



# FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

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Community psychology goes beyond an individual focus and integrates social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and international influences to promote positive change, health, and empowerment at individual and systemic levels.

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# The Community Psych Research Process



Defining Topic/Issue



Defining Community affected



Focusing Topic/Issue



Focusing Community



Methods of Data Collection



Methods of Data Analysis



Drawing Conclusions



Sharing Conclusions and Beyond

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# Terms to know: Research Grounding

- **Quantitative Research:** Research projects based on using number based data. Rely on statistical methodologies in order to analyze data and draw conclusions.
  - **Qualitative Research:** Research projects based on narratives, content, and/or context. Rely on coding, and patterns in order to analyze data and draw conclusions.
  - **Research Question:** The synthesis of what you are trying to ask/solve with your research project.
  - **Variables:** What factors of any given issue that you intend to look at. Independent variable researcher manipulates dependent variable researcher measures.
  - **Operationalize:** Specifically defining your variables. Being explicit about what it is you intend to control and measure.
  - **Hypothesis:** The answer or outcome you expect to see from your project. Used predominantly with quantitative and other prediction based research.
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# Terms to know: Research Process

- **Methods:** What you intend to do, how you intend to do it, and how you plan to make sense of it all in the end. Qualitative, Quantitative, & Mixed Methods.
  - **Sample/Participants:** Who exactly is a part of your study. Your participants are who give consent and partake in your research project.
  - **Pattern/Theme/Story:** The consistencies, contradictions, complexities we are seeing within our data. We use patterns, themes, stories to draw conclusions.
  - **Dissemination:** How a researcher goes about sharing what they found with the world. Important to think about reach, audience, bias, and potential misinterpretation.
  - **Epistemic Violence:** When unaddressed bias leads the conclusions we draw in our research maintain or perpetuate violence against marginalized groups.
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# Types of Research Questions



- **Descriptive:** Research questions aimed at better understanding what's happening in any given issue
  - **Relational:** Research questions aimed at attempting to define or describe a relationship between variables
  - **Causal:** Research questions aimed at proving one variable causes or directly influences another.
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# Descriptive, Causal, or Relational?

- How do white LGBTQ youth engage with whiteness and white privilege discursively?
    - *Descriptive*
  - Does generational poverty increase symptoms of alcohol dependence in Native Adults on reservations?
    - *Causal*
  - What is the relationship between early childhood abuse and mental health for Latine Adults ages 21-45?
    - *Relational*
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# Activity: Focusing a Topic

- In small groups choose one of the Community/Topic pairs below:
    - Women and Mental Health
    - LGBTQ+ youth and Safety
    - Muslim people and Representation
  - Focus the aspect of the issue and specific community you want to focus on within the pairs
  - Operationalize the factors you will be researching
  - Develop a research question based on the pair (descriptive, relational, or causal)
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