

Training for Community Health Workers

Overview

The American Public Health Association states that Community Health Workers (CHWs) have the proven ability to build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy. To be well versed in these skills and help facilitate the best outcomes, it is imperative new CHWs properly receive the best on-boarding and training process. Properly helping new CHWs become acclimated to the culture of the organization while they receive intensive training regarding the "how" and "why" of their role will only increase retention and ensure baseline competencies for all staff.

Research has shown that CHWs must be trained appropriately and respected by the healthcare system for their unique role and identity. CHWs can be effective health workers provided they are taught skills that describe their practice and are supportively and educationally supervised. Appropriate training of CHWs is vital to their effectiveness. Traditionally health care systems and organizations dominate training with a huge emphasis on acquiring knowledge only. The mandatory CHW training offered at STAR is focused on building relationships that promote empowerment and development for the benefit of individuals, families, and communities. This training is focused on inspiring a transformational movement. CHW education seeks to enable people to assume responsibility for their own health through understanding their community's health problems and the societal influences that act upon them through the lens of self-awareness, social justice, and accountability.

Training Program

STAR's CHW training is mandatory and is offered periodically in a small classroom setting. The small class size enables collaboration among each new cohort of CHWs and an opportunity for hands-on instruction. The training for new CHWs will last a minimum of 2 weeks (80 hours), but may vary based upon the individual's performance.

The initial 2 weeks of training is intensive and structured. It will be led by a contracted education and training company which specializes in Population Health & Wellness education and training for health systems and community based organizations. The core training is best administered by a core team to ensure a standardized training experience. This will ensure everyone receives the same information and that quality improvements can be made as needed. This will also ensure all CHWs have core competencies in order to be successful in their role.

The class training is followed by field work and mentoring by the assigned STAR supervisor. The training team will work with the CHW's director and supervisor to provide the necessary support.

The training program has 3 major goals:

1. To inspire and empower CHWs to have valuable relationships with persons they are engaging and helping to navigate their community resources, healthcare systems, and overall path to a sustainable life of wellbeing.
2. To assure CHWs are knowledgeable about the fundamentals and goals of the program so that they are able to effectively work with providers, clients, the care team, as well as other interested parties toward the overall goals: of better quality of care and better cost control and better client experience.
3. To assure that CHWs are able to effectively identify appropriate clients, develop and write clear, concise, and appropriate notes and follow plans of care in order to coordinate care for their clients with the goal of improving their health outcomes and reducing breakdowns resulting in hospitalization or emergency department visits.

CHWs who complete this training will be able to interact in meaningful ways and impact a person's healthcare experience, while helping to decrease the overall healthcare spend and impact health outcomes for individuals and populations of people.

Classroom learning includes:

- Lecture and interactive sessions on the competencies of a CHW.
- Lecture and practice on the skills in writing effective notes and wellness (care) plans.
- Instruction and simulated work on how to effectively coordinate the care of the client.
- Shadowing experiences.

During the training period, the new CHW will have an opportunity to shadow supervisors and experienced CHWs in the ordinary conduct of their work. This enables experienced CHWs to share their insights with the new CHW in order to assist in their learning. Being a successful CHW requires an ability, among other things, to prioritize and manage time. Field shadowing provides the opportunity for learning through example and first-hand observation

After completing the 2 week training CHWs will (Competent/Novice level):

1. Understand care coordination and the role CHWs in the midst of population health. Be able to articulate the history of CHWs related to public health and the viability within current culture.
2. Demonstrate and embody competent and caring characteristics which allow them to build multiple relationships while helping another person navigate the systems of healthcare.
3. Demonstrate the ability to build trust between multiple persons within the care team
4. Be able to identify persons who would benefit from a CHW
5. Understand and demonstrate the ability to educate the community in a way which respects cultural humility
6. Understand and demonstrate the ability to document interventions and record success
7. Understand and identify opportunities for improvement. How to implement a plan, monitor and reevaluate and redirect when needed
8. Demonstrate effective and confident communication skills which will allow for exchange with providers throughout all levels of the care continuum
9. Understand and demonstrate how to complete a medication review
10. Understand the basic disease process of the most common preventable health conditions
11. Understand basic medical and healthcare terminology
12. Understand and be able to discuss the benefits of the Affordable Care Act
13. Demonstrate the ability to begin holding space for the community
14. Be able to demonstrate the ability to identify appropriate resources
15. Demonstrate self-awareness and the ability to implement self-control and self-love interventions

Curriculum Outline:

Public Health-Population Health-Chronic Care Model

- History of the burden of chronic conditions on a community
- IHI Triple Aim
- ACA impacts
- Care Teams....CHWs within care teams
- Current call to action

Care Coordination

- Roles/Responsibilities
- Resource Identification/Development
- Care Plan Development
- Documentation
- Chronic Condition Management
- Priority Setting
- Assessment
- Health Literacy
- Engagement
- Care Teams

Authentic Engagement

- Self-Awareness
- Influence
- Listening Skills
- Behavior Change
- Communication Skills
- Motivational Interviewing Techniques
- Mental Health

Cultural Competency

- Cultural Humility
- Culture
- Social Determinants of Health
- Mediation
- Health Literacy

- Empowerment and Bias

Technology

- Electronic Health Records
- CRISP
- Social Media
- Health Related Apps

Core Features:

- Role Plays
- Simulations
- Didactic
- Poplar Education
- Self-Care
- Conversational