

**Best Practices for Research and Evaluation that Benefits Tribal  
Communities**

**Building Research-Community Partnerships to  
Make the Most of the Home Visitation Programs**

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# Acknowledgements

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- Tribal partners around the country
- Colleagues at the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health

# Our Stories

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## Nancy

- Studying child and adolescent development for 22 years
- Working with tribal communities for 9 years
- Current work –
  - Partnering with Oglala Sioux Tribe to build tribal infrastructure for public health research
  - working with tribal Head Start and Early Head Start programs to evaluate and improve services for Native families (AK, CA, MT, OK, OR)
  - examining factors that contribute to early substance use to inform better prevention efforts with Native youth
  - sexual risk reduction interventions with Native adolescents
  - Native Children's Research Exchange



The “children” that inspire me

# Our Stories

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## Michelle

- Clinical psychologist
- Studying children and families for 20 years
- Working with tribal communities for 16 years
- Current work –
  - Partnering with Midwest tribe to develop a culturally-based prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
  - Director of the American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Research Center (ACF) – building partnerships to evaluate and improve HS and EHS programs for Native families
  - Native Children’s Research Exchange
  - Interested in children’s early development and supporting parent-child relationships through culturally-based interventions
- Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe tribal member



# Research and tribal communities

# Criticisms of Research in Tribal Communities

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- “Helicopter” research
- Research driven by questions from the outside
- Inflexible approach based on western scientific ways of knowing
- Little benefit to the community

**Research  
Question**

**+**

**Western  
Scientific  
Approach**

**=**

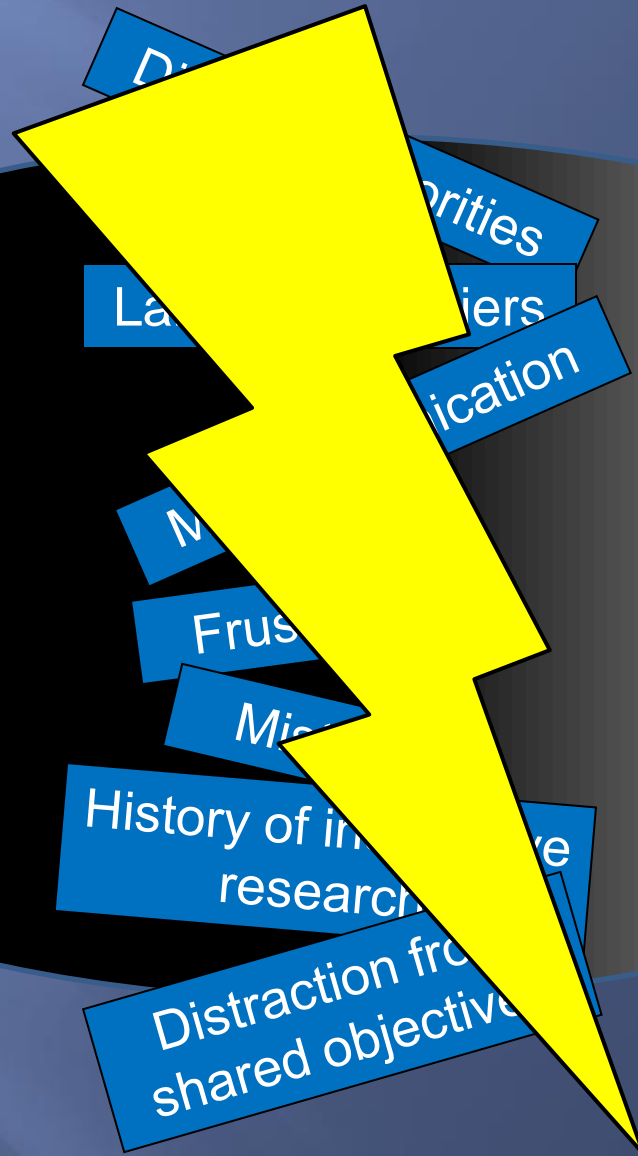
**“Knowledge”**



**Tribal  
Community**

**Western  
Scientific  
Ways of  
Knowing**

**Cultural  
Ways of  
Knowing**



# Research in Partnership with Tribal Communities

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- Models for partnerships between communities and researchers
  - *Community-Based Participatory Research*
  - *Tribal Participatory Research*
- Research driven by community questions
- Provides information that is directly useful to community
- Western scientific ways of knowing working together with cultural ways of knowing contribute to shared success

