

Health education and promotion

with Dr Justine McGovern
and Dr Lisa Fusco

Talking points

Knowledge & Comprehension

1. What is epistemic disobedience?
2. What are the similarities and differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods?
3. How do colonial practices and perspectives impact health research and care?
4. What are two of the barriers to getting published in scientific journals that Justine and Lisa mention?

Application

5. “Epistemic disobedience is gaining traction across disciplines such as global health, education, political philosophy, human rights, art, music, anthropology and more,” says Justine. How might epistemic disobedience affect each of these fields?

Analysis

6. How do you think language affects our thoughts? How might referring to ‘subjects’, ‘participants’ or ‘citizen scientists’ change the way we think about knowledge-building?
7. In qualitative research methods, how is a line of inquiry generated?

Evaluation

8. “Sharing my stories in my lessons, in an appropriate way, has shaped my teaching style,” says Lisa. How do you think learning from someone with first-hand experience of a health condition would be different to learning from someone with no personal experience? Which do you think you would prefer, and why?

More resources

- Justine’s research also inspires her photography: justinemcgovern.com
- To learn more about how to challenge colonial narratives, Justine recommends reading books such as *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon and *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.
- Read the featured campaigns on the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website to get an insight into the field of health communication and education: [cdc.gov/health-communication/php/communication-resources/featured-campaigns.html](https://www.cdc.gov/health-communication/php/communication-resources/featured-campaigns.html)

Activity

One area that Justine applies her research to is gerontology, the study of ageing. She hopes that the practices of epistemic disobedience will help to make research with older people more person-centric and humanising.

She says:

“After my mother died of Alzheimer’s in 2005, I participated with my young children in the Alzheimer’s Association New York City Chapter’s Alzheimer’s Walk. It was a glorious fall day, and the walk meandered through Riverside Park, which lines the Hudson River in New York City. I was there with my kids to honour my mother’s passing. We were surrounded by people living with dementia, their family members and other caregivers, and I was very moved. A small but vigorous group of musicians played Big Band music of the 40s. Older members of this amazing event danced with joy, joined by carers of all ages and from all walks of life. That day changed everything for me. Ever since, my work and research have focused on older adults, with a special concentration on those affected by dementia.”

Think of an area of health that you wish people thought about differently and that, like dementia, is often stigmatised in Western ways of thinking or is difficult for people to talk about. Some examples of topics to get you started might be mental health and emotional well-being, sexual health or chronic health conditions.

Once you have your topic, come up with an idea for a community event that would help raise awareness of this aspect of health. You could, for example, plan a walk around a local greenspace, or host an event where you incorporate music, dance or storytelling.

Create a flyer to promote your event. Consider:

- Who will you ask to come speak, and why? Will they have a personal connection to the topic?
- What do you hope people will get out of the day?
- Why do you need to raise more awareness of this aspect of health, and why do you wish people thought about it differently?

This activity might raise difficult issues for you or your classmates, so remember to discuss ideas thoughtfully and sensitively. Talk to your teacher if you are unsure about how to communicate your ideas without getting upset or upsetting others.