**R2R First Post 10-10-11**

**Story Prompt – Please post draft for NCI review by COB October 12 (subsequent stories will be due the 15th of each month)**

* **What have been your past experiences with other mentorship activities (either as a mentee or mentor) and with working in evidence-based public health? What are your thoughts on the mentorship model? What do you hope to get out of your participation in this program and from your mentor both for your project and for your professional development?  What do you hope to share with the broader R2R community through your stories over the next 18 months?**

***NOTE: use this as inspiration for your story, but feel free to focus on one part, add to it, etc…just make it you own and what you want to share with the community and start this program off. It doesn’t need to be the next great American novel, but do make it long enough to share your thoughts and let people begin to get to know you and your project so they will continue to come back and read your story as it unfolds over the next 18 months.***

Hi Everyone! Welcome to my first R2R post, hopefully throughout this process you will learn with me as I share my successes and any barriers that I encounter while developing my first evidence based public health intervention!

As a current student in the Master’s of Health Science program at Boise State University, I have lots of academic knowledge on the components of evidence based public health. I have seen the results of successful evidence based health interventions and understand the benefits of beginning with a well thought out program design. However developing a theoretical program in the comfort of the classroom is much different than in the real world! Translating this classroom knowledge into a real world successful program is much easier said than done.

In my role as a Rural Community Cancer Education Coordinator with St. Luke’s Mountain States Tumor Institute (MSTI) I have been tasked with implementing cancer control programs that are specific to rural communities. The initial model I followed took existing programs (not evidence based) and simply transferred them to rural Idaho. Although they seemed to be going smoothly, I was constantly reminded every evening in class that I was not actually utilizing my skills as a public health professional and these programs were not evidence based and I had no means of evaluating their success! Yikes!

After taking a step back to truly look at the programs that I was currently spending so much time with, I decided to start from scratch and approach them from that public health perspective I had learned so much about. This was much easier said than done. In the real world you actually have to develop your logic model, goals and objectives and then implement this program without the help and support of an experienced professor or fellow classmates! I found myself struggling at where to even begin; program development is very overwhelming especially when you’re doing it for the first time.

Luckily, I was selected to take part in the Research to Reality Mentorship program. I have been paired up with Hope Krebill, Executive Director of the Midwest Cancer Alliance. She is a total rock star and has so much experience in program development I couldn’t even fit it all onto this page! How lucky am I! With guidance from Hope, I will be developing my first ever evidence based public health intervention. Over the next 12 months, I will be working to develop a sun safety and skin cancer screening program that utilizes community partnership and is specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of the rural population. Over the course of this program, I am looking to gain real world knowledge and experience while improving upon my program development, community engagement/partnership, and cultural competency skills. Developing a skin cancer education and screening program will not only benefit communities in rural Idaho, it will help foster my professional development in these three focus areas, specifically program development and community engagement.

I am excited to begin working on this project and can’t wait to begin sharing stories with the R2R online community. Feel free to provide suggestions, feedback and your own experiences with me throughout this program. The mentorship program is not meant to only benefit me and hopefully over the next year you will all learn something as well!