological
Chronic Stressors
Low Social Support/Social Capital
Racism/Segregation
Structural/Relative Inequalities
Allostatic load
Historical Trauma
Disparities/Inequities
Demands versus Resources
Deprived Communities
Strategy to Reduce Disparities: Empowerment

- Psychological Empowerment
  - Self Efficacy to Act
  - Political Efficacy
  - Motivation to Act
  - Collective Efficacy

- Critical Thinking/ “Conscientization”

- Community Empowerment
  - Increased Local Action
  - Transformed Conditions
  - Improved Health Policies
  - Resource Access/Equity
  - Changed Power Relations

Reduce Social Risk Factors

Reduce Physical Risk Factors

-Sense of Community
-Participation
-Cultural Identity/ Revitalization
Empowerment Theory

- Multi-level and Interdependent Construct:
  - Individual/Psychological Empowerment
  - Organizational Empowerment
  - Community Empowerment
- Assumes Control and Mastery over Lives
- Process and Outcome
- Contextual/Dynamic
- Power (power to influence/power over)
“Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of (poor) people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.”

(Narayan, 2002)

- Interplay of agency and opportunity structure
- Requires removal of formal and informal barriers
- Requires reciprocal strengthening of public investment and civil society
Dialectic of Power

• Power Over:
  – Power as Repressive/Domination: Political, Economic, Legal, Military, Ideologic
  – Power relations reproduced through ideology and social exclusion

• Power With:
  – Power as Productive
  – Not monolithic, diverse relations and spheres
  – Power as Resistance/hidden voices
  – Feminist Power: Power as resource
  – Power as Dialogue
Freirian Education

• Popular or Empowerment Education
• Dialogue between co-learners
  – Not Banking Education
• Belief in People
• Goal of Education is Critical Thinking and Social/Political Action
• Listening-Discussion-Action-Reflection
Paulo Freire

- Born 1921, From Middle Class to Poverty
- From law to education: influenced by liberation theology, humanism
- Started literacy movement in Northeast Brazil
- Military Coup 1964, Imprisoned then exiled
- Fled to Chile, World Council on Churches, Worldwide influence in adult education
- Returned to Brazil in 1991
- Minister of Education, State of Sao Paulo
Freirian Culture Circles in Brazil
Freirian Culture Circles in Brazil
Freire: Belief in People’s Voice

• To be a good “educator”/“leader” “means above all to have faith in people; to believe in the possibility that they can create and change things” (Freire, 1971).
Freire: Purpose of Education

- The purpose of education is human liberation, which “takes place to the extent that people reflect upon themselves and their condition in the world—the world in which and with which they find themselves... to the extent that they are more conscientizised, they will insert themselves as subjects into their own history” (Freire, 1971).
Listening/Dialogue/Action/Reflection

Trigger:
Case study Experience Photographs

Dialogue/Collective Storytelling

Dialogue

Action/Experience

Action

Reflection

Reflection/Analysis

Listen

Listen

Listen
Start with Listening

• How to be a good listener?
• Who to listen to? Hidden voices?
• What to listen for? Generative Themes
  – Issues that people are passionate about
  – Issues that reflect emotional and social reality
  – Issues that contain paradoxes, complexity or contradictions
  – Issues that bring people together to work on
How to Engage People in Dialogue

• Look for or Create triggers based on generative themes
• Physical representation of themes
• Triggers-Codifications:
  – Present a familiar issue or challenge
  – Evoke emotional connection
  – Present multiple sides
  – Are open-ended. Do not contain solutions.
DoubleTake
"Could someone help me with these? I'm late for math class."
Empowerment in Health Promotion Research

• How to involve the community as genuine partners
• How to start with community issues/listening
• How to define research questions with community
• Structures and processes to maintain partnerships over time
Definition of CBPR

“Collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities.”

W.K. Kellogg Community Scholar’s Program (2001)
CBPR: What it is and isn’t.

