The Role of Community Health Workers

Amie Fishman, Karen Winkler, and Elena Schwolsky

This chapter provides three activities and two assessments for training community health workers (CHWs) to understand the roles, competencies, and characteristics they need to be successful CHWs. The work of CHWs occurs in clinical settings and as part of organizations, as well as informally in community settings and homes.

This guide corresponds to, and is meant to be used with, Chapter 1, “The Role of Community Health Workers,” of Foundations for Community Health Workers, Second Edition.
The Role of Community Health Workers

Training about the roles, core competencies, and characteristics of CHWs typically occurs early on in the CHW program at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) and is revisited periodically as learners assess their own skill and knowledge development throughout the program. We recommend incorporating some icebreakers and community-building activities, especially early on in a training program. The content in this chapter is designed to be covered in one to two classes or training sessions.

This guide is meant to be used when teaching or training using Chapter 1 of *Foundations for Community Health Workers, Second Edition*, where more material about the roles of CHWs is provided. The step-by-step learning activities presented here are just a sample from our curriculum and do not include all training activities we facilitate over the course of a nine-month CHW certification process. We recommend reading Chapter 1 in *Foundations*, as the textbook provides more material about the role of CHWs, as well as a deeper explanation of concepts related to activities in this guide.

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

**The Role of Community Health Workers**

This chapter comprises up to 4 hours of training content.

### ACTIVITY

**ACTIVITY 1.1: ROLES, COMPETENCIES, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHWs (45–60 MINUTES)**

This activity prepares learners to identify roles, competencies, and characteristics of CHWs across a wide variety of fields.

Small group drawing activity, individual worksheet, and large group discussion

*Includes:*
- Learner Handout 1.1 A: CHW Body Template
- Learner Handout 1.1 B: CHW Self-Assessment
- Learner Handout 1.1 C: CHW Roles and Core Competencies Tables

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Explain common roles CHWs play.
- Articulate core competencies associated with community health work.
- Identify essential qualities and characteristics of successful CHWs.

### ACTIVITY 1.2: IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CHWs (45–60 MINUTES)

This activity enables learners to identify important personal qualities or characteristics of successful CHWs. By drawing on personal experiences of receiving assistance, learners are able to put themselves in their clients’ and prospective clients’ positions.

Written self-reflection and large group discussion

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Describe personal qualities and characteristics common among successful CHWs.
- Name personal strengths and assets they bring to their work as CHWs.
- Identify areas for growth and improvement.
# CHAPTER AT A GLANCE (continued)

## The Role of Community Health Workers

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<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITY 1.3: CHW PANEL—EXPERTS IN THE FIELD (75–90 MINUTES)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This activity provides learners with an opportunity to hear directly from experienced CHWs about the realities of community health work and the roles CHWs play in health promotion. In-class presentation by a panel of invited CHWs Includes: ⬗ For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Name some of the roles CHWs play in health promotion. ▶ Identify common challenges CHWs face in the workplace. ▶ Discuss benefits of having CHWs as part of a health team. ▶ Describe core skills and competencies needed to be a successful CHW.</td>
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### TRAINING WITH VIDEOS FROM CHAPTER 1 OF FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 1 of the textbook includes two interviews with working CHWs and an expert.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>ANSWER KEY OR RUBRIC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT 1.1: IDENTIFYING CHWs’ ROLES, COMPETENCIES, AND CHARACTERISTICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This assessment contains a short-answer quiz in which learners must identify and explain CHWs’ roles, competencies, and characteristics using statements from CHWs.</td>
<td>▶ Answer key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT 1.2: MATCHING QUIZ</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This assessment contains a ten-question matching quiz to differentiate between roles, competencies, and characteristics.</td>
<td>▶ Answer key</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITIES

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Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics of CHWs

This activity prepares learners to identify roles, competencies, and characteristics of CHWs across a wide variety of fields. It should be done after learners have already developed an understanding of what a CHW is and discussed some of the different kinds of community health work that exist, as explained in the Foundations textbook. This activity incorporates simple drawings, small group discussion, and synthesis in the large group.

1 Introduction

Explain to learners that this activity will start by defining CHWs, then small groups will fill out a drawing, and then the results will be posted for the large group to review. Learners will do a brief self-assessment of their skills.

Refer back to Chapter 1, reminding learners that there are many different kinds of CHWs working in diverse settings, in both clinical and nonclinical environments. Remind learners that CHWs go by different titles and that they work or volunteer in a wide range of settings. CHWs usually come from the communities they serve and share the goal of reducing health inequities and improving health outcomes for their communities.

