



## Best Practices in Engagement and Research to Practice

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## Best Practices in Engagement and Research to Practice

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines Research to Practice (r2p) as “an approach to collaborations with partners and stakeholders on the use, adoption, and adaptation of NIOSH knowledge, interventions, and technologies.”<sup>1</sup> In the field of occupational agricultural health and safety, it is imperative to work with strategic partners to gather research data and translate the findings into practical solutions that positively impact the workplace. Partners not only provide the necessary access to target populations and community resources to conduct research, but they also inform realistic interventions that will be adopted by the end-user.

Underscoring the importance of partnerships, the Western Agriculture Safety and Health Conference held in Seattle, Washington in August 2019 centered its program around the theme *Cultivating Collaborations*. The *Best Practices in Engagement and Research to Practice* (r2p) session at the conference was designed to highlight various strategies and theoretical models for engaging with key partners. The session was chaired by Amanda Wickman, MBA, Program Director for the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education. The 2-hour program comprised three presentations and two panels and featured proven techniques for research and outreach that not only reach but also engage agriculture, forestry and fishing (AgFF) work groups. Session content and participants are described in the following paragraphs.

**Michael Merten, PhD, Director of the Center for Family Resilience and Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University**

Dr. Merten’s research focuses on a wide range of determinants of youth development outcomes, particularly psychosocial outcomes considering both family and community contexts. He presented on Latino Farmworker Health Outcomes: Engaging Youth and Families in Research and

Prevention. Dr. Merten and his team engaged lay health advisors known as *promotoras* to deliver a pesticide safety program to Latino adolescents and family members to increase knowledge about safe handling, storage and washing procedures. Trusted community members including *promotoras* and church leaders were key to successful recruitment and retention of research participants.

**Barbara Lee, PhD, Senior Research Scientist at Marshfield Clinic Research Institute in Marshfield, Wisconsin**

Dr. Lee directed the NIOSH-funded National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety from 1997 to 2019. Her presentation, Partnering with AgriBusiness Leaders to Raise the National Agri-Safety Culture, emphasized the importance of inviting manufacturers and well-known businesses to participate in research and outreach efforts. She described how the engagement of agribusiness can expand spheres of influence, align research goals with production outcomes and help researchers accept the limitations of evidence-based interventions. Dr. Lee used the socio-ecological model to further depict how multiple dimensions and interactions influence human behaviors and recommended community-based participatory principles for maximizing potential impact.

**Teresa Andrews, MS, Outreach Education Specialist for the Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety, University of California Davis**

Ms. Andrews has extensive experience working with cultural minorities, including developing educational materials and conducting training. Ms. Andrews has forged collaborative links with Hispanic farm worker groups, growers, farm labor contractors, community organizations, employers, federal agencies and insurance personnel. She has developed low-literacy educational materials and conducted training sessions in both

English and Spanish for farm worker children, dairy workers, farmers and others. Ms. Andrews described how strong, trusting relationships are essential for conducting effective training in her presentation, California Heat Illness Prevention Study.

### **Community-engaged research methods with the Yakima farmworker community**

Four researchers from The University of Washington contributed to the panel discussion entitled Community-Engaged Research Methods with the Yakima Farmworker Community. Elizabeth Tozzez, BS, Research Coordinator for *El Proyecto Bienestar*, works with the Northwest Communities Education Center/Radio KDNA in the Yakima Valley. She described her research projects, including HOME Air in Agriculture: Pediatric Intervention Trials, Health and Safety of Women Agricultural Workers: Sexual Harassment Prevention and Heat Related Illness Prevention in Agricultural Workers. Her work requires strong, trusting community partners due to the sensitive nature of the studies. Ester Min, PhD candidate in Environmental and Occupational Hygiene in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences discussed her research focused on reducing environmental health disparities through community-academic partnerships. As part of her dissertation, she works with communities, regional and state agencies on various community-engaged research projects including the Asthma Research and the Home Air Pediatric Intervention (HAPI). Orly Stampfer, PhD student in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, presented her research focused on community-engaged air pollution in partnership with two Washington tribes. She is interested in rural air pollution issues including wildfire smoke. Her research team has engaged multidisciplinary partners including schools, non-profits, health service providers, local radio stations and an Environmental Management Program. Kori VanDerGeest, MPH, is active in community-based participatory research and environmental health disparities, she discussed issues surrounding access to safe drinking water in agricultural communities.

### **Best practices for using social media to connect with AgFF stakeholders**


The session concluded with a panel discussion entitled Best Practices for Using Social Media to Connect with AgFF Stakeholders. Panel members represented various educational backgrounds and geographic regions of the country. The panel members included, Ellen Duysen, MPH, Coordinator and Outreach Specialist for the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Public Health; Whitney Pennington, MPH, is the Outreach Program Coordinator for the High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety at Colorado State University; and Shelbie Powell, BS, MPH Candidate, represented the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education located at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. The experienced panel members described the benefits and downfalls of using various social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn. Methods for evaluating the effectiveness and gathering analytics from these sites were described.

The manuscript that follows describes the development and evaluation of a YouTube safety and health channel. The U.S. Ag Center YouTube channel is a NIOSH Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Center collaboration.

The presentations and panel discussions featured in the *Best Practices in Engagement and Research to Practice* (r2p) session provided a snapshot of the multidisciplinary partners required to successfully reach target audiences, gather data, develop practical interventions and improve health and safety outcomes for AgFF workers.

### **Reference**

1. NIOSH. r2p: research to practice at NIOSH. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/r2p/> (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/r2p/>). [Google Scholar].

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