• CBPR is an orientation to research/values
  – changes the role of researcher and researched

• CBPR is **not** a method or set of methods
  – Typically thought of as qualitative
  – Experimental/epidemiologic designs growing

• CBPR is an applied approach
  – Goal is to influence change in community health, norms, systems, programs, policies
Principles of CBPR

- Recognizes community as a unit of identity
- Builds on strengths and resources
- Facilitates partnership and capacity building in all research phases
- Disseminates findings and knowledge to all
- Involves long-term process and commitment
- Seeks balance between research and action

Challenge of Research/Community Relationships

Shared University/Community Control

Professional Control

CBPR

Community Control
Challenge of Participation in Community

• Minimal Consultative versus Comprehensive throughout Process

• Participation Questions:
  – Who is included? Who is excluded?
  – Who is representing the community?
  – Service providers vs. community members
  – Hidden discourse (what will never be known)
Ethnic/Racial Challenges

• Institutional Racism:
  – Predominance of white middle class professionals and academics working in minority and deprived communities
  – Historical “helicopter” research
  – Social labeling of communities
    • Reproduced inaccurate representations
    • Resistance is ignorance
    • White privilege: Mistake white culture as culture neutral
  – Academy norm of research practice
    • Professional approaches are universal
    • Knowledge is uni-linear
Privilege and Power Challenges

• “Expert” or “Scientific” knowledge can obscure or prevent community knowledge
  – Empirically Supported Interventions (ESIs) privileged over Culturally/Community Supported Interventions (CSIs) (Gordon Hall)

• Who has power of knowledge?
  – Knowledge defined by whom? About whom? For what purpose? Who makes the decision of what to study?

• Who has power/resources to act and decide? Jobs versus research interest
Individual versus Community Protection Challenge

• IRB set up to protect individuals from harm
  – Need to identify greater benefit than harm (especially if vulnerable populations)
  – History of Tuskegee/ Current Havasupai lawsuit

• What would community protection look like?
  – How ensure community benefit?
  – Who determines community benefit?
  – Who can speak for community?
  – Minimum needed: Benefit and dissemination plan
New Mexico: CDC Capacity Study: 1999-2004

• Participatory research on social capital and community capacity within ethnic minority communities to strengthen capacities and strategic planning

• UNM team work with two tribal communities
  – 1999: Tribal resolutions, Develop advisory committees/local research teams
  – 2000: Co-develop interview instrument
  – 2001: Interviewer training and conduct interviews
  – 2002: Co-analyze data with local research teams
Pueblo of Jemez

- One of 19 Pueblos in New Mexico
- >89,000 acres of land
- 3,100 Enrolled Tribal Members
- Rural Environment
- Traditional Form of Government: Political Leaders Appointed by Spiritual Leaders on annual basis
- 95% Population Speak Towa Language
- 2000: Exercised self-determination in the taking over of ambulatory health services and prevention programs
- Local schools: Charter High School, Riverside and Day School Elementary schools
Jemez Pueblo

- Less than an hour from ABQ
Conceptual Framework of Community Capacity At A Tribal Level

**Cultural Capacities**
- Spirituality
- Traditionality
- Bi-culturality

**Economic/Environmental Capacities**
- Economic Development
- Built Environment/Facilities

**Social Capacities**
- Personal Relationships
- Organizational Relationships

**Health**

- Cultural Capacities
- Economic/Environmental Capacities
- Social Capacities
Year One: Partnership development and co-creation instrument

• What would you like tribal life to look like in 25 years?
• What makes the Pueblo a good place to live?
• What are the problems that you face living here?
• Which programs are successful and why?
• What are the capacities that are the most important?
  – Leadership, participation, sense of community, skills, sense of history, social supports, power to bring in resources, culture/tradition/language
Data Collection and Analysis

• Year 2: Participatory Data Collection
  – 30 Individual Interviews
  – 5 Focus Groups: Women, Men, Teens, Young Adults, & Tribal Employees (35)

• Year 3 and 4: Participatory Data Analysis/Community Voices Reports
  – Programs: Health, Environment, Education
  – Participation/Leadership and Politics
  – Communication/Sense of Community
  – Elders/Family/Youth/Gender Issues
  – Cultural Preservation/Identity/Language
  – Economic Development
Changed Model: Tribal Community Capacity

Health

Cultural Capacities
Culture / Tradition / Spirituality / Language

Social Capacities
♦ Personal Relationships
♦ Participation
♦ Education

Economic/Environmental Capacities
♦ Economic Development
♦ Built Environment/Facilities

Leadership & Politics
♦ Tribal Leadership
♦ Tribal Council
♦ Tribal Programs
Family Circle Project Goals 2005-2009

