

Community Health Worker (CHW) Core Competencies

Communication Skills

- Understand basic principles of verbal and non-verbal communication
- Listen actively, communicate with empathy and gather information in a respectful manner
- Use language confidently and appropriately
- Identify barriers to communication
- Give information to clients and groups in a clear and concise way
- Speak and write in client's preferred language and at appropriate literacy level
- Document activities and services and prepare written documentation
- Collect data and provide feedback to health and human services agencies, funding sources, and community-based organizations
- Gather information in a respectful manner
- Assist in interpreting and/or translating health information

Interpersonal Skills

- Represent others, their needs, and needs of the community
- Be sensitive, honest, respectful, and empathetic
- Establish relationships, and assist in individual and group conflict resolution
- Understand basic principles of culture, cultural competency, and cultural humility
- Recognize and appropriately respond to the beliefs, values, cultures, and languages of the populations served
- Set personal and professional boundaries
- Provide informal counseling
- Use interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing)
- Work as a team member
- Act within ethical responsibilities as set forth in Rules regarding Training and Certification of CHWs, Section §146.7. Professional and Ethical Standards
<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/chw/progrule.aspx>
- Maintain confidentiality of client information and act within the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements
- Model behavior change
- Ability to network

Service Coordination Skills

- Identify and access resources and maintain a current resource inventory
- Help improve access to resources
- Conduct outreach to encourage participation in health events
- Coordinate CHW activities with clinical and other community services
- Develop networks to address community needs
- Coordinate referrals, follow-up, track care and referral outcomes
- Help others navigate services and resources in health and human services systems
- Provide education, assessment and social support to clients and communities

Capacity-Building Skills

- Identify problems and resources to encourage and help clients solve problems themselves
- Collaborate with local partnerships to improve services, network and build community connections
- Learn new and better ways of serving the community through formal and informal training
- Assess the strengths and needs of the community
- Build leadership skills for yourself and others in the community
- Facilitate support groups
- Organize with others in the community to address health issues or other needs/concerns

Community Health Worker (CHW) Core Competencies (Continue)

Advocacy Skills

- Participate in organizing others, use existing resources, and current data to promote a cause
- Identify and work with advocacy groups
- Inform health and social service systems and carry out mandatory reporting requirements
- Stay abreast of structural and policy changes in the community and in health and social services systems
- Speak up for individuals or communities to overcome intimidation and other barriers
- Utilize coping strategies for managing stress and staying healthy

Teaching Skills

- Use methods that promote learning and positive behavior change
- Use a variety of interactive teaching and coaching methods for different learning styles and ages
- Organize presentation materials
- Identify and explain training and education goals and objectives
- Plan and lead classes
- Evaluate the success of an educational program and measure the progress of individual learners
- Use audiovisual materials and equipment to enhance teaching
- Prepare and distribute education materials and present at community events
- Facilitate group discussions and decision making in ways that engage and motivate learners

Organizational Skills

- Plan and set individual and organization goals
- Plan and set up presentations, educational/training sessions, workshops, and other activities
- Effectively manage time and prioritize activities, yet stay flexible
- Maintain and contribute to a safe working environment
- Gather, document, and report on activities within legal and organization guidelines

Knowledge Base on Specific Health Issues

- Gain and share basic knowledge of the community, health and social services, specific health issues
- Understand social determinants of health and health disparities
- Stay current on health issues affecting clients and know where to find answers to difficult questions
- Understand consumer rights
- Find information on specific health topics and issues across all ages [lifespan focus], including healthy lifestyles, maternal and child health, heart disease & stroke, diabetes, cancer, oral health and behavioral health
- Use and apply public health concepts