

Provider Guide to Success with CHWs: Mental Health Services

Welcome to Success with CHWs, a helpful web-based resource about the community health worker (CHW) role for providers who address adult mental health and integrated health needs, especially among low income clients experiencing barriers to good health and recovery!

Practical tools for busy health professionals

Featuring research, case studies, webinars, video clips and other tools, this electronic “pocket guide” is designed to help you--busy mental health professionals, primary care providers who address mental health needs, and agency/clinic managers--learn about CHW services and their multiple benefits to clients, care systems and communities. Success with CHWs is also intended to build knowledge, readiness and capacity for providers to begin to integrate proven CHW strategies in team-based care.

CHWs: your partner to bridge barriers, improve care, advance health equity

Health reform efforts that promote health equity, performance improvement, and new models such as the Behavioral Health Home model challenge provider systems to organize and deliver services in ways that will advance the Triple Aim, measurably reduce health disparities and better link to communities. Introducing culturally-competent CHW approaches can help providers meet these major challenges.

Working under many different titles and in many different settings, CHWs are trained and trusted frontline health workers who apply their unique understanding of the experience, language, and/or culture of the populations they serve in order to carry out one or more of the following roles:

- Provide culturally-appropriate health education, information, and outreach in homes, clinics, hospitals, mental health centers, social services agencies, schools, shelters, local businesses, community centers and other settings
- Serve as bridge and cultural mediator between individuals, communities, and health and human services as well as build individual and community capacity;
- Assure that people access the services they need
- Deliver direct services, such as informal counseling, social support, care coordination, and health screenings
- Advocate for individual and community needs.

The US Dept of Health and Human Services and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health reported in 2012, “Although often enlisted to serve a variety of functions in community and health, the role of the CHW, or promotora, in mental health and substance use screening and care can be especially effective in reducing barriers by communicating in the language of the patient and providing insight to the problem at hand and the treatments prescribed...the CHW/promotora can help reduce stigma, enhance patient engagement and facilitate the warm handoff to a provider of trust, and represent an important part of the solution to a culturally and linguistically competent workforce.”

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Using this online tool kit

Review this website individually or as a team to learn about CHW strategies and how they can help you effectively address suboptimal outcomes; barriers related to culture, language, literacy, isolation, trust, socioeconomic factors and others; and the social determinants of health that impact results, utilization and well-being. You will find information on the CHW role and impacts including scope of practice, education, funding, evidence, models, hiring and supervision and team-based care. Learn how CHWs can build on culture as a source of health, resiliency and healing.

Join our CHW Supervisor Roundtable for shared learning, best practices and networking among other Minnesota CHW employers. And call on us for guidance and technical assistance. We will continue to update Success with CHWs and welcome your feedback at info@mnchwalliance.org!

Are you a consumer seeking information about mental health?

Please contact your clinic or mental health provider.

Another reliable resource is the Minnesota chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Visit www.namihelps.org or call 651-645-2648, toll-free 1-888-626-4435

Reference

Sanchez, K., Chapa, T., Ybarra, R., & Martinez, O. N., (2012). Eliminating Disparities through the Integration of Behavioral Health and Primary Care Services for Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Including Populations with Limited English Proficiency: A Review of the Literature. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, p. 19.

http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/uploads/documents/OMH%20Report_FINAL-FINAL.pdf