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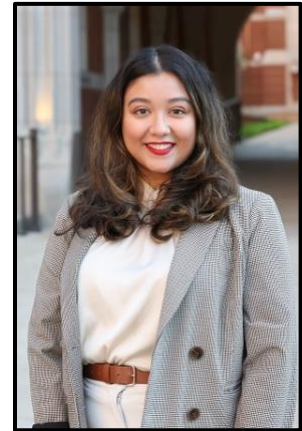
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Employing Health Equity Frameworks to Enhance Engagement in Community Based Interventions



Introduction: Community-based behavioral interventions that consider social determinants of health can be effective to address obesity among Latinos in Nashville. Historically, these interventions have not been as successful among minority populations. Equitable and inclusive practices can improve participant engagement.

A randomized control trial, "Competency-Based Approaches to Child Health (COACH)," aims to prevent and treat obesity among Latino families in Nashville, Tennessee. To improve participant engagement in COACH, equitable and inclusive practice were implemented as part of the practicum.

Methods: A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted through in-depth interviews with study staff implementing COACH. Interviewed research team members held a range of roles, including leaders, health coaches, program managers, and data collection staff. After gaging gaps and opportunities for improved community engagement and organizational development, a collaborative discussion with study leadership took place.

Results: As a result of the SWOT analysis, key action steps included: 1) developing a workforce development tool that would facilitate training new and existing team members on cultural humility and sustain skills for community engagement with traditionally marginalized populations, 2) ongoing attention to hiring practices to onboard staff representative of the communities in the research (e.g., rural and Latino communities), and 3) continuing to prioritize the needs of an evolving population by adjusting intervention materials.

Based on this analysis, a workforce development toolkit rooted in principles of health equity was developed and delivered to the current study team. The toolkit covers implicit versus explicit bias, an overview on the Latino diaspora, the difference between cultural competency and humility, and how to manage dynamics of privilege and power within community settings.

Conclusions: A diverse and experienced team is key to recognizing cultural norms, fear and hesitancy with medical research, and creating accessible programming. A health equity focused approach to workforce development equips research teams with foundational knowledge and resources to support communities in achieving generational optimal health and wellness.