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## Transcript

Speaker 1

Welcome to the bridge. The official podcast for the University of Maryland Baltimore School of Pharmacy Patients program, the patients program is the bridge between the community and the researchers. The patients program created this partnership to help researchers. Listen to the community's voice in order to build a bridge. To an effective learning healthcare community, here's your host, Rodney Elliott.

Rodney Elliott

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Rodney Elliott, community engagement specialist over here at the patients program and welcome to the bridge today. We are excited to have two guests, 2 partners. Two friends of. The patients program joining us to talk about a project that they worked. Heavily on first guess is Miss Ericka Lewis. She is assistant professor at University of Maryland School of Social work. Has a passion for working with children families, particularly in that parenting space. And I also learned that she's an avid gamer, so we may have a question or two about her love for games that may come up later on as well. And another guest friend of the patients program is Howard Hughes. He is a financial advisor during the day, but the community leader in West Baltimore and SW partnership in his off time. We want to thank you guys both for joining us today. On the bridge, the project that we're going to be talking about initially primarily today is going to be the code driven project. Which is a project between patients program and SW partnership. They Co developed the code driven project to provide 5 learning sessions about patient centered outcomes research and how the community can have an active role in health and health research. I'm I'm going to jump right in and get the question the first question. The Erika and ask Erika what was your role in the code driven project, Erika.

Ericka Lewis

And so I was a part of the Advisory Board. And so it was really nice to be there with researchers and community leaders such as as Howard and we came together and we were just giving our thoughts on materials and other things that were going to be a part of the the training sessions. And so I was there to listen and learn. Really, I I learned so. Much from this project.

Rodney Elliott

They have to listen and learn. Howard, in your off time again. Like I mentioned earlier, your community leader, how was it being good meeting with Doctor Lewis? And did she listen and learn?

Howard Hughes

I think it was it. It was an all around thing because. I was listening and learning myself. And learning about how research. Starts, begins and works in between. And things of that nature was very

enlightening and and interesting as well, so. In all, it's really a encompassing thing on on, watching how. The professionals like Doctor Lewis works and and the individuals such as myself and the community works within the.

Rodney Elliott

That's great to hear, because here the patients program, we always try to provide spaces where our community members and where our doctors and researchers can all get together and have conversations around health issues that are important to both to both sides, to the researcher side and also to the Community side. So the CC was a big part in that the community engagement. Center, where we hosted a couple of those focus. Bruce, where Erica and Howard got together along with other researchers and community leaders, and they talked about, well talked about issues that are important to the community. And this leads me to my next question, how I'm going to start with you as a Community member. Did you feel as though you had the space and you had the time to share? Your thoughts in a in a in a in a safe space at the CC with other members. Yeah, I I I thought.

Howard Hughes

It was a a great venue and a great opportunity and the time allotted was good. You know, it could always be more, but again, the attention span is always an issue with people you know. Trying to get. Get in this bit of time and this bit of space to to learn about things, but it was a good venue. Everybody was heard it it, which is the most important thing. Everybody that that spoke was heard and it was discussed. So I would say it was a win win.

Rodney Elliott

We talk a lot about being being heard. I know a lot of community members that I've come involved with out in the Community they talk about, yes, they want their opinions heard and they want them heard in the safe space and I know the patience program. We try to do a good job of sharing some of those topics that are important to us, that we understand helps bridge that gap. Helps the community members learn from the lens of the researchers and doctors and reverse the doctors and community members. Learn from the doctors, learn from the community members perspective. Erica, when we talked about the 10 step framework, when we talked about patient stenders outcome research and the research process as far as engagement principles, did you feel as though you had an opportunity to, to share and also learn with the Community members during those focus groups?

Ericka Lewis

And I and I have to. Say it's the. Way that the the meetings were set up. OK, I think it starts with the structure in building that environment so that people felt comfortable to share, so. It wasn't, you know, us coming in and introducing each other or introducing ourselves to each other and talking about degrees or what we did here and there. But it was really around. How do we all? How do we all come together? What shared interest do we have? What shared thoughts and feelings do we have? And I loved having that space for that. Also, starting at each meeting, which I think this is something that the patients program does as well, which I've seen in the patients program, which I I loved, was starting with a story I've been hearing from community members. It really just set the pace for the rest of the meeting. But it wasn't going to be all buttoned up and stuffy, but we were really going to we're going to

talk about real things that mattered to everyone. And so it just opened up the environment to learn and to grow from 1.

