

## **1 Translation for the Role of the Promotora/CHW in Public Health**

### **Slide 2**

According to your experience and knowledge, what is a promotor (a) / Worker Community in Public Health?

### **Slide 3**

Choose the best option to define community health.

### **Slide 4**

Choose which of the following options represent essential activities of the Community Health Worker.

### **Slide 5**

Choose which of the following is a characteristic must have a promotor / Community health Worker to be successful in your community.

### **Slide 6**

Reality does not change because of a presidential mandate (government) the world is not modified by superior ordains, society does perfect itself because of imposed laws, no:

The former will not be able to transfer our reality for the benefit or our communities; This is why we celebrate a group of women who decided to change their lives and knit their dreams and desires, sharing their time between their work, co-workers, house chores, children, domestic obligations, grandchildren and their classes in the different community centers.

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### **Slide 7**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Brief history of promotors/ community health workers.
- Learn about the different roles the health promoters / community workers occupy in the community and in public health.
- Identify the characteristics of promotors / community workers.
- Appreciating and understanding more the promoter, community worker, and responding to the needs of communities.

## **Slide 8**

### **Definition of a Promotor/CHW**

CHW are frontline public Health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables CHES to serve as liaison link or intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

CHWs also 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.

(Notes: This is a definition by American Public Health Association).

## **Slide 9**

The Promotores/CHW as an activist

The promotores and CHW specialize in reaching out the most vulnerable populations. They continually advocate for better opportunities for the needy, for the hard to reach populations, our low income Hispanic and Latino communities. (Notes: Promotores have been agents for social change).

## **Slide 10**

Other Definitions of CHW:

A promotor is any woman or man, who carries out health related functions, who have been trained within the context of intervention, and have not received any formal or professional training or certification. Lewin et. Al 2005

Notes: There is evidence in the literature that CHWs/promotores carry out various functions depending on the need of the community or country. In regards to gender, it is said that approximately 70% are women. In countries like Somalia and Peru, the majority of promotores are men.

## **Slide 11**

Diagram showing various titles given to the CHW/Promotores

There are many names, but the function is the same. CHWs/Promotores are leaders chosen by their communities and they possess privileged positions because they reside in the communities where they work or are volunteers. In 2009 the department of labor of the United States, recommended the creation of a distinguished occupation and assigned the following responsibilities: Assist individual and communities in the acquisition of healthy behaviors, conduct outreach to support the medical personnel where they work and live, and implement prevention and intervention programs that will help communities maintain and reach and individual and community health.

## **Slide 12**

Brief History of the Promotor/CHW as agents for Social Change

The roles and the activities of the Community Health Worker and Promotor have been immense in history and in many parts of the world.

The first promotores were known as the “Chinese Barefoot Doctors”.

They were the first health volunteer and communicators during the early 50’s as a result of the need for doctors and medical services in China. The promotora model had a lot of success and the movement propagated to other countries.

The promotores/CHWs’ became advocates for the needs of the communities and would express the injustice done to their people. During those years they were called liberators instead of servants. In the famous document of Alma Ata it is said that the CHW was the cornerstone of primary health systems.

During the 80’s recession many economies in the developing countries were affected and the programs directed by the government disappeared. However, the Faith based organization continued to support the promotora modelo, but at a smaller scale.

As the years passed the promotora model was replaced by a technical and management role, due to economical, political and social reasons. Nevertheless, the pragmatic focus of the CHW gained throughout the years position its role again as an agent of social change.

### **Slide 13**

#### History of the Community Health Worker/Promoter

In a publication of the WHO, the following quote was expressed regarding the CHW's during the '80s. The CHWs' have a role that cannot be replaced with formal healthcare workers, or by the communities. The CHW combine various service functions and carry out health promotion roles or functions, not only in the area of health itself, but also in the most important and unsurpassable role, that is " "They are the bridge between the community and health." ". *Kahssay, Taylor&Berman,1998*

#### *Notes*

*Their embracing activities open the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of their preventive and healing services.*

### **Slide 14**

The following is evidence of the unique role of the CHW as the bridge or mediator between the community and the Health services.

