What is power imbalance in research?

Power imbalance in family engagement in research can occur in situations where a researcher or a research team exercises - unconsciously or consciously - power over family research partners to control the process of the research. Power imbalance in family engagement in research can affect a family in ways that are



- the family's interest,
- the trust relationship,
- the equal partnering relationship,
- the positive engagement of the family,
- the feeling of being respected,
- the family's voices being heard.

This power imbalance can be visible and recognized, but can also be invisible.

Power imbalance impacts the:

- Trust-building process
- **Equal partnering relationship**
- Positive and active engagement of the family
- Knowledge-building process.

Power imbalance generates a:

- Feeling of being less-valued
- · Feeling of being in an unsafe environment
- · Feeling of being unheard
- · Feeling of being disconnected
- Feeling of demotivation.

Factors contributing to power imbalance







Level of

Income

level

education







Social status

- Age
- Gender Sexual
- orientation
- Citizenship
- Religion or spirituality

Health **Economic** conditions situation

- Physical health
- Mental health • Stigmatized health
- conditions (e.g.

HIV & FASD)

Disability

Information

- Access to information
- Communicating information
- Expertise
- Experience
- Spoken langage

Control

- Institutional
- Funding
- Expectations
- for influence • Systemic
- and
- structural

Cultural

- diversity Race
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Expectations
- Social interactions

How to prevent power imbalance?



Ensure Safety



Ensure Equity



Ensure Authenticity



EXECUTION





Build Respect



Build Transparency



Practice Self-Reflectivity



Practice Mutuality







References

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