**OPTION** It may be helpful to refer back to the definition of a CHW from the American Public Health Association CHW section (www.apha.org/membergroups/sections/aphasectiions/chw/). You may want to write this on the board or pass it out and ask learners to follow along as the definition is read aloud:

A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community.
Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics of CHWs (continued)

to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

A CHW also builds 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.

Ask learners if there are any words or concepts from the definition that are unclear, and take a few minutes to review language before moving into the exercise.

Tell learners that this exercise will provide an opportunity to more deeply examine three things:
1. What CHWs do (roles)
2. What skills and knowledge CHWs need to perform their jobs (core competencies)
3. What qualities CHWs bring to their work (characteristics)

Small Group Discussion

Break the group into groups of three to four people each and distribute the CHW body template (included at the end of this activity). Explain that the figure in the handout represents an ideal CHW, and the task for learners is to identify what roles, competencies, and qualities that CHW has, and to draw or write them on the picture. Ask the learners to pick one person from each group to write down the ideas on the handout as the group brainstorm. Encourage them to draw from their own experiences and knowledge as well as from the textbook chapter.

Ask learners to start with roles—the core functions CHWs perform—such as counseling, health education, and health system navigation. Encourage learners to not only write words, but also to draw symbols or use colors or images that convey the core functions. You may wish to ask learners to think about the different body parts of the CHW as they relate to the roles. For example, the hands and feet can represent things CHWs do, or where they go to do that work. Circulate among the small groups, observing their work and responding to questions, as needed.

After a few minutes, prompt learners to start brainstorming a list of competencies—the skills and knowledge a CHW needs to perform these roles, such as communication or facilitation skills.

Finally, prompt learners to brainstorm and write down a list of qualities or characteristics the CHW needs to have to perform these roles, such as open-mindedness, compassion, or sensitivity. You may wish to ask learners to pay special attention to the eyes, ears, mouth, heart, and other parts of the body that might represent different aspects of the CHW's characteristics.
Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics of CHWs (continued)

3 Gallery Walk and Large Group Discussion
Ask each group to put their picture on the wall, and then spend a few minutes doing a gallery walk (where they walk through the room and view each group’s picture) to give learners a chance to see what each of the other groups created.

As learners are participating in the gallery walk, draw three columns on the board or on three pieces of flip-chart paper with the following headings:

- Roles
- Core competencies
- Characteristics

4 Large Group Debrief
Bring learners together into one large group and ask them to reflect on the pictures they created and viewed as you go through each of the three categories. First, ask learners to name some of the common roles that CHWs perform, according to their discussions. As they share, list the roles on the board or on flip-chart paper.

There may be some confusion or overlap here between roles and core competencies, so take time to discuss as a group. If it becomes clear through the discussion that an example shared as a role fits better in one of the other categories, write it in the correct place. Explain that not every CHW will perform all of these roles, and that the specific roles of a CHW depend on their work environment and the particulars of their job.

**TIP** If a learner provides an example that does not fit within the category being discussed (e.g., a quality or characteristic instead of a role), ask the group to discuss it and collectively determine where the example fits. Similarly, if an example is provided that does not fall within any of the categories, ask follow-up questions to better understand and identify the correct role, competency, or quality being described.

After a few minutes of discussion on roles, switch to core competencies and again ask for learners to share the key examples they developed. Again, engage the learners when an example is provided that fits better in one of the other categories. Explain that, as with roles, not every competency will be used at every CHW position.

**OPTION** Hostos Community College created two tables: one that describes core CHW roles and jobs associated with them, and the other that describes core competencies. These are included at the end of this activity. You may want to review them, pass them out to learners, or both.
Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics of CHWs (continued)

Repeat these steps for characteristics, filling in the column or flip-chart paper with examples. Ask learners to review the lists and notice, based on their own knowledge and the textbook, if there are any glaring omissions.

Although the emphasis in a report-back from small group work is on capturing and categorizing the responses from the learners, it is also an opportunity to add in pieces that have not been discussed. If you choose to do so, make sure to explain to learners what you are adding and why it is important.

5 Self-Assessment

Hand out copies of the CHW self-assessment form (included at the end of this activity). Ask learners to review the roles, competencies, and qualities lists on the board. Tell them to write down in each column what they currently do or have.

For example, if learners are already working as CHWs, have them write down what roles they currently perform, what skills they already have, and what qualities they already possess.

Then, for each of the three columns, have learners write down which roles, skills, and qualities they would like to learn more about, practice, or develop. If learners have a pen in a second color or a highlighter, they can use color to distinguish the “have now” list from the “want to develop” list.

