

Abstract

Action mapping: Using participatory action research to develop a community-level theory of change to address precarious employment in greater lawndale.

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The use of community-based participatory research (CBPR) approaches in developing public health interventions have been widely described. Yet there is a lack of sufficient description about effective processes by which researchers and community partners translate the findings into action. The Greater Lawndale Healthy Work (GLHW) project is a CBPR study that examines work as a structural determinant of health at the community level. The Greater Lawndale area is a predominantly Black and Latinx community in which the residents experience high socio-economic hardship, and opportunities are limited such that they are often engaged in “precarious work” – work that is unpredictable, unsafe, and exploitive in nature. Action mapping is a multi-step, iterative process embedded in the principles of participatory action research, the socio-ecological model, and systems thinking. Steps included gathering data through a community health assessment to identify focus areas of strongest need; developing a shared understanding of the findings by conducting root cause mapping to name the multi-level causes of each focus area; brainstorming strategies targeting stakeholders across socio-ecological levels; and building a road map towards a shared vision of change. Researchers and community partners engaged in collaborative training and a series of meetings over a period of 15 months culminating in the development of a GLHW Theory of Change (ToC). This approach demonstrates that action mapping and a community-level ToC can help build consensus on the outcomes of community-based research and provide a comprehensive roadmap for the selection and implementation of interventions with continued input from the community.

Advocacy for health and health education
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(conceptual and theoretical models), applications related to public health