Community Health Worker (CHW) Role, Skills, and Qualities

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:
- Identify the roles, skills, and qualities of CHWs

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to the session, review the C3 Report in resources.
2. Welcome participants and review the objectives for the session.
3. Explain that now we will review the different roles, qualities and skills of CHWs. Review some of the roles that people mentioned in the brainstorming activity during the "Who Are CHWs" session.
4. Discuss C3 Roles
   - Explain that there have been a number of efforts to define the roles of CHWs. One such effort was the National Community Health Advisor (NCHA) Study. That study established seven key roles of CHWs in 1998. Currently, the Core Consensus project has updated the list of CHW roles and skills to include 10 roles. Referred to as the C3 Roles, the newly formed National Community Health Worker Association (NCHWA) is following the C3 Roles and Skills for CHWs.
   - Review the C3 roles in the PowerPoint (slide 2).
5. Video and discussion
   - To hear from other CHWs about their work, we will now watch a video about the roles of CHWs from the Oregon Community Health Worker Association (12 minutes): *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69csBE4y1Uo*
   - Ask, "What caught your attention in the video? Which role(s) are you most excited about?"
   - Clarify that while you may not immediately play all these roles in your work as a CHW, over time you may find that you will need to play many or all of these roles to be most effective as a CHW.
6. Wrap up. Review CHW skills and qualities. Distribute handouts on CHW roles, skills, and qualities and review slides 3 and 4.

Related C3 Roles
All

Related C3 Skills
All

Method(s) of Instruction
Video, large group discussion

Estimated time
30 minutes

Key Concepts
Roles, skills, qualities, C3 Project

Materials
- Computer with internet access and projector
- PowerPoint slides
- ORCHWA video: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69csBE4y1Uo*
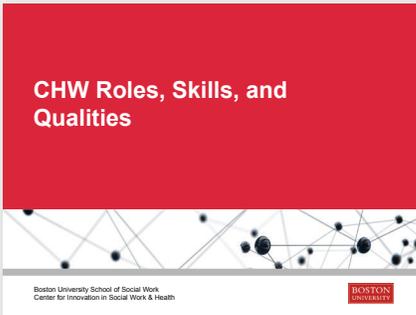
Handouts
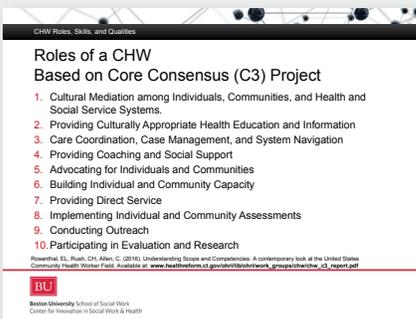- Roles of CHWs
- Skills of CHWs
- Qualities of CHWs

Resources
- Rosenthal, EL, Rush, CH, Allen, C. (2016). Understanding Scope and Competencies: A contemporary look at the United States Community Health Worker Field. Available at: *www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/lib/ohri/work_groups/chw/chw_c3_report.pdf*

Community Health Worker (CHW) Role, Skills, and Qualities

SLIDE 1
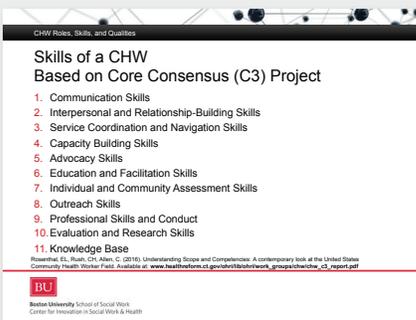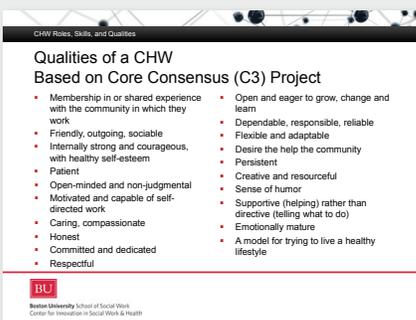
CHW Roles, Skills, and Qualities

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SLIDE 2

Ask a volunteer to read through the CHW roles on this slide.

CHW Roles, Skills, and Qualities

Roles of a CHW
Based on Core Consensus (C3) Project

1. Cultural Mediation among Individuals, Communities, and Health and Social Service Systems.
2. Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education and Information
3. Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
4. Providing Coaching and Social Support
5. Advocating for Individuals and Communities
6. Building Individual and Community Capacity
7. Providing Direct Service
8. Implementing Individual and Community Assessments
9. Conducting Outreach
10. Participating in Evaluation and Research

Rosenthal, EL, Rush, CH, Allen, C. (2016). Understanding Scope and Competencies: A contemporary look at the United States Community Health Worker Field. Available at: www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/lib/ohri/work_groups/chw/chw_c3_report.pdf

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SLIDE 3

While presenting this slide, reference the CHW Skills handout, which has more detailed information. Ask for a volunteer to read each skill and give an example of how CHWs might use each skill in their work.