Explain that this is a self-assessment, and that self-awareness is a key quality of a successful CHW and one that they are already developing.

6 Reinforcement

Review the difference between roles, core competencies, and qualities. You may wish to remind learners of the following:

- Not every example discussed will be used by every CHW, and the day-to-day experience of CHWs varies depending on location, context, and many other factors.

- Even though CHWs have been around for a very long time, the field is still considered to be emerging and many people still do not understand the roles of CHWs.

This is why it is so important that they both understand the roles and responsibilities of CHWs and that they help shape and clarify those roles within their organizations and in society. Doing so will help ensure CHWs are working within their scope of practice and also at the highest functional level possible.

Take a moment to highlight the importance of self-awareness as an essential ingredient for success as a CHW.

It is helpful for learners to know where they stand today in terms of their knowledge and skills. It is also important to keep setting goals for professional development that include...
Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics of CHWs
(continued)

plans for enhancing their knowledge and skills over time. You may wish to suggest that learners keep the form they used to assess their current knowledge and skills and that they write down plans for professional development. The self-assessment activity can be repeated or reviewed periodically throughout the longer training period, providing learners with an opportunity to revisit their learning goals and evaluate their professional development.
Activity 1.1

Learner Handout 1.1 A: CHW Body Template
## Learner Handout 1.1 B:
### CHW Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I currently do or have...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to learn more about, practice, or develop...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Learner Handout 1.1 C: CHW Roles and Core Competencies Tables

#### Activity 1.1

### CHW Roles and Associated Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHW Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and community mobilization</td>
<td>Prepare and disseminate material, find cases and recruit, assess community, visit homes, promote health literacy, be an advocate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/cultural liaison</td>
<td>Organize communities, be an advocate, translate and interpret, conduct assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care management and care coordination</td>
<td>Engage families, conduct assessments, address basic needs, set goals and plan actions, supply counseling, suggest referrals, give feedback to providers, produce documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based support</td>
<td>Visit homes, assess environments, promote health literacy, provide coaching, implement action plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health promotion and health coaching</td>
<td>Teach and model behavior change, coach on problem solving, reduce harm, promote treatment adherence, facilitate support groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System navigation</td>
<td>Help patients navigate, coordinate, and follow up; translate, and interpret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory research</td>
<td>Be an advocate, engage partners, interview, perform data entry, and conduct web searches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHW Core Competencies Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Listen actively, ask open-ended questions, convey information in clear language, clearly state wants or needs, present information to groups, facilitate groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Convey personal warmth, build trust, deal with strong emotions and conflict, begin and end relationships with clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about community health issues and services available</td>
<td>Learn community health needs, find resources, share information with others, develop and update resource lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-coordination skills</td>
<td>Work in health care team, network with health and social service agencies and providers, make referrals for services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Learner Handout 1.1 C: CHW Roles and Core Competencies Tables (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy skills</td>
<td>Speak out for client or community needs; ensure clients are treated fairly and respectfully; build relationships with community advocacy groups; advocate with state, city, local officials, and service providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
<td>Share accurate and culturally appropriate information with clients, families, and community groups; use plain language; assess understanding; select appropriate written and visual materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational skills</td>
<td>Create work schedule, prioritize tasks, clearly document work, report to supervisor or work team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity-building skills</td>
<td>Identify and support community leaders, develop personal leadership skills, collaboratively organize effective community advocacy projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identifying Characteristics of Successful CHWs

This activity enables learners to identify important personal qualities or characteristics of successful CHWs. By drawing on personal experiences of receiving assistance from helping professionals in their own lives to guide the activity, learners are able to put themselves in their clients' and prospective clients' positions. In doing so, learners reflect on the most important qualities and characteristics displayed by helping professionals, identify the qualities they already possess, and name those they wish to develop or strengthen.

1 Introduction

Explain to learners that successful CHWs, in addition to possessing an important set of skills and competencies, also display qualities or characteristics that make them able to play important, helping roles. Unlike skills or competencies, which explain what people do, qualities and characteristics describe how people interact with others and move through the world. Some of these qualities are innate, and others are learned.

Tell learners that in this activity, they will work in pairs. Each member of the pair will think of a person in their life who plays an active role. The pair will then work together to describe the characteristics of these two people in their lives. They will then each write their own brief self-reflection.

The difference between qualities, skills, roles, and competencies can be confusing, so take a few minutes to make sure learners understand what you mean by qualities. Ask learners for a volunteer or two to explain what is meant by qualities or characteristics, and ask for some examples. As people offer examples, ask them to explain how a quality differs from a skill or a competency.