1. Having integrated the CHW to the multidisciplinary health teams has been an effective strategy to improve and control hypertension among high risk populations.
2. Two interventions in the United States have demonstrated that it is feasible to integrate CHW in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases among Hispanics and to be able to duplicate this effort rendering positive results.
3. After revising 18 studies where CHWS were involved with Diabetic patients, it was found that their intervention improved their self-knowledge and self-management of their disease among diabetic patients showing a decrease incidence of emergency visits.

## **Slide 15**

What is a Public Health CHW/ Promotora?

After reviewing all the history of the CHW, we can see how the CHW has really performed as a Public health professional. They are natural leader who are sensitive to the community, possess a unique knowledge about the needs of their people. Without having received a formal training about public health as a science or subject, they carry out functions such as promotion of health, primary prevention and secondary intervention. In some regions, it is the CHW who visits the families at risk for certain chronic diseases, that thanks to their support, communities have demonstrated positive health outcomes. However, many CHW/promotores are not aware that without knowing, they have been part of a very important and organic movement in public health, one that strengthens their community networks.

## **Slide 16**

Graph showing the essential roles of the promotora/CHW

Notes: This is a general graph that represents the essential roles that control most the functions that the CHW's/promotoras carry out in our country and around the world. Their work of this group is immense and should be recognized as one that helps improve the life expectancy and health of our communities.

There is a vast evidence in the health literature of how the CHWs/promotores have facilitated the application and execution of many Public Health projects and they carry out a vital role in the execution of these primary and secondary prevention programs directed to chronic degenerative diseases, as well, as their role in the intervention of natural disasters, epidemics and community participatory research.

## **Slide 17 – picture of puzzle?**

The Promotores/CHWs bridge their community to the Health Services

One of the unique characteristics of the CHWs programs is that they strengthen the existing network of communities.

The promotores are in a privileged position to carry out connections, they understand what is relevant for their communities, they communicate in the same language of their people, and they know how to incorporate the cultural practices and costumes within their communication.

The best definition is the one that represents a unifying function of the promotora with the community. They represent part of a great puzzle or whole where the leader is able to unify health and the people through a key knowledge that has been acquired along the years of interacting with one another and understanding the community where they all live. The CHW/ promotora is the bridge between the migrant worker, the housewife, the young student, the children and the health services.

[\(Wilson, Brownstein, & Blanton, 1998; Walters & Simoni 2002\).](#)

### **Slide 18**

The positive impact of the CHW in the Community Health

“The diversity of the different roles and functions of the CHWs /promotores has helped us carry out many of the demands of the community and the health care system”. Sophia London Vicepresident of the Alliance for CHW in Minnesota.

The present graph tries to show you how the CHW/Promotoras has been supporting public health in all of its phases, mainly in primary prevention and at the same time helping and supporting the healthcare systems in all of its levels: Primary care, Secondary care and Tertiary care.

### **Slide 19**

Other areas in which CHWs successfully participate

Environmental Health

Mental Health

## Violence Prevention

Advocate for Human and civil rights

Notes: The CHWs/Promotoras' embracing activities have opened opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the healing and preventive services.

### **Slide 20**

A promotora or CHW will have any of these characteristics

Slide 16

The Promotora/CHW must always promote the culture for prevention.

### **Slide 21**

Identify with its audience or group

The CHWs in the majority of the cases are not only bilingual but also come from low income families, having the same stories of life or backgrounds, and sometimes even the same tragedies. This is why they identify with their community and are ideal transferring the needs of the people to the health service professionals, legal professional, social services or other diverse groups. The CHW have accomplished a titanic effort, these days during our health care reform, they have thrown down the barriers of mistrust and stigma that exists within the Latino community when it comes to trusting the health care services.

### **Slide 22**

The CHW/Promotora must be Committed

In the majority of the programs the CHW /promotoras do not receive a formal pay or monetary contribution for their work. On the contrary, their own commitment

to themselves and their profound desire to help others is their motor or motivation to continue serving their community.

