Translating Research and Building the Evidence Base

John Eckenrode
Professor of Human Development
Director, Bronfenbrenner Center For Translational Research

CCE Stakeholder Consortium
March 22, 2013
Mission of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR)

To strengthen and speed the connection between cutting-edge research and the design, evaluation, and implementation of programs and policies that enhance human development, health, and well-being.
CCE Strategic Plan Objectives Directly Related to Translational Research

• “Collaborative agreements and joint projects will be established with organized centers throughout the Cornell system, with emphasis on translational research opportunities that link research and outreach. “

• “In partnership with campus faculty, evaluation processes will be developed that measure the public value of priority program efforts. “

• “CCE will intentionally move toward promoting evidence-based, rigorously-tested programs and practices throughout all program areas, including both program content and delivery approaches. “
CCE Strategic Plan Objectives Directly Related to Translational Research

• “Ongoing professional development programs will be designed to increase the ability of CCE educators to employ and disseminate research findings in their work and to build expertise in evidence-based approaches.”

• “Translational research grants, including federal funding from NIH and NSF, will be developed in partnership with campus faculty and community stakeholders served by CCE.”
Translational Research

Multi-phased process by which research-generated knowledge directly or indirectly relevant to health outcomes serves the general public.
Knowledge to Action Framework (CDC)
(From: Prev Chronic Dis. 2011 March; 8(2): A46.)

RESEARCH PHASE

- DISCOVERY STUDIES
- EFFICACY STUDIES
- EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION STUDIES

TRANSLATION PHASE

- DECISION to TRANSLATE
- KNOWLEDGE INTO PRODUCTS
- DISSEMINATION
- DECISION to ADOPT
- PRACTICE

INSTITUTION-ALIZATION PHASE

- Institution-alization Supporting Structures

Research Supporting Structures
Translation Supporting Structures

EVALUATION
What’s New About Translational Research?

Hasn’t CCE been doing this from the beginning? Just old wine in new bottles?

Yes, No, and Maybe:
Varies by field/discipline
(e.g. agriculture vs. social programs)
The overall goal of using research to inform practice and policy is the same, BUT

• Policy context has evolved

• The science has evolved

• Information dissemination landscape has evolved
Policy context has evolved:

- **OMB**: evidence-based policy initiatives: emphasis on “smarter” investments

- **NIH**: major investments in translational research: e.g. Clinical and Translational Science Awards - 60 centers and $500m/year

- State agencies such as Dept. of Health have also adopted evidence-based standards in RFP/RFA’s
The science has evolved:

• Experimentation to test health, social and behavioral innovations has become more common

• Statistical methods have developed to aid in program evaluation when randomization not possible

• New sub-fields are developing (e.g. prevention science; implementation science)

• New multidisciplinary training programs have formed
Information dissemination landscape has evolved:

- Accessing large amounts of information quickly
- Computing power has increased
- Search engines on the web
- Remote access
- Distance learning (synchronous and asynchronous)
A Few General Areas Where Cornell Might Excel

• Advance an ecological model to the development and testing of programs and practices
• Advance a life course model in translational research
• Promote multiple methods for acquiring “evidence” for program efficacy
Evidence from Experimental Evaluations

Evidence from Non-Experimental Evaluations

Evidence from Other Research

Evidence from Practice and Experience

Draw on and synthesize evidence from all four sources to:
- continuously make interventions more effective
- guide the selection and design of interventions to implement or scale up
- demonstrate that the work is improving lives and neighborhoods

A Few General Areas Where Cornell Might Excel

• Advance an ecological model to the development and testing of programs and practices
• Advance a life course model in translational research
• Promote multiple methods for acquiring “evidence” for program efficacy
• Develop models of community engagement, transfer of practice-based knowledge, and researcher-practitioner research partnerships
• Focus on sustainability of programs and practices that have proven effective and have been “scaled up”
Some Specific Challenges and Emergent Opportunities for CCE

• Engage more faculty in extension and outreach via the research translation process
• Prepare both faculty and CCE associations for community-based research partnerships
• Enhance linkage of existing CCE programs like 4-H to evidence-based practices and programs and to research opportunities including participatory action research
• Enhance capacity of CCE associations to access new funding streams through involvement in research projects
• Partner with NIFA in efforts to link with other federal agencies and institutes (e.g. NIH, DoD) to conduct translational research and promote evidence-based programs