If learners seem to be struggling with the concept, offer an example of a personal quality, such as compassion or trustworthiness. Although these qualities

Activity 1.2

45–60 MINUTES

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flip-chart paper and markers
- Writing paper and pens

TRAINER PREPARATION

- Review Chapter 1.
- Write the three reflection questions from Step 4 on flip-chart paper.

LEARNER PREPARATION

After this activity, learners will be able to:

- Describe personal qualities and characteristics common among successful CHWs.
- Name personal strengths and assets they bring to their work as CHWs.
- Identify areas for growth and improvement.
Identifying Characteristics of Successful CHWs (continued)

and personality traits can be developed and strengthened over time and with practice, they are different from skills or competencies, such as conducting interviews or doing outreach. Qualities and skills go hand in hand and complement one another. For example, a medical doctor may be very skilled at diagnosing a particular form of skin cancer (a skill) but if they are extremely shy and hesitant to ask questions or interact with a patient, their ability to perform successfully may be impaired. Similarly, an outgoing doctor who can develop a strong rapport with a patient may not be aware of the latest research findings about the same form of cancer and, as a result, may not be able to diagnose the disease.

2 Small Group Activity

Assign learners to work in pairs. Ask learners to close their eyes and think about a person in their own lives who played a professional helping role. This could be any kind of helping role: a physician, CHW, social worker, teacher, midwife, pastor, monk, rabbi, or another helping professional. Ask people to visualize that person who really helped them or their family through a particularly difficult time, or who made a positive difference in their lives at a critical moment. Pause for a moment and then ask if everyone has identified someone.

_With your eyes still closed, continue to visualize the person who helped you, who made a positive difference in your life (pause). In your mind, go back to the time that they helped you (pause); think about how the person acted and interacted with you and how it felt to be helped by them (pause). What qualities or characteristics did this person have that you appreciated, that you valued and respected? What was it about the way the person was with you (pause)? Now, open your eyes and turn to the person next to you. Decide who will go first, and take a few minutes to share with each other the qualities you most respected and appreciated about the person you chose._

Ask the pairs to take turns telling each other about the person who provided meaningful help or support in their life. After about 4 minutes, tell the group to switch to the second speaker in the pairs, if they haven’t already. Give the pairs another 4 minutes and then tell them to finish their last thought and come back to the large group.

3 Large Group Brainstorm

Ask learners to share with the large group some of the qualities they identified as being most valuable in the helping professionals they discussed. As learners give examples, write the qualities they share on the board or on a flip chart.

Once learners have shared, ask if there are any qualities they see missing from the list they’ve generated together. Ask if they notice any themes in the qualities they identified. Acknowledge that this list includes just some of the many important qualities that people in helping professions can have (and not every helping professional has all of them).
Identifying Characteristics of Successful CHWs (continued)

Point out that learners may already have many of these qualities that can enhance their work as CHWs, either because of their own life experiences, their nature and personalities, or because they actively worked to develop them.

4 Individual Work—Writing Reflection and Self-Assessment

Provide learners with paper and pens, or ask them to take out a piece of paper and a pen. Direct their attention to the written reflection questions on flip-chart paper, and ask them to take a few minutes to reflect and write their responses. Ask learners to return their attention to the helping professional they remembered, and to the qualities they most valued and appreciated about that person, as they write for 5 to 10 minutes on the following questions:

1. Which of these qualities also reside in you?
2. What additional qualities will you bring to your career as a CHW?
3. What qualities do you most need or want to strengthen or enhance?

Going in a circle, ask each learner to share one quality they bring to their work as a CHW and one quality they wish to strengthen or enhance. After everyone has shared, thank learners for their honesty and commitment to growth.

5 Reinforcement

Identify the qualities of self-awareness and reflection as among the most important characteristics for CHWs to possess. Along with the development of core competencies and skills, CHWs can and should work to enhance and develop those qualities that will enable them to be successful in their field and most able to support their clients. Acknowledge that the development of qualities and characteristics is a life-long process requiring humility, vulnerability, curiosity, and self-awareness.

This quote from Foundations may help further reinforce these points:

Successful CHWs must be able to build positive interpersonal relationships with people of diverse backgrounds and identities. Without the capacity to build relationships based on trust, CHWs cannot do their job effectively. The qualities that enable this capacity can be strengthened through practice and self-reflection.

