



National HIV Prevention Conference

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[TITLE:] CONDUCTING HIV/AIDS PREVENTION RESEARCH IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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ISSUE: Many prior research studies conducted with American Indian/Alaska Native communities have been almost exclusively directed by outside researchers with little community input. In general, American Indian nations and communities have grown to distrust researchers. This lack of trust has developed over decades of interaction with university-based researchers who have poorly explained their intents and actions, have ignored cultural explanations of and community experience with the phenomena being studied, and have offered little or nothing in return for the collection of research data.

SETTING & PROJECT: In an effort to describe methods that actively involve American Indian communities in designing and conducting HIV/AIDS preventive interventions, this presentation will draw upon case studies of successful HIV/AIDS prevention research partnerships in both urban and rural settings.

RESULTS: The constant process of collaboration and the importance of different types of expertise that may contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS preventive interventions will be presented.

LESSONS LEARNED: American Indian people need to be intimately involved in the entire process of research from conceptualization of the issue, to the methodological approach, to data collection and analysis, to dissemination of the results. This type of approach (i.e., community participation at all levels), requires community organization, the recognition and valuing of cultural practices and knowledge, and consensus building which, in turn, empowers the community.



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