CHW Roles, Skills, and Qualities

Skills of a CHW
Based on Core Consensus (C3) Project

1. Communication Skills
2. Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills
3. Service Coordination and Navigation Skills
4. Capacity Building Skills
5. Advocacy Skills
6. Education and Facilitation Skills
7. Individual and Community Assessment Skills
8. Outreach Skills
9. Professional Skills and Conduct
10. Evaluation and Research Skills
11. Knowledge Base

Rosenthal, EL, Rush, CH, Allen, C. (2016). Understanding Scope and Competencies: A contemporary look at the United States Community Health Worker Field. Available at: www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/lib/ohri/work_groups/chw/chw_c3_report.pdf

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SLIDE 4

While presenting this slide, reference the CHW Qualities handout, which has more detailed information.

CHW Roles, Skills, and Qualities

Qualities of a CHW
Based on Core Consensus (C3) Project

- Membership in or shared experience with the community in which they work
- Friendly, outgoing, sociable
- Internally strong and courageous, with healthy self-esteem
- Patient
- Open-minded and non-judgmental
- Motivated and capable of self-directed work
- Caring, compassionate
- Honest
- Committed and dedicated
- Respectful
- Open and eager to grow, change and learn
- Dependable, responsible, reliable
- Flexible and adaptable
- Desire the help the community
- Persistent
- Creative and resourceful
- Sense of humor
- Supportive (helping) rather than directive (telling what to do)
- Emotionally mature
- A model for trying to live a healthy lifestyle

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Community Health Worker (CHW) Roles

Cultural Mediation among Individuals, Communities, and Health and Social Service Systems
- ✓ Educating individuals and communities about how to use health and social service systems (including understanding how systems operate)
- ✓ Educating systems about community perspectives and cultural norms (including supporting implementation of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services [CLAS] standards)
- ✓ Building health literacy and cross-cultural communication

Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education and Information
- ✓ Conducting health promotion and disease prevention education in a manner that matches linguistic and cultural needs of participants or community
- ✓ Providing necessary information to understand and prevent diseases and to help people manage health conditions (including chronic disease)

Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
- ✓ Participating in care coordination and/or case management
- ✓ Making referrals and providing follow-up
- ✓ Facilitating transportation to services and helping to address other barriers to services
- ✓ Documenting and tracking individual and population level data
- ✓ Informing people and systems about community assets and challenges

Providing Coaching and Social Support
- ✓ Providing individual support and coaching
- ✓ Motivating and encouraging people to obtain care and other services
- ✓ Supporting self-management of disease prevention and management of health conditions (including chronic disease)
- ✓ Planning and/or leading support groups

Advocating for Individuals and Communities
- ✓ Advocating for the needs and perspectives of communities
- ✓ Connecting to resources and advocating for basic needs (e.g., food and housing)
- ✓ Conducting policy advocacy

Building Individual and Community Capacity
- ✓ Building individual capacity
- ✓ Building community capacity
- ✓ Training and building individual capacity with CHW peers and among groups of CHWs

Providing Direct Service
- ✓ Providing basic screening tests (e.g., height and weight, blood pressure)
- ✓ Providing basic services (e.g., first aid, diabetic foot checks)
- ✓ Meeting basic needs (e.g., direct provision of food and other resources)

Implementing Individual and Community Assessments
- ✓ Participating in design, implementation, and interpretation of individual-level assessments (e.g., home environmental assessment)
- ✓ Participating in design, implementation, and interpretation of community-level assessments (e.g., windshield survey of community assets and challenges, community asset mapping)

Conducting Outreach
- ✓ Case-finding/recruitment of individuals, families, and community groups to services and systems
- ✓ Follow-up on health and social service encounters with individuals, families, and community groups
- ✓ Home visiting to provide education, assessment, and social support
- ✓ Presenting at local agencies and community events

Participating in Evaluation and Research
- ✓ Engaging in evaluating CHW services and programs
- ✓ Identifying and engaging community members as research partners, including community consent processes
- ✓ Participating in evaluation and research
  - o Identification of priority issues and evaluation/research questions
  - o Development of evaluation/research design and methods
  - o Data collection and interpretation
  - o Sharing results and findings
  - o Engaging stakeholders to take action on findings

CHW Core Consensus Project Report: https://www.c3project.org/

Community Health Worker (CHW) Skills

CHWs and CHW program coordinators interviewed for the Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project (2016) reported that CHWs need the following skills to be effective in their work. *Skills* are abilities that can be gained through study and practice.