- Build on evidence based program of Anishinabe people
- To create Jemez specific culturally based family empowerment program of three generations
- To reduce risky alcohol use behaviors of 10 and 11 year olds
- To support children to contribute to tribe’s vision through improved family empowerment dynamic and through community action projects
**Aim One: Years 1-4**
Advisory Committee

- Reaffirm Tribal Advisory Committee members with leadership
- Review existing Tribal Resources
- Obtain IRB Approvals

**Aim Two: Year One**
Adapt Curriculum

- Conduct focus groups on curriculum
- Add community & cultural capacities
- Add empowerment/social action

**Aim Three: Yr Two**
New Curriculum

- Analyze focus group data
- Co-develop curriculum and manual
- Co-develop evaluation tools

**Aim Four: Yr 3 & 4**
Pilot and Evaluate New Curriculum

- Identify families and Conduct Pilot
- Pre/Post test
- Revise Curriculum
- Revise Facilitator’s Manual
- Plan large Prevention Program
Reaffirm Advisory Committee

- Able to establish very active AC with monthly meetings, usually conducted in the Towa or English languages
- Allowed the opportunity for the elders from the community to get together with tribal program staff and to share knowledge
- AC members given the opportunity to envision a sustainable project for their community to share their traditions, values, language and culture
- AC members were trained to facilitate and transcribe focus group discussions and later the curriculum
Adapted Empowerment Curriculum

Each AC actively reviewed and have adapted each of the 14 sessions of the Anishinabe curriculum

1. Welcome Feast
2. My Family
3. History
4. Way of Life
5. Our Vision
6. Community’s Challenges
7. Communication & Help Seeking
8. Recognizing Types of Anger
9. Problem Solving
10. Being Different
11. Refusal Skills
12. Peer Communication
13. Building Social Support
14. Making a Commitment
Empowerment & Health

Health Promotion Programs: Empowering Strategies

Community Empowerment Outcomes:
- Psychological
- Organizational
- Community/Political

Improve Health Outcomes
- Decreased Health Disparities

Wallerstein, Nina: Evidence that Empowerment Strategies Improve Health: WHO, 2006
## Empowerment Outcomes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Change</td>
<td>Well-Functioning Services</td>
<td>Civil Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political efficacy</td>
<td>Accountable Equitable Efficient Culturally-based Organizational Capacity</td>
<td>Good Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective efficacy (belief in group)</td>
<td>Sustainability Leadership Achieves results Empowering to Members</td>
<td>Transparency Accountability</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Interpersonal:</td>
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<td>Critical Reflection Participation</td>
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<td>Socio-Economic, Environmental Conditions and Policies</td>
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<td>Sense of Community Social Capital</td>
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<td>Changed Power Dynamics</td>
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Potential Health Outcomes

• Impact of Empowerment Outcomes on Health:
  – Few direct studies: (Eng et al, 1990)
  – Triangulation of evidence worldwide from case studies, correlational studies, intervention evaluations: w/women, people at risk for HIV/AIDs, youth, patients, poor.

• Further Studies Needed of Added Value of Empowerment Strategies on Health

Summary: Freirean Empowerment

- Emphasis on participation and inclusion of people who have been marginalized/or not participating in civil society
- Emphasis on living conditions and social determinants/ generative themes of people’s lives
- Emphasis on people’s voice as legitimate and recognized by public entities
- Listen to people’s own issues
  - To Identify generative themes and community issues
  - To engage in meaningful dialogue
  - To support community engaged actions for their own health
Our Roles

- Caring Professionals/Listeners
- Practice and Research
- Facilitation and Consensus Building
- Work towards change of social determinants
- Advocacy and Policy Change
- Willing to take Political Stance
How to Develop Codes/Triggers

• Identify core generative themes
• Be creative: How to present theme:
  – Skits/Role Plays
  – Visuals: Slides, photovoice, drawings
  – Songs
  – Stories
• Identify at least three voices representing issue:
• Create skit/image/story:
  – Identify ending
  – Be sure there’s no solution: Strike last line
SHOWED QUESTIONS

S What did you SEE here?  ► Descriptive

H What's really "HAPPENING?"
HOW are people feeling?

O How does the story relate to
OUR lives?  ► Personal

W WHY does this problem occur?  ► Analysis

E What would help EMPOWER
us?

D What can we DO about the
problem?