

Lotus House Women's Shelter: Lead Agency in Service-Driven Research Projects

WINNER OF THE
"BEST REFLECTS
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POSTER



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The Need for Community-Based Research

Rationale

- Advance Equity and Social Justice
- Ethical
- Pragmatic

Purpose

- Provide critical services tailored to the needs of those served, addressing gender, racial and social inequities
- Continuous improvement
- Inspire positive social change
- Extend scientific knowledge base



The Lotus House as an Exemplary Case

Our Premise

The collaborative research was particularly successful because Lotus House has ownership.

- Was the initiator
- Led the research efforts
- Managed its funds and service delivery
- Kept and controlled its data
- Actively engaged in dissemination

Conceptual Framework for evaluation: Drahota et al. (2016) Community-Academic Partnerships: A Systemic Review of the State of the Literature and Recommendations for Future Research. *The Millbank Quarterly*, 94,1 (163-214).



Lotus House's Emergence as a Research Entity

- Lotus House sought and received grants to develop service driven research project
- Research aligned with its mission and programs
- Local researchers/evaluator volunteered services
- Funder receptive to community based organization led research

Research Program A

Program A. Study of Mental Health Services and Parenting for Sheltered Children and Families

Entry assessment of

- Children's status and trauma histories
- Mental health/developmental needs

Provision of mental health/parenting services

- Child Parent Psychotherapy and/or
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and/or
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Research Program A, cont.

Program A. Study of Mental Health Services and Parenting

In 3 years, met mental health and parenting needs for

- 1,118 children
- 619 mothers

Research Program A, cont.

Study A: Family Outcomes

Statistically significant & clinically meaningful improvements

- Behavior improvement
- Reduced trauma symptoms
- Positive parenting
- Strengthen mother-child relationships



A close-up photograph of a pink lotus flower in a pond, surrounded by green lily pads and dark water. The flower is the central focus, with its petals in various stages of bloom. The background is slightly blurred, showing more lily pads and the dark water of the pond.

Research Programs, cont.

Program B. Study of single women's survival strategies while homeless.

- Focus groups of alumni sheltered women
- Focus on successful organizational principles – a culture of care
- Several manuscripts in preparation
 - Lotus House as a “culture of care”
 - Gender specific experiences of single women experiencing homelessness



Research Programs, cont.

Program C. Pilot study of women's and children's nutritional intake and food insecurity prior to shelter.

- Baseline for grant proposal
- Acquisition of innovative hydroponic urban garden to improve nutrition
- Food waste harvesting project and neighborhood food distributions

Reasons for the Success Label, cont.

Institutional Outcomes

Enriched services and programming

Capacity building on

- Clinical training
- Research methodology
- IRB certification
- Valid interpretation of results
- Data entry & management

Established research, policy and public education department

Created replicable model for community based organizations

Reasons for the Success Label, cont.

Sustainability

- Efficacy of outcomes for women and children
- Continued financial support
- Additional academic and field papers in preparation
- Additional proposals in preparation
- Expansion of services
- Continued and expanding collaborations
- Goodwill and camaraderie among collaborators

Reasons for the Success Label, cont.

Dissemination

Academic publications

- [Doblecki-Lewis S](#), [Lester L](#), [Schwartz B](#), [Collins C](#), [Johnson R](#), [Kobetz E](#). HIV risk and awareness and interest in pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis among sheltered women in Miami. [Int J STD AIDS](#). 2016 Sep;27(10):873-81.
- *Pending* - Graziano P, Spiegel J, Arcia E, and Sundari Foundation, Inc. Early Assessment and Intervention for Families Experiencing Homelessness: A randomized trial comparing two parenting programs. [Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology](#), currently under peer review, 2020.
- *Pending* - Eaton A, Stephens D, Ruvalcaba Y, Banks J, and Sundari Foundation, Inc. A Culture of Care: How Lotus House Women's Shelter heals program participants through genuineness, space, high expectations, dignity, individualized attention, and community. [Journal of Community Psychology](#), currently under peer review, 2020.

LH web-platform publications

- The Farm at Lotus Village, Innovation Program Design, Sundari Foundation, Inc. 2019. www.lotushouse.org
- Lotus Village Children's Wellness Center Innovation Project, Sundari Foundation, Inc. 2017. www.lotushouse.org

Yearly reports to Funder

- Arcia, E (2020) Lotus House Therapeutic Mother-Child Program: Year III Report.



Hindering Factors

- Time
- Financial resources
- Intensive data management
- CBO has competing priorities for operations and services
- Academic research perspective versus community service delivery perspective
 - Empirical and experiential criteria for decision making
 - Differences in professional jargon/semantics

Facilitating Factors

- Shared belief in mission
- Trust, respect for each other's expertise
- Frequent communications
- Clearly differentiated roles
- Leadership vision and commitment
- Skilled, dedicated staff
- Positive program effects
- Benefit for all collaborators
- Well regarded by funding agencies
- Memoranda of understanding





Summary

Successful research projects satisfy the goals of the community based organization as lead

- Meet the service needs of the persons to be served
- Document positive outcomes from service driven research and inform continuous improvement
- Address impacts of gender, racial and social inequities
- Extend current knowledge and inspire change on a national level
- Replicable and scalable

Acknowledgements

This project was made possible by the generous funding of: The Children's Trust of Miami Dade County, Florida; Miami Dade County Homeless Trust; Miami Dade County and Lotus Endowment Fund, Inc.; Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation; Carnival Foundation; Martin Z. Margulies; Angela Whitman and Family Foundation; and our community.

We would like to thank the children and families of Lotus House for their participation and the dedicated team of Lotus House for making this community based, service driven research possible, with special mention to Shana Cox, LCSW, Psy.D., Gabrielle Contreras, LCSW, Stephanie Padro, LMFT, Muriel Ayala, LCSW, Nicole Carnero, LMHC, Nadly Moline, LCSW, Michaelle Sylveus, LMHC, Geneva Comeau, LMHC, Arleny Mirambeau, MSW, Marsha Trujillo, MFT, Ireysis Ramos Garcia, MSW, Franchesca Ali, MSW, LeShea Jenkins, MEd, Noelle Amador, BS, Leanett Reinoso, BA, Melissa Claros-Erazo, BS, Donna MacDonald, MHSc, and Shameequa Buxton, JD.

Access the paper accompanying this Poster Presentation for the Society for Research in Child Development 2021 Virtual Biennial Meeting, April 9, 2021: <https://lotushouse.org/childrenfirst/>

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