Communication Skills
✓ Ability to use language confidently
✓ Ability to use language in ways that engage and motivate
✓ Ability to communicate using plain and clear language
✓ Ability to communicate with empathy
✓ Ability to listen actively
✓ Ability to prepare written communication including electronic communication (e.g., email, telecommunication device for the deaf)
✓ Ability to document work
✓ Ability to communicate with the community served (may not be fluent in language of all communities served)

Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills
✓ Ability to provide coaching and social support
✓ Ability to conduct self-management coaching
✓ Ability to use interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing)
✓ Ability to work as a team member
✓ Ability to manage conflict
✓ Ability to practice cultural humility

Service Coordination and Navigation Skills
✓ Ability to coordinate care (including identifying and accessing resources and overcoming barriers)
✓ Ability to make appropriate referrals
✓ Ability to facilitate development of an individual and/or group action plan and goal attainment
✓ Ability to coordinate CHW activities with clinical and other community services
✓ Ability to follow-up and track care and referral outcomes

Capacity Building Skills
✓ Ability to help others identify goals and develop to their fullest potential
✓ Ability to work in ways that increase individual and community empowerment
✓ Ability to network, build community connections, and build coalitions
✓ Ability to teach self-advocacy skills
✓ Ability to conduct community organizing

Advocacy Skills
- ✓ Ability to contribute to policy development
- ✓ Ability to advocate for policy change
- ✓ Ability to speak up for individuals and communities

Education and Facilitation Skills
- ✓ Ability to use empowering and learner-centered teaching strategies
- ✓ Ability to use a range of appropriate and effective educational techniques
- ✓ Ability to facilitate group discussions and decision-making
- ✓ Ability to plan and conduct classes and presentations for a variety of groups
- ✓ Ability to seek out appropriate information and respond to questions about pertinent topics
- ✓ Ability to find and share requested information
- ✓ Ability to collaborate with other educators
- ✓ Ability to collect and use information from and with community members

Individual and Community Assessment Skills
- ✓ Ability to participate in individual assessment through observation and active inquiry
- ✓ Ability to participate in community assessment through observation and active inquiry

Outreach Skills
- ✓ Ability to conduct case-finding, recruitment, and follow-up
- ✓ Ability to prepare and disseminate materials
- ✓ Ability to build and maintain a current resources inventory

Professional Skills and Conduct
- ✓ Ability to set goals and to develop and follow a work plan
- ✓ Ability to balance priorities and to manage time
- ✓ Ability to apply critical thinking techniques and problem solving
- ✓ Ability to use pertinent technology
- ✓ Ability to pursue continuing education and life-long learning opportunities
- ✓ Ability to maximize personal safety while working in community and/or clinical settings
- ✓ Ability to observe ethical and legal standards (e.g. CHW Code of Ethics, Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA])
- ✓ Ability to identify situations calling for mandatory reporting and carry out mandatory reporting requirements
- ✓ Ability to participate in professional development of peer CHWs and in networking among CHW groups
- ✓ Ability to set boundaries and practice self-care

Evaluation and Research Skills
- ✓ Ability to identify important concerns and conduct evaluation and research to better understand root causes
- ✓ Ability to apply the evidence-based practices of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- ✓ Ability to participate in evaluation and research processes including:
    - o Identifying priority issues and evaluation/research questions
    - o Developing evaluation/research design and methods
    - o Data collection and interpretation
    - o Sharing results and findings
    - o Engaging stakeholders to take action on findings

Knowledge Base
- ✓ Knowledge about social determinants of health and related disparities
- ✓ Knowledge about pertinent health issues
- ✓ Knowledge about healthy lifestyles and self-care
- ✓ Knowledge about mental/behavioral health issues and their connection to physical health
- ✓ Knowledge about health behavior theories
- ✓ Knowledge of basic public health principles
- ✓ Knowledge about the community served
- ✓ Knowledge about United States health and social service systems

CHW Core Consensus Project Report: https://www.c3project.org/

Community Health Worker (CHW) Qualities

CHWs and CHW program coordinators interviewed for the National Community Health Advisor Study also made it clear that in order for CHWs to do their complex and demanding work, they need certain qualities. *Qualities* are personal characteristics that can be enhanced but not taught.[1]

- ✓ Membership in or shared experience with the community in which they work
- ✓ Friendly, outgoing, sociable
- ✓ Internally strong and courageous, with healthy self-esteem
- ✓ Patient
- ✓ Open-minded and non-judgmental
- ✓ Motivated and capable of self-directed work
- ✓ Caring, compassionate
- ✓ Honest
- ✓ Committed and dedicated
- ✓ Respectful
- ✓ Open and eager to grow, change and learn
- ✓ Dependable, responsible, reliable
- ✓ Flexible and adaptable
- ✓ Desire the help the community
- ✓ Persistent
- ✓ Creative and resourceful
- ✓ Sense of humor
- ✓ Supportive (helping) rather than directive (telling what to do)
- ✓ Emotionally mature
- ✓ A model for trying to live a healthy lifestyle

Acknowlegements

This curricula draws from and is adapted from other training curricula for peer educators and community health workers, such as the Building Blocks to Peer Success (https://ciswh.org/resources/HIV-peer-training-toolkit) and the Community Capacitation Center, Multnomah County Health Department (https://multco.us/health/community-health/community-capacitation-center)

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