Building Trust was developed as a bioethics research initiative designed to address the underrepresentation of many minority groups in research. Although health and medical research has been instrumental in improving the health of Americans, the underrepresentation of minorities in research has limited their ability to benefit equally from scientific advances. One of the main goals set forth by the Building Trust project was to create training and educational programs designed to increase the participation of minorities in public health and biomedical research and to strengthen the capacity of researchers and community members to work effectively with each other. We have developed two curricula to help achieve this goal, one for community members, and one for investigators, research staff, and IRB members.

Leading this project are Principal Investigators Stephen B. Thomas, PhD, and Sandra C. Quinn, PhD. Dr. Thomas is a Professor of Health Services Administration in the School of Public Health and Director of the Maryland Center of Health Equity. Dr. Quinn is the Associate Dean for Public Health Initiatives, a Professor in the Department of Family Science, and Senior Associate Director of the Maryland Center for Health Equity. Both are recognized as two of the nation’s leading scholars in the effort to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.

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This curriculum is designed for use in minority communities, particularly those who experience significant health disparities. This program will help participants understand how research can improve public health and eliminate health disparities. The goals of this program are to enable participants to engage with health and medical research in their communities and to make informed decisions about participating in research. Ideally, two facilitators will lead this interactive five-module program in groups. Potential audiences include civic groups, faith communities, YMCAs/YWCAs, tribal groups and others interested in learning more about participating in research.

“I learned which questions to ask.”

Becoming a Self-Reflective Researcher: Successfully Engaging Minority Communities

This curriculum is designed for use by researchers, research staff, IRB members, and health professions students. This program will strengthen the capacity of researchers to effectively recruit and retain minority participants in research. Through seven interactive modules, participants will respond to trigger films, discuss complex ethical issues, and practice skills for enhancing recruitment, retention, informed consent, and the development of community partnerships. This facilitator-led program can be used in settings such as academic health centers, health sciences schools, research centers, and government agencies.

Module 1: Research, Race, and Social Justice
Outcome: Examine how social and historical context impact researchers’ engagement with minority communities.

Module 2: Case Studies in Ethically Complex Research
Outcome: Given case studies, analyze ethical considerations in conducting research with minority populations within the contemporary contexts of racial and ethnic diversity and social justice.