Rodney Elliott

Another when we talk about meeting the community where they are, that's exactly what we mean. Just that. And I know when I first started with the patients program as the engagement. I thought that I had to go out into the community with the lab coat, with the clipboard and the glasses on and my ID and, you know, be ready to write information down. That's the stuffiness that we tried to avoid, that I knew right away it wasn't going to work. So when I'm out and about the community I'm meeting the community where they are and I'm being just that I'm Rodney Elliott. I do have my degree. But you know I don't have my degree. Last it everywhere you don't have to call me Doctor or Mr. And none of that. You know, it's simple opportunity for me to meet you where you are. So you can. Feel comfortable or the setting? I would say so to speak is a comfortable setting where everybody can share. Howard, from your perspective, what type of impact do you think a setting like that can have for the community, for the people who live in West Baltimore? Is that a safe setting? Do you think that setting was was was productive, I should say?

Howard Hughes

Well, I'll write of of what Erica said in regards to the atmosphere of. Not so much as throwing out. I'm a doctorate of Bioscience, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So we're here to talk about this and go right in. Kind of. Go into it. That's important. For the community members to feel as though OK, I'm not being talked down to more, so I'm being talked. With or to.

Rodney Elliott

OK.

Howard Hughes

And engaging, I mean I think that's important because. You you kind of. Especially in West Baltimore, the participation. That is desired. It is important. But more so, it needs to be more participation. The participation we did is great, but it's only a small fraction of what what is needed as a whole to bring in to really engage the Community.

Rodney Elliott

I totally get that you know, when I go out to the community and whether it's for an event or whether it's just support, one of the events they ask me, always ask one of the things they ask me is when you're coming back or when's the next one. So when you have a good product, when you have a setting where folks can. Share they want that more and more again. I'm sure that's something that the leaders in the code driven project definitely have taken note of. And I know we have some upcoming dissemination opportunities to give the information back to the Community of what we learned during that process. If either you can take this next question and kind of give me a a. Or give the listeners a view of what some of those focus groups was like. Any highlights of the Focus group where you heard something from the community and it either a light bulb went off or it kind of, you know, you know, sparked the conversation because I know when we get around some of our community members, they have

opportunity to grab the mic. Or share their opinion. They do just that. Was there something that was on some of those public scripts that stood out to you? Anybody can go first, either one.

Ericka Lewis

I would, I would say that I really appreciated the the feedback that we received at. The end of. The focus groups that then the code driven the Advisory Board came together and talked about and it was things around. Yes, we like to hear about research. We like to hear about how research is going to impact our community. Yeah, but just like. How we're saying we need to see more and we want to be involved more involved so that it's not happening to us but that we are a part of it. And so I think that. Was one of the the biggest takeaways. That code driven should be how we do research and just in life. How we do research in general, which should be collaborative.

Rodney Elliott

Erica, do you think some of your colleagues can benefit from participating in situations like this? And you know, I I see you're smiling. Folks can't see us, but we're recording this zoom. But how? How do you think some of your other colleagues can benefit from opportunities like this, like a code driven project?

Ericka Lewis

Yes, yes and yes, colleagues, researchers, anybody could really benefit from this because it I think it humbles us as researchers we're coming in, we you know we have this education. We have this passion to to make changes, but we think we know everything. I mean, so in our quest, I think sometimes to to do the research and to be of use that we are silencing those who say that we want to work with them and we wanna help. And so I think this type of program I'm coming in knowing that you have to, you can't just say that. You're about it. You have to be about it. You have to be there. You have to show up. You have to be collaborative. I think this is just a a great lesson for for researchers near end Farm.

Rodney Elliott

Thank you for that. And how what I'm. Sitting here, reading off of the. Give back material that we're going to share with some of the cultural participants and some of the results from that project, a bulleted saying that we build new relationships for future work. That's something that came out of the public schools designing research from the communities. Give the Community control and the research process. Help patients be active partners in their health care and return results in an understandable way. These are things that these are the feedback that we got from the community members, how which one of those stood out to you or you would mind, maybe, you know, give us a little bit more deeper dive into, you know, as far as some of the results that came from those focus groups.

Howard Hughes

I think the one you hit on was having. Engage in controlling what the research does.

Rodney Elliott

Give the Community control and the research process.

Howard Hughes

Sir. Right.

Rodney Elliott

OK.

