

Community Health Worker

Curriculum Summary – Behavioral Health Focus

Program Length: 20 Weeks • Classroom Hours: 120 • Service Learning Hours: 60+

CHWs assist individuals and communities in their adoption of healthy behaviors through service coordination, advocacy, and capacity building strategies. CHWs may conduct health outreach, coordinate resources, provide social support and informal counseling, facilitate health education programs, and collect data to identify and advocate for individual and community health needs. This competency-based training combines classroom instruction with community-based service learning experiences. Training aligns with the Missouri Core Competencies for CHWs.

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate the Missouri Core Competencies to serve as a CHW.
2. Define the roles, responsibilities, boundaries, limitations, and essential skills of a community health worker/advocate.
3. Identify community resources and be able to access them.
4. Identify and describe how lifestyle components and environmental factors result in health issues.
5. Identify concepts, laws, and compliance regulations that impact clients when accessing services.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the role cultural beliefs have on health practices and use of services

Textbook

Foundations for Community Health Workers (2nd Edition). Timothy Berthold, et al. Copyright 2016. ISBN: 978-1-119-06081-9.

Classroom

Classroom activities combine live virtual lecture, community speakers, discussions, group activities, and role-playing exercises. Weekly coursework includes assigned readings, written reflections, case studies, research, and practice exercises. Curriculum includes:

Unit	Key Concepts
The Role of CHWs	Models of care, CHW roles and competencies, personal qualities and attributes
Introduction to Public Health	Health definitions, public health core functions and roles, spectrum of prevention, epidemiology, ecological models of health
Promoting Health Equality	Health inequalities in US, social determinants of health, health equality policy and policy change, role of CHWs
Introduction to Health Care and Policy in U.S.	US healthcare system, healthcare access, health policy, insurance, Obama care, Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, healthcare enrollment, role of CHWs
Practicing Cultural Humility	Cultural diversity, biases and discrimination, immigrant communities, cultural health beliefs, self-awareness, professional CHW roles, models of practice
LGBTQIA+ Support	LGBTQIA+ terminology and frameworks, practicing cultural humility, community needs, mental health, peer support, queer immigrant intersectionality

Unit	Key Concepts
Guiding Principles for CHWs	Ethical challenges and guidelines, HIPAA, MO CHW Code of Ethics, professional boundaries, CHW scope of practice (SOP), working as part of a multidisciplinary team, client-centered practice
Conducting Initial Client Interviews	Structure, process, SOP, building rapport, confidentiality, informed consent, strengths-based approach, documentation
Client-Centered Counseling	SOP concerns, developing action plans, harm-reduction and risk-reduction counseling, motivational interviewing, challenges, documentation, self-awareness
Care Management	CHW care management, care teams and CHW SOP, developing care management plans, common challenges, working with families, providing referrals, documentation
Home Visiting & Safety Planning	Preparation, conducting home visits, challenges, common courtesies, guidelines, safety guidelines and planning, responding to common challenges
Clinical Documentation	Types of documentation, case notes, SOAP notes, SMART goals, PRAPARE Social Determinants of Health Tool, encounter forms, environmental inventories
Stress Management & Self-Care	Stress and burnout, internal and external resources, stress responses, self-assessment, stress management techniques, client stress reduction
Conflict Resolution	Workplace conflict, client conflict, conflict styles, deescalating anger, communication skills, models of conflict resolution
Professional Skills	Code switching, finding a job, keeping a job, boundaries, communication, professional development, networking
MO CHW Policy	Local, state, and regional landscape, statewide infrastructure, how to get involved, St. Louis CHW coalition, Integrated Health Network, HEAL
Previously Incarcerated People	US incarceration policies, individual and community health impacts, re-entry challenges, healthcare best practices, role of CHWs, St. Louis Re-LINK program
Chronic Disease	Diabetes, asthma, hypertension, high blood cholesterol, chronic disease management, local resources, ecological approach to causes and consequences, treatment options and models, patient self-management, SOP, working with clients, action planning, medication management
Healthy Eating and Active Living	Food policy, barriers to healthy diets, weight-inclusive approach to health, healthy nutrition and physical activity guidelines, practical guidelines for healthy eating, providing health information about nutrition, body positive approach, supporting clients
Health Outreach	Outreach levels and methods, planning, outreach teams, identifying health issues, conducting outreach, safety issues, supervision, and support
Facilitating Health Education Trainings	Approaches to teaching and training, popular education, participatory learning, problem-based learning, facilitation techniques, training evaluations
Group Facilitation	Group factors, group types, advantages, group processes, facilitator roles, facilitation techniques, boundaries and supervision, challenges, ethics and confidentiality
Community Diagnosis	Key concepts, strengths-based approach, role of community and CHWs, key steps, conducting research, analyzing findings, developing an action plan
Community Organizing and Advocacy	Purpose, strategies and tactics, models of practice, developing policy recommendations, media advocacy, Community Action Model, role of CHWs
Mental Health	Mental illness, disorder categories, mental health treatment, crisis intervention, suicide intervention, substance use disorder, mental health first aid action plans, resources
Trauma	Trauma responses, collective impacts, PTSD, CHW SOP, guidelines for working with survivors, providing referrals, action planning, trauma informed practice, self-care

Unit	Key Concepts
Community Violence Prevention	Violence as a public issue, primary forms of violence, introduction to community violence intervention models, introduction to supporting victims of violence
Domestic and Sexual Violence	Statistics, violence and health equity, violence prevention, risk and protective factors, violence prevention in health systems, resources, role of CHWs, safety planning
Crisis Prevention Intervention	Nonviolent crisis intervention, community de-escalation techniques, tools and resources for reducing crises, promoting safe spaces, reducing health disparities to promote positive health outcomes, assisting with behavioral health situations,
Suicide Prevention	Statistics, risk and protective factors, warning signs, screening tools and evaluation, interventions, resources and referrals
Substance Abuse	Disease model of addiction, types of substance abuse, impacts, signs and symptoms and effects of commonly abused substances, safety concerns, supporting clients, resources
Reproductive Health	Sexual health, adolescent sexual health, STIs, contraceptive counseling, birth control methods, data and statistics, resources, role of CHWs
Perinatal Mood Disorders	Identifying perinatal mood disorders, applying trauma informed care, supporting clients experiencing PMDs, providing resources and referrals
Additional Behavioral Health Topics	Additional topics coming soon!

Service Learning

Service learning allows students to apply classroom concepts and practice the Missouri CHW core competencies within the communities they will be serving. Students design their service learning experiences based on their interests, community, and personal learning plan. Service learning experiences include resource gathering, networking, outreach, and workplace learning.

Workplace Learning

Students work with the service learning coordinator to set up an internship in their area of behavioral health. Students leveraging an existing job/volunteer role are required to complete a project that extends beyond their typical responsibilities to demonstrate growth and mastery of competencies and is related to the behavioral health focus of the program. In addition to 40 workplace learning hours, students will complete a workplace learning proposal, weekly reflections, and a final summary paper.

Networking and Outreach

These experiences connect students directly with individual expertise and service agencies. These opportunities increase health-specific knowledge, enhance resource portfolios, and help to build personal relationships and connections that will be beneficial to CHW practice. Each student will complete 3 interviews and attend a minimum of 3 community health events.

Resource Gathering

Resource gathering puts students in touch with local services that are available to future clients. Each student will research and develop a personalized community resource manual that can be used with clients during their work as CHWs.

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,213,026 and is 100% financed with the federal award. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).