BEST PRACTICES FOR RESEARCH WITH NON-ENGLISH DOMINANT POPULATIONS

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This check sheet is intended to assist researchers who are working with non-English dominant populations. This check sheet assumes that the researcher is a native English speaker and is working with people who either speak limited English or do not prefer to use it in the context of research. That said, the recommendations provided here are applicable to any investigator that is conducting research outside of their own native language. The check sheet draws on several sources and highlights important points to consider throughout the research process.

» **Research Formulation and Design**

☐ Conduct preliminary research into the group or community you intend to work with to better understand the historical, social, political, and language context.

☐ Consult expert sources to enhance your research design. For more detailed strategies on culturally competent research design and the development of research materials with non-English dominant communities, see: Han et al. 2007 and the CONVERGE Cultural Competence in Hazards and Disaster Research Training Module.

» **Translation and Research Design**

☐ It is important to consider that simply translating from one language to another is not always appropriate. For instance, there are significant cultural and social implications to language that can be lost in verbatim translation. This is why conducting background research and understanding the broader context is so important.

☐ Consult a locally-based colleague and/or community leader for help with the creation and translation of materials. Seek feedback on already-translated materials since there may be community-specific translations for certain words. Be ready to revise based on what you learn. Translators should be appropriately compensated for their time.

☐ Sousa & Rojjanasrirat (2010) outline the following steps for cross-culturally validated translation:

• Have two bilingual and bicultural translators conduct a forward or one-way translation from the original language to English. Preferably, one translator would be familiar with specific field terminology while the other should not be knowledgeable about the topic being studied. Compare the two translations.

• Have two *different* bilingual and bicultural translators conduct a blind backward translation of the English translations back into the original language. This will allow for comparison and clarification of the specific words used in the translations.

• Resolve any ambiguities and discrepancies by reaching consensus on the final translations.

» **Community Outreach and Fieldwork**

☐ Try to assemble a research team that includes at least one member who is fluent in the language of the participants.

☐ Consider other differences, such as race/ethnicity, class status, immigration status, and gender, that may impact outreach and participation. Address these differences in the development of your research team.

☐ Members of language minority communities are often immigrants, and may therefore distrust or even fear researchers.

- For more information on effectively working with immigrants in research projects, see: Vaughn et al. 2017.

☐ Understand that many community members may be able to communicate competently in English. Do not assume what language they are most comfortable with. Always offer to conduct interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc. in either, *or both*, languages.

» **Translation and Analysis of Data**

☐ Decide what language to use during data analysis. Adopt the strategies presented above in Sousa & Rojjanasrirat (2010) for any data translation.

» **Dissemination of Findings**

☐ Non-English dominant populations are often excluded from research. It is imperative to share research findings to promote mutually beneficial relationships with these communities in order to increase their representation in research.

☐ Ask community members how they would prefer to receive your research findings. Be ready to prepare a report or a presentation in their native language.

☐ Participants often need or want research that makes a substantive and positive change in their communities. Do not simply summarize findings. Provide recommendations to address issues that concern them.

☐ Avoid making promises you cannot keep. If community members request something you cannot provide, be honest and communicate the problem with them.

☐ Translate **at least** the abstract or the full text of any journal articles published.

☐ Write social media posts about the findings in multiple languages.

☐ Share findings with media outlets that use the language of the participants (i.e. Non-English newspapers).

REFERENCES:

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For CONVERGE Training Modules focused on Cultural Competence, Social Vulnerability and Disasters, Disaster Mental Health, and other relevant topics, see: https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules.

For additional advice on carrying out ethical and rigorous research, see the CONVERGE Extreme Events Research Check Sheets series at: https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/check-sheets.

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