



SCOPE Tip of the Week Member Newsletter

August 6th, 2013

How to Help

In graduate school, I came across a book with which I absolutely fell in love. The book was *Action Research*, by Ernest Stringer. While I enjoyed the insightful exploration of qualitative research and practical application of quantitative statistics, my favorite part was the way he used powerful stories and examples to drive his points home.

One example of this was related to his discussion of stakeholder involvement. He shared a story of a sociologist who was responsible for working with an African tribe and how he approached the tribe's elder to offer his assistance. The elder wisely replies, "If your well-being is tied to the tribe's well-being, then certainly we will accept your help. If you are here to help, but are separate from us, then we have no use of your services."

This story helps illustrate the importance of stakeholder buy-in and investment in the process of change. Too often, we see prevention programs implemented on campus without the consent or involvement of the population in need of change. Prevention efforts are most successful when they involve members of the community they are trying to change, from planning to implementation.

Change comes slowly. It is always more successfully realized when community members are involved in discussion and achieving goals. Prevention educators should involve the groups they are attempting to influence at every stage of a successful intervention.

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