

Handout #4: Talking With the Principal Investigator

Finding Contact Information

Most evidence-based programs from Cancer Control PLANET (<http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/>) and journals will include contact information for the program staff. This will include how to contact the principal investigator (PI).

Contacting the PI can be helpful if you have questions about his or her program. It may also be helpful to contact local researchers who know the topic area. You can use Step 2 on Cancer Control PLANET (<http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/>) to find some of these contacts.

Preparing for the Interview

Keep in mind that many PIs will want to discuss their evidence-based program and help you adapt it. However, they may not have a lot of time. Because of this, try to be as prepared as possible. Be sure to research the program thoroughly. Jot down any questions. You may want to do a literature review before you call to make sure that you are familiar with the PI's work. The literature review itself may answer some of your questions.

Interviewing

Below are some questions you may want to ask the PI. Make sure that you are not merely repeating what you already know.

Questions:

- How did you choose your intended audience?
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Health behaviors
 - Sex
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Insurance coverage.
- Why did you choose to define your audience this way?
- Why did you select the employed strategies?
- What costs were involved with the program?
 - Labor (project labor, community labor)
 - Incentives
 - Materials
 - Printing/production
 - Time.
- How did you obtain community buy-in?

- What barriers did you find during the implementation?
 - How did you overcome these barriers?
 - Did you change the program to address the barriers?
- How did you evaluate the program?
- How long did you follow participants?
- How did you collect data? What instruments/methods did you use?
- How did you do your data analysis?
- What barriers did you encounter during the evaluation phase?
 - Were you able overcome these barriers? If so, how?
- What were the key outcomes of the program?
- How may I obtain a copy of the materials and evaluation instruments used for the program? Are they available for download?

When calling a PI, introduce yourself and state where you found his or her evidence-based program. Make sure that the person has enough time to talk or ask to schedule a time. After you have completed the interview, ask the PI if you may contact him or her again and how he or she would prefer being contacted. Be sure to thank the PI for his or her time.

Possible recommendations from the PI can include:

- Things not to change or adapt from the program
- Other people to speak with for more information
- Other programs to review.