Howard Hughes

Because during those meetings, a lot of people, again, we're not aware of how the research works or they had the misconceptions from past like the Tuskegee experiment or with things that happened at John Hopkins, you know, they hear about these things and then it's passed down. But they don't really know. Until they sat down and went through. Oh, this is what actually you. Know is happening and this is how it works it well. It's how this. Is how it should. Work how it.

Rodney Elliott

I will show.

Howard Hughes

How you know this is how it you know, it would probably be done if given to the community and presented to the community in that fashion and it. It it was just received. Very well, like you, you were going over. Those those answers, it it really is about how the community wants to. Participate and wants to interject and how the research is done and proceed into the future.

Rodney Elliott

Could you wanna comment on that?

Ericka Lewis

Say word facts and I would say all of it. I agree. There's just more control over the process and which I think is important and also how it, how the information is getting out there. So the research is conducted now. How are you communicating it? With the community. And so I think that's really important as well.

Rodney Elliott

Yeah, that's a huge highlight. I know early on when I started, when I got to the community and I'd say the quote UN quote, our word, the research word. Community members typically freeze up on me or they. You know close. But when I get to explain it to them, that research is. That that doesn't always have to evolve. You know, a specimen doesn't have to evolve way a swab or or taking your blood or anything like that, or or giving. You a pill? We're talking about focus groups. We're talking about discussions because. We believe the early are to. Recognize early on that. Community members lived. Experiences is just as important as all the education and time to the researchers and doctors put into their craft as well. So you need both. You need those lived experiences and need the professionals to, you know, structure and talk about the process, about how they can come to a better solution. To a different solution to. More than just one solid. Solution one pill doesn't fit every problem. One temple. It doesn't fit every neighborhood as we know, because we work with a lot of neighborhoods that W Baltimore and I can tell you what you can go to one side of Martin Luther King and you go 2. Three blocks down. It's a whole different vibe there, so you have to be aware of that and if you have your lab coat on and your clipboard and your eyeglasses and you stay in these buildings. On the other side of. A

month to the king, you just might not get that feel. So I love when I hear Erica Lewis and Howard Hughes getting together over to CC and other colleagues talking about different projects, because that lets me know that the impact that after these meetings, after these focus groups are going to be huge. I'm going to be substantial. From both sides, we're almost coming towards the end. I just wanted to ask both of y'all starting with Erica, what do you think the impacts of events like Codriven can have on? The research work.

Ericka Lewis

I think major impacts, I think it shows the importance of relationship building and how we that has to be centered in all of the projects. It shows how how far research can actually reach and impact others. If you know we're building. If we're getting feedback and we're collaborating with the community and if we continue working with community to. To disseminate the findings, I think it's it's really important and I think one of the impacts is. I think the research being more trustworthy and there's that accountability factor that it's been vetted by the community, they've had their input and and so I think that's really, really important on top of networking, just this these opportunities to connect.

Rodney Elliott

The holes are definitely. Highlighted on the form as well. Talking about that building relationships, building that trustworthy and that. Working how what are the next steps for the committee members? What are the next steps for the patients program, you know is from from your lens? You participated in a couple of projects with us, but I think now you have a grasp of who the patients program is, how we are and what we. Do and how we? But you've been very vital to helping us connect with that. This partnership, So what would be the next steps in in your eyes or some of the next steps, your eyes going forward? When it comes. To code driven project or just bridging that gap between research and the community in general.

Howard Hughes

I think just continued communication is the key to that. Just recently with on this side of town and in West Baltimore with the E coli scare, I got a number of calls from some community. Howard, can they do research on this on how this affects the Community, blah blah blah, you know, so it it. It it it really piques the interest now of those who have come to those meetings. And and further entices them to ask more questions. You know, like I said, they they were like, well, Howard, what can we do to get? You know more research in. And you know, with the water and how it affects everybody. With the lead and you. Know the kids. And all those things come, you know, are are coming. So all those questions are coming into place now that I don't think would have would have happened had we not had these these meetings with the Community with code. And I think just continued communication and also just more information given to the Community back and forth and be transparent with that. With that information it is key because that's the main thing. Is how a lot of the community on the West side of town feels as though they are not being heard by the city. With this water issue. Because of how? Well, serious it it is though. I think that I think it's. Just important to have that communication continued.

Rodney Elliott

The line of communication is definitely important. That bridge to communication is definitely important. See why I did that. The bridge. To the communication.

Ericka Lewis

I caught it, I caught it and I. Liked it?