# Tribal Community

## Research Question



Western Scientific  
Ways of Knowing



Cultural Ways of Knowing



**New Knowledge**

# How to make the partnership work

# What researchers can do to support the partnership

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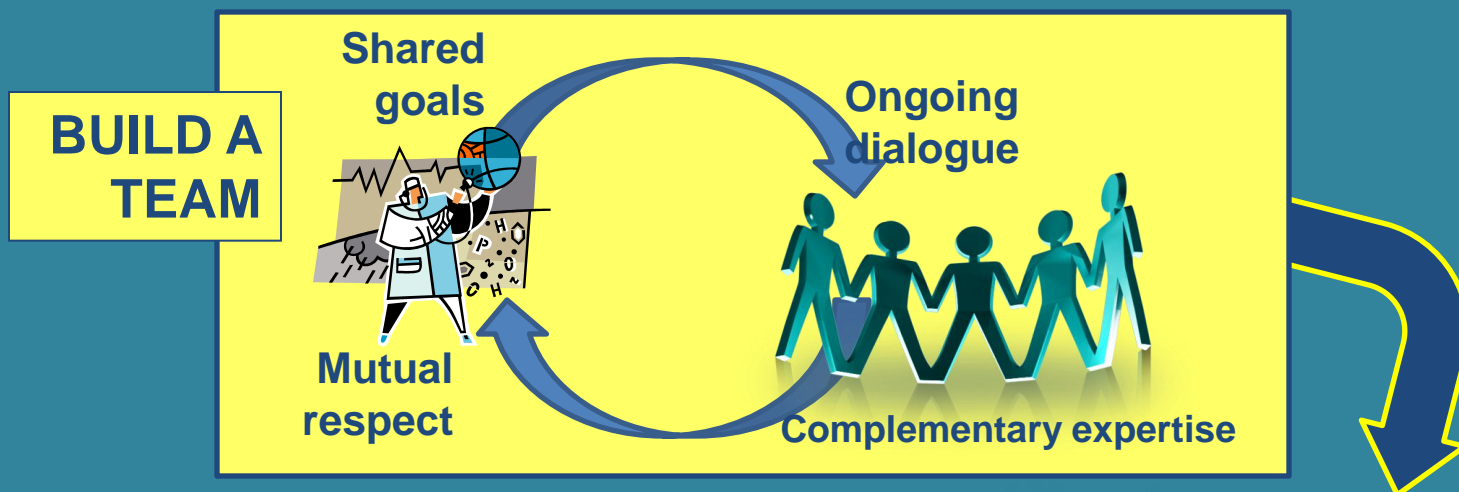
- Be informed about tribal culture, norms, and practices
- Be informed about tribal protocols for research & follow them
- Work with community partners to identify questions that need to be answered
- Provide consultation on how research can answer these questions:
  - Consider what is feasible
  - Propose a research design
  - Propose research measures
- Work with community partners to review evaluation plan and change it based on what will work for the community
- Provide summaries of research progress and findings in straightforward language
- Seek ongoing input and feedback throughout the research process, making changes as needed to ensure success

# What communities can do to support the partnership

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- Help researchers understand cultural customs and practices
- Ensure that community stakeholders are represented in discussions
- Work with researchers to identify questions that need to be answered
- Consult with researchers on the research plan
  - Identify potential barriers to successful implementation
  - Provide input on procedures and measures, insuring a good fit with the community culture and language
- Assist researchers through the tribal approval process
- Help interpret findings in cultural context

# QUESTION: How can the home visitation program work best in your community?



1. Identify what you want to learn from the research.
2. Design the evaluation (make a plan to answer your questions)
3. Carry out the evaluation (gather information about the home visitation program)
4. Analyze the data (look at all the information you collected to see what it can tell you)
5. Use findings to improve your home visitation program – make adjustments and adaptations based on reliable information.

## **Take opportunities to talk with researchers here at this conference -**

- For advice on how to identify potential research partners
- For advice on how to work best with your research partners to make an optimal evaluation plan
- To share your thoughts on the challenges to tribal-university partnerships and how to overcome them

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