The Role of Confianza in Community-Engaged Work for Reproductive Justice

By Rachel Bloom-Pojar and Maria Barker

ABSTRACT

This article presents a narrative about community-engaged research, promotores de salud (health promoters), reproductive justice, and confianza. Confianza is often translated as trust or confidence, but this piece discusses the dynamic ways that it can function beyond the literal translation in research and community education. The co-authors discuss how they developed relationships with each other, community members, and the promotores de salud who work with Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI).

This piece also describes how the PPWI promotores program began with a focus on community interests and how reproductive justice became a central part of its curriculum. Ultimately, we argue that confianza is an integral component to reproductive justice research, and as such, we encourage researchers to consider the role of confianza in their own work when pursuing community-engaged partnerships.

POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

In this article, we discuss working with Latinx communities in Wisconsin, promotores de salud from those communities, and Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI). Maria is the founder of the promotores de salud program and the Director of Latinx Programming and Initiatives at PPWI. She has more than 20 years of experience working with Latinx communities in Wisconsin, and has spent many years building confianza with Latinx community members who use Planned Parenthood clinic services and community education.

Rachel has been getting to know the promotores de salud and plans to continue building this relationship.

TAKEAWAYS

1. Prioritize building relationships with community partners over shared interests. This might mean letting authentic research trajectories emerge from that rather than arriving with a research objective to direct future interactions.

2. Recognize that funding is very important to compensate communities for their time and expertise. It is also an essential part of accounting for the economic injustice and disparities between communities of color and predominantly white institutions. Apply for funding that can direct resources into the programs and communities you work with while being cautious of any reporting requirements that request identifying information.
1. Prioritize building relationships with community partners over shared interests. This might mean letting authentic research trajectories emerge from that rather than arriving with a research objective to direct future interactions.

2. Recognize that funding is very important to compensate communities for their time and expertise. It is also an essential part of accounting for the economic injustice and disparities between communities of color and predominantly white institutions. Apply for funding that can direct resources into the programs and communities you work with while being cautious of any reporting requirements that request identifying information from individuals.

3. Consider how confianza functions as a dynamic communicative activity that people can establish, have, enter into, and create with others. Be reflexive about what it takes to build trust and create spaces where people are trustworthy. Then keep in mind the need to respect that trust with all future actions such as publishing, teaching, or talking about what was shared with you in a space of confianza.

4. Researchers must think about what their research project will leave behind for the community to continue to use. Communities are tired of just getting by. They want to help develop tools for themselves as well, that they, their family and the community can use to thrive and not just exist.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How do we develop rhetorical theory and praxis that center the voices, strategies, and priorities of women of color rather than analyzing reproductive justice through a white rhetorical gaze?

2. How might studies of rhetoric and reproductive justice benefit from meaning making in languages other than English?

3. How do we navigate the politics of translation without losing the core of community-based rhetorics when communicating about them with predominantly white, English-speaking audiences?