The commitment and the discipline shown by these CHWs /Promotores is almost their only motivation. Their desire to learn has been an important element that keeps them interested in continuing collaborating and serving their communities without expecting anything in return. In some occasion they are paid for some time under a contract or temporary program. However, it is important for them to be recognized as part of an important workforce group and be paid for their exceptional labor and contribution.

### **Slide 23**

Educate others

The desire to share and educate others is another vital component of the CHW/promotora. It is important to continually update their knowledge in order to train others and provide them with the necessary tools.

### **Slide 24**

The CHW/promotora must be able to help provide the services the community needs. These leaders must be able to have the capacity to respond when the community needs them.

### **Slide 25**

Respect

Another characteristic and component of the CHW /promotora is the value of Respect towards others' opinions, cultures, and decisions.

### **Slide 26**

Trust

The CHW/promotora establishes trust within the community from the moment he or she is elected as their leader and representative. However, it is important to



maintain this trust, since it is so difficult to maintain and so easy to lose within some hard to reach communities.

### **Slide 27**

#### Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to feel or perceive what the other person would feel if he or she was in the same situations lived by that other person. This is a very special characteristic of the CHWs, they feel what their communities need, they place themselves in others' shoes, as one would say, and advocate for the needs of others. This human value is one of the many values these CHWs possess and it is one of the keys to maintain communication, respect and trust within the community members.

### **Slide 28**

#### Knowledge

Again, just like we said before, it is important to be well prepared on the topics we plan to share with our community, if we plan to empower, teach and transfer the necessary information to others in the community. We cannot talk about a topic we don't know well.

### **Slide 29**

#### CULTURE

The CHW/Promotor must provide cultural mediation, education and health information that is culturally appropriate, using materials and methods that are common and relate to the people you intend to serve. The CHWs must possess cultural humility and desire to understand and show respect for other cultures.

### **Slide 30**

Key actions carried out in the community

### **Slide 31**

Inform others

Timely and adequate communication is one of the key actions that must be carried out by the CHWs/promotoras. Everything learned in trainings is with the intention of sharing it and/or reproducing it to develop timely messages for others in the community they serve.

### **Slide 32**

Design Messages tailored to Hispanic/Latina population

The design and delivery of the health messages must be in the language of the community to be served. It is ideal to generate the ideas in the language of the community. The messages should be the result of a previous analysis of the needs and capacities of the community that you are serving.

### **Slide 33**

Easy To Understand

Messages should be simple! The CHW/promotor should deliver health messages in a culturally appropriate manner, using popular and simple messages. You may use simple images that are easy to follow, understand and reproduce by the people you are serving.

### **Slide 34**

Messages and images that is able to Break Myths

The delivered messages must be clear, simple and able to break myths.

### **Slide 35**

Use language or dialects spoken in the region you are serving

### **Slide 36**

Credibility

The CHW/Promotor must maintain his or her credibility delivering truthful messages, clear facts, not promising what one cannot deliver. Being a role model, being an example!

### **Slide 37**

Personal Growth

The CHW/promotor should continually pursue his or her personal growth in every aspect of his or her life. Besides being up to date in trainings, they must take care of one's self first, to be able to serve others.

### **Slide 38**

Collaboration

The continuous collaboration with other CHW/promotores, health agencies, government agencies, non-government agencies, and faith based organizations will be vital in order to establish and succeed in your community.

### **Slide 39**

The CHW/promotores must also educate others such as: Health administrators, physicians, hospital personnel, about the importance of your labor as a communicator and they must know how relevant your support is to the health care system. They should also learn from you how relevant the cultural intervention is in order to strengthen the communication between patients and their physicians, communities and their health care services.

### **Slide 40**

Motivate

Motivation is vital in order to maintain the interest from the community and yours as well.

### **Slide 41**

Interest others

Maintain the interest for your community through the interaction with neighbors, collaborators and organizations within your community. Know your community's social and human capital.

**Slide 42**

Provide Tools

**Slide 43**

Maintain family bonding, network and care for one's self.

**Slide 44**

Thank you all for your time and for the work you do so well as Community Health Worker/Promotora