



Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center News

Epidemiology Project of Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.

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USING DATA TO SUPPORT YOUR CAUSE...

WHAT IF THEY STILL DON'T BELIEVE YOU?

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations and the application of this study to the control of health problems.

GLITEC provides epidemiological services to the Tribes in the Bemidji Area (Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). The services include training and technical assistance in many areas of public health, data management, program planning, and program evaluation.

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How often have you prepared for a meeting or presentation, developed your position, listed your reasons, thought ahead about potential arguments and convincingly articulated your request only to hear in response, **“Where are the numbers?”** Well, most of us now realize the importance of having the numbers (data) to support a request, prove a point, state a case, make a claim or line up a defense. I think we have also learned how important the **source** is where the data is found and cited. The use of credible, reliable, objective and dated sources can make the difference between a trusting or suspicious audience (audience can be many or one).

Do you present the data first, state your rationale and then make your request? Or, do you make your request, state your rationale and then present the data? You may have discovered which works best for you, or shift the order depending on the situation. Or, you may have witnessed that neither makes a difference whether you have a trusting or suspicious audience. In other words, a suspicious audience is an unbelieving audience. Unfortunately, sometimes we think that collecting and presenting **more** data will change a suspicious audience into a trusting audience, or the audience will believe us more. This thinking might be missing an important point.

So, in some cases, why wouldn't the use of objective data achieve the desired impact? Here are some things to look at:

- The data you present contradicts an existing value; believing your data might mean giving up a deeper value. Example: *Data demonstrates that smokers are at higher risk for cancer and you request support for smoke free policy. The audience disclaims the data responding that many things cause cancer. The unspoken and deeper value is “free choice”.*
- The data you present places the audience in an embarrassing or dangerous situation if they express agreement or belief. Example: *Data illustrates that preparation for a disease outbreak is warranted to save lives and cost. The audience knows they just eliminated the staff allocation dedicated to disease surveillance from the budget.*

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Welcome Anne

I moved from the most southerly and westerly corner of the contiguous 48 states, or San Diego County, to Wisconsin in order to 1) eat at least a quarter of my weight in cheese, 2) meet Bret Favre, and 3) make snow angels until there are at least one for every person I have ever met. Even though I once considered a career in comedy (not really), my true calling is public health; I really would not be happy making money and devoting 40 hours of my life every week doing anything else.

I was born in Viet Nam, and moved to Los Angeles County with my family in 1990. I received a BS in Microbiology from the University of California, San Diego, while taking enough art and communications classes to earn two Minors. Then I went to the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University for my MPH in Epidemiology. After 18 years of being in school, getting to put my education to use and doing something I have a great passion for is really an honor. I guess in Bush Junior's economy, it is also a privilege and stroke of luck.

Transitioning made me feel like a potted plant for a while, but I think my roots are starting to grow, and they seem to like the soil in Wisconsin just as much as the soil in California. Perhaps it's all the fresh water... At time of writing, I have accumulated four weeks, 5 hours, and 58 minutes of work at the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center. I am already learning much more about working with underserved and underrepresented populations than I ever did in school. I welcome any challenges that I might face and will use them as opportunities to develop my skills and be better and more effective at what I do. I look forward to meeting new people and working with other dedicated professionals in order to positively impact American Indian health locally and nationally.