The following table (taken from Chapter 1 of Foundations) provides a list and explanation of some key qualities successful CHWs possess. It may be helpful to reference this table as you reinforce the qualities and characteristics of successful CHWs.
### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CHWs (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>DEFINITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Interpersonal warmth</td>
<td>Being able to listen, care, and respond to clients and communities with compassion and kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Being honest, allowing others to confide in you, maintaining confidentiality, and upholding professional ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Being willing to embrace others' differences, including their flaws, and being nonjudgmental in your interactions with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Objectivity</td>
<td>Striving to work with and view clients and their circumstances without the influence of personal prejudice or bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sensitivity</td>
<td>Being aware of and truly respecting the experience, culture, feelings, and opinions of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Competence</td>
<td>Developing the knowledge and skills required to provide quality services to all the clients and communities you work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Commitment to social justice</td>
<td>Demonstrating the commitment and heart to fight injustice and to advocate for social changes that promote the health and well-being of clients and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Good psychological health</td>
<td>Having the mental and emotional capacity to perform your work professionally, without doing harm to clients, colleagues, or yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Self-awareness and understanding</td>
<td>Being willing and able to reflect on and analyze your own experiences, biases, and prejudices, to ensure that they do not negatively affect your interactions with clients and colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the International Training and Education Center on HIV in Zimbabwe (I-TECH) and the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health (2004). *Integrated Counseling for HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care: Primary Care Counselor Training: Trainer’s Guide.*
CHW Panel—Experts in the Field

This activity provides learners with an opportunity to hear directly from experienced CHWs about the realities of community health work and the roles CHWs play in health promotion.

1. Introduce the Panel
Tell learners that they will be hearing from a panel of expert CHWs about the roles they play and the challenges and opportunities they experience in their daily work. Welcome the panelists and thank them for being there. Briefly introduce the panelists using the bios they provided. Explain what the structure of the panel presentation is and that learners will have the opportunity to hear from the panelists as well as ask questions they may have. Provide guidelines for when learners can ask questions, such as throughout the panel discussion or only at the end. Either way, encourage learners to take notes of important points and write down their questions during the panel. If the panel is more informal, invite the panelists to respond to each other's comments.

TIP Advanced preparation makes for a much more successful, effective, and dynamic panel. Review “Hosting a Panel Discussion” (included at the end of this activity) to prepare yourself and the panelists.

2. Moderate the Panel Presentation
Moderate the panel presentation and discussion by asking the panelists questions such as these:

- Will you introduce yourself and share a little about how you came to be a CHW? What drew you to this work?
- Will you describe a typical day in your work as a CHW? How do you spend your time?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your work as a CHW?

Activity 1.3

- 75–90 MINUTES
- MATERIALS NEEDED
  - Name tags and pens
- TRAINER PREPARATION
  - Review and modify suggested panel questions (provided in Step 2).
  - Invite and confirm three to four CHW panelists using instructions in “Trainer’s Copy 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion” (included at the end of this activity).
  - Prepare panelists using instructions in “Hosting a Panel Discussion” (included at the end of this activity).
  - Compile panel participant bios.

- LEARNER PREPARATION
  - After this activity, learners will be able to:
    - Name some of the roles CHWs play in health promotion.
    - Identify common challenges CHWs face in the workplace.
    - Discuss benefits of having CHWs as part of a health team.
    - Describe core skills and competencies needed to be a successful CHW.
CHW Panel—Experts in the Field (continued)

- What personal qualities do you think a person needs to cultivate to be a successful and effective CHW?
- In your experience, what are the most important roles CHWs can play in health promotion?
- What are some of the most important things you have learned through your experience as a CHW?
- What do people training to be CHWs need to know in order to be successful in this field?

Prioritize your questions in case you don’t have time to ask all of them. Pick the most important three to four questions and start with those.

Ask each panelist to spend about three minutes introducing themselves and sharing how they came to be CHWs.

**OPTION** There are many ways to facilitate or moderate a panel discussion. Some people prefer to have each panelist respond to each question, one at a time, so panelists can speak more extemporaneously and respond to one another’s comments. Others prefer panelists to address all the questions at once, often in prepared remarks. For an informal panel discussion, we prefer the first option, because it allows for more conversation, but there may be situations in which the second option is more appropriate. The following instructions reflect this first approach.

Ask the other questions you have prepared, paying attention to the time. Make sure each panelist has an opportunity to speak and share their views and that each has the opportunity to agree or disagree with each other’s statements.

As the moderator, you can ask prompting questions, such as, “Can you say more about _________?” or “Can you share an example of what that looks like?” to encourage the panelists to go deeper. If one person is speaking more than the others, you can adjust the balance by saying, “For this question, I’d like to hear from _________.

### 3 Questions from the Audience

Learners will likely have many questions for the panelists. Make sure to leave at least 