Rodney Elliott

Yeah, we definitely you guys have participated again, like in numerous projects, both of you guys are phone call or e-mail away. So on behalf of the patient program, I appreciate you guys always being available for us scheduled permitting early in the summer. You both participated in. Or guess that the patient? Today at the Community Engagement Center and taking a quick flashback back to that day, Erica, as you were a guest there, one of the questions or feedback, so to speak from the audience was talking about. Going to therapy, and if I remember correctly, you kind of sat up in your chair and you and you and you wanted to comment a little bit intently about that, not specifically connected to code driven, but I think it's still connected in some way because mental health is important and I want to ask you that question again and and and and public. Do you is slide it to? You as well, Howard. Like how important. That is to see there because I think that was just the exact question like should we go to therapy? That was one of the questions from the audience members.

Ericka Lewis

Therapy is so important and so useful, and I think that you can participate in therapy before a problem occurs. It can be seen as as a a source of of prevention and it's I think I was saying at the last event that it's really one of your only opportunities. Where you have someone who's dialed in just for. For you, an objective sounding board and and and I think it's just, it's really important and it's one of those things that we see we always say self-care, self-care, self-care. These are one of the things that you're doing that's really investing in you so that you can be of of service and and really. All aspects of your life because you're able to, you know, a bit more about yourself, you know that you're putting your mental health, you're setting it as a priority. And I think that you will see it in other areas of your life when you are mentally healthy and when you do have. These avenues, such as therapy to to be able to just to continue to grow.

Rodney Elliott

Yeah, I was actually in the gym the other day having a conversation with a. I'm not say he's a friend, but I've seen him in the gym a lot and he's talking about, you know, lifting weights and then going to get a massage and massage his muscles and even just broke out in conversation saying, yeah, I'm also going to go to therapy too, because I treat the brain like a muscle as well. And when you look at it from that perspective, but think at it from that perspective, if you put a lot of tension and stress on your body when it comes to working out. Stay in shape. You're gonna need some, you know, relaxation needed for your muscles. That some massage. We all have a lot of stress in in, in, in, in friction on our brain and on that back to have an opportunity to and on our heart in general, so have an opportunity to bounce stuff off of folks who is 100% dialed in on you. I think it's just as important. So yeah, I. Just wanted to ask that question because I knew you that was a highlight of patience. And umm, I wanted to give you opportunity to get into elaborate on that as well and how it works from your perspective you know on patients today that's another day an opportunity for us to again bridge that gap and stay connected with our community. Hopefully that that's gonna be an annual thing for us at the patients program. And we've been even had conversations with the. Or the the leaders over there the CC to. Have more events.

On a consistent basis over there at the CC. So what are some of the? Events you think that we can. Have at the. CC that can be beneficial to the community members over there W Baltimore.

Howard Hughes

Well, like you all were just talking about the. Therapies to talk about mental issues and things of that nature that I mean that that being such a a hot point in generations under, I'm considered an old head so therapy and and diagnosis of things. Ah, well, you'll be. Alright, just go. Go, run, go out, run and play and put dirt on it. You'll be OK. That that mentality is what I grew up. However, you see more and more like you all said, there are spaces that you can go to to talk about. What's going on? Just to like you said, relax. The the. The mental muscle, so to speak. And and to work on it and to strengthen it. So those type of things. Can be brought to the table more in event wise on how you I guess how you how are you feeling type of event or you know let's talk about an event you know you know. OK, tea and tea and talk or. Chat and shoot. You know, so, so those type of thing could really. Help along those lines.

Rodney Elliott

Thank you all for sharing that and I'm going to take a book out of. Our executive directors. Toolbox, so to speak. Doctor Mullins, when an idea is brought up or something. You know, thought provoking is brought up. He definitely revisits. That person that gets a little bit more insight on that. So I'll definitely be in contact with you a little bit more. To hear a little bit. More about chat and chew tea and talk. I like that. And you know, we have resources here that maybe can provide an opportunity in this space for that I think could be beneficial to the Community. And thank you both for joining me here on the bridge, on our space. But we just try to stay connected. To our community and our research world as much as we can, it's always been a pleasure when I see you guys when I see the e-mail with your name on it. Thanks again for all your participation in the patience program and thank you for joining me today on the bridge.

Howard Hughes

Thank you for having me.

Speaker 1

Thank you for listening to the Bridge podcast. To learn more about the patients program, visit our website at [www.patients.umaryland.edu](http://www.patients.umaryland.edu).