

Best Practices for DEMOCRATIZING RESEARCH

The Drug Policy Alliance in partnership with New York University Silver School of Social work hosted a convening entitled *Ethics, Expertise, and Experience: Democratizing the Role of the Expert*. The convening gathered over thirty academics, community based organizations and people directly impacted by the war on drugs to begin dismantling the oppressive structure of current research and research methodology; we are doing this in an effort to pay homage and give credit to those who provided the information.

We have set out to document best practices from the conversation **for academics and researchers working in communities below:**

Engagement

1. When partnering with a community based organization:
 - Volunteer first; get to know the people providing and utilizing the services
 - Discuss with the organization the biggest issues facing them and let that drive your research
 - Enable the community to review research proposal
 - Offer education and training on the research process and research literacy



Collaboration

2. Once permission is granted to work within the community you should:
 - Work together to draft a Memorandum of Understanding to hold the researcher accountable to the community
 - Enable participants to contribute and get credit for the research by involving them in:
 - Assisting in the methodology of the study (eg. drafting questions for the interview sheet and weighing in on the study design)
 - Conducting interviews and surveys
 - Drafting, reviewing and/or editing the end products

Resource Allocation and Impact



3. Pay participants and staff for their contributions
4. Communicate clearly to participants all of their rights
5. Offer services in the event people are triggered
6. Ensure service return to the community post research
 - If services are offered as a part of the intervention, then make a plan to continue services post the research intervention

Credit

7. Include the community in academic opportunities by:
 - Inviting them to present findings at conferences and supporting them financially to do so
 - Acknowledging the people providing and utilizing the services in the end products
 - Including participants and staff in peer review journal articles



The Drug Policy Alliance and the Office of Academic Engagement wants to extend its humble appreciation to the colleagues whose discussion helped inform and guide this document.

For more information please feel free to reach out to the Office of Academic Engagement.

**We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.**