

**What does it mean to be a trustworthy researcher in a community-academic research partnership?  
Repairing distrust of research institutions through advocacy and action**

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**Trustworthiness:**



**Trust:** A relational concept. *A trusts B to do x.*

*x* = to act in such a way as to take care of something A values.

Implies some vulnerability (of A) and responsibility and freedom of choice (of B).

**2 categories of harms leading to need for repairing trust:**

- 1) When one group has been harmed in the past by the researcher's institution, or research in general, "prophylactic distrust." (Potter) Also legacies of harm to other communities.
- 2) Within the partnership itself, a mismatch between expectations of the trusted and what happens.

**10 key features of Potter's feminist virtues ethics framework of trustworthiness:**

1. *That we give signs and assurances of our trustworthiness.* Active commitment.
2. *That we take epistemic responsibility seriously.* Self-reflection and dialogue with others; recognizing impacts of differing interests, values, beliefs, and positionality, on trust.
3. *That we develop sensitivity to the particularities of others.* Understand the trusting person's view to understand broadly what they are counting on; Moral effort beyond stereotypes.
4. *That we respond properly to broken trust.* Caring, accountable, committed, effort, transformation.
5. *That our institutions and governing bodies be virtuous.* Responsibility of researchers to advocate for institution's responsiveness (e.g. change policies) to community needs.
6. *That we deal with hurt in relationships*—both the hurt we inflict on others and the hurt we experience from others—in ways that sustain connection.
7. *That we recognize the importance of being trustworthy to the disenfranchised and oppressed.* Managing conflicting responsibilities and prioritizing those in positions of lesser power.
8. *That we are committed to mutuality in relationships.* Recognize our interdependence and we work without domination, exploitation, threat.
9. *That we work to sustain connection* while neither privatizing nor endangering mutual flourishing.
10. *That we need also to have other virtues.* Being trustworthy requires being a good person.

\*\*I add: *Know when to part ways.*

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**Free-write and Pair Share**

- In what ways have you dealt with broken trust (either directly, or prophylactic) in your partnership?
- How did you work through it (or not)?
- Which aspects of trustworthiness were relevant? Anything else not on here?

**Group Discussion**

- Work through a case

**Take-Home Points for Researchers**

- Trust may not be as indispensable as often described; but being trustworthy likely is. Demonstrating that the researcher respects and trusts the community is described as contributing to researcher trustworthiness.
- Sometimes who we are matters most. Sharing some similar social groups (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background, family values, disease status) helps initiate trust.
- Institutional structures may constrain what researchers can do, but researchers are responsible for own roles.
- Roles of the researcher: can't simply be specialists.
  - *Advocate* against barriers and systems of oppression within our institutions and their effects on our partnerships. Creatively navigating institutional barriers to meet community expectations.
  - *Act* as a connector to resources, gatekeeper, translator, supporter of community partner capacity development. Money can signal commitment.
- Knowing when to part ways: when community-engaged work is not for you, and when you are involving another researcher who does not understand.

**Study Methods**

- In-depth interviews with members of community-academic partnerships. Approximately 60 minutes each. Included academic researchers, community partners, and “bridge” people who strongly affiliated with both and operated in a bridging capacity in the partnership. More interviews are scheduled, and I am still actively recruiting.
- Audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed using Atlas.ti software. Results are preliminary.

**Participant demographics: As of May 10, 2016**

	Community partners	Bridge partners	Academic researchers	Overall
<b>Total N=</b>	6	5	13	24
<b>Age range</b>	21-71, evenly spread ages	40s-60s	30s-50s	Avg 40s
<b>Gender</b>	F = 5 M = 1*	F= 5 M= 0	F= 11 M=2	F= 21 M= 3*
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	AI/AN= 1 Hispanic= 1 African American= * White= 4 Asian=0	AI/AN= 4 Hispanic= 1 African American= 0 White= 0 Asian= 0	AI/AN = 0 Hispanic= 2 African American= 0 White= 10* Asian= 1	AIAN= 5 Hispanic: 4* African American: * White: 14* Asian= 1
<b>Concordance with partners' race/ethnicity</b>	Concordant with academic partners: mixed	Concordant with community=5 Discordant re: academics= 5	Concordant with community= 4 Discordant with community= 9	
<b>Primary Setting of partnership</b>	Rural= 2 Urban=1 Both/Multinational= 3*	Rural= 3 Urban= 0 Both= 2	Rural= 4 Urban= 6 Both/Multinational= 3	Rural= 9 Urban= 7 Both/mix= 8
<b>Duration of partnership (from start of interactions)</b>	1-12 years with researcher	Hard to quantify	2-17 years with community	

\*Additional participants fitting these demographics are scheduled but not included in analysis.