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- The data you present diminishes the interest and investment of the audience in their own cause creating competing causes. Example: *The data presented supports the addition of a new community health worker. The audience realizes that the budget won't permit two new positions and champions their need for an administrative assistant.*
- Well, what can you do about it? It can be very frustrating to gather good data from good sources only to feel defeated when the audience doesn't respond in the manner you would like, or challenges your intentions. In these situations, you would benefit from asking a different set of questions. Instead of, "How can I use/present the data to influence the support I receive, or how can I change the audience belief?" Try, "How can get the audience to see what I see? Or, "How can I involve the audience in understanding the data and constructing *their* conclusion?"
- I recommend the following:
1. Learn something about your audience
 2. Invite the audience to hear and see the data, ask clarifying questions and then ask "What do you think this suggests?" "What do you think it means?" "What do you think should be done?"
 3. When you encounter a negative response to the data, imagine that the response is just the tip of the iceberg. The roots of the response lie beneath the surface. Look for the possible reasons and develop a data strategy to address the roots.
 4. Ask questions like, "What do you think is missing in the data?" "What story is the data leaving out?" "What should be added in order to complete the picture?"
 5. Pay attention to your sources and any potential root conflicts the source may provoke.
 6. Ask collaborative questions like, "How should **we** approach this data?" "What can we do to move forward to get our needs met?" "What other data should we include?"
 7. Be prepared to set the data aside in order to seek understanding and acknowledge contradictions and conflicts. Once the audience feels unjudged and understood, the data negativity may go away.
- Remember that data is a useful and compelling tool to document and convey objective findings, only if you create and maintain a trusting, accepting and understanding relationship. So, work on the "people" part and the "numbers" part will make a difference.

Green—Not Just a Color

written by Jean Koranda

Green. Just what does that mean? Some claim that those who adopt a green lifestyle are extremists. Building, food, water, cosmetics...they are also green. So, what is the definition of green, why care, and how is green applied to the work environment, meetings or conferences?

One definition of green is, saving the environment for future generations by not using more than the average ecological footprint. A footprint is the measure of demand or consumption of natural resources and Earth's ecological capacity to regenerate those resources (*Wikipedia.com*). Why care? First, calculate an ecological footprint (<http://www.footprintcalculator.org>). Once the calculation is done, and the shock has worn off, follow some of the website's suggestions to adjust the footprint. Or just remember the simplest method: **reduce, reuse, recycle** (known as the 3 Rs).

Okay, so an individual can reduce their footprint, but what about the work environment? Since there are conferences and meetings all the time, applying the 3 Rs can save money and waste. Here is how:

- Use 80%-100% recycled materials.
- Email agenda ahead of meeting, post it on a board or through on an LCD projector at the meeting.
- Give handouts electronically after the meeting (*if printed double side*).
- Have registration online (*or send a postcard referring to the website or call*).
- Use whole fruits as centerpieces.
- Use regular plates/cups/silverware (*not disposable*).
- Serve food buffet style (*if the law allows, donate leftover food to a shelter*)
- Carpool to events and give tickets to use the local transit system.
- In lieu of paper/styrofoam cups—give participants a mug or water bottle to use for the duration of the conference. Charge for use of paper/styrofoam cups.
- Provide a reusable lunch container if serving a box lunch.
- Use recycling containers for plastics, cans and paper.

Still not convinced? Think about the 2000 BTUs of electric, 800 gallons of water, or 80 pounds of waste per day that a small conference generates. By applying just one of the above ideas, it will preserve some resources for future generations.

Find more information about individual greening at www.greenlivingtips.com and for additional information about greening meetings visit, www.conventionindustry.org, www.greenbiz.com, or www.meetingsnet.com.



GREAT LAKES NARCH NEWS



Beginning June 15th, this year's Wisconsin Youth Conference brought together twenty-one students from across Wisconsin and Michigan for a week of fun and learning. Each day the students attended various classes to enhance their educational experiences, with important cultural activities, and also get a taste of college and dorm life.

One of the highlights of the week was a day trip to the Oneida Nation where the students were able to tour the tribal museum. Then it was off to a Leadership Clinic at St. Norbert's for a low ropes course, and finished off with a great Indian Taco dinner with an Oneida cultural discussion at the Oneida Elder Services Center. The students formed great new friendships and look forward to returning next year.

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center Mission: To support Tribal communities in their efforts to improve health by assisting with data needs through: Partnership Development, Community Based Research, Education, and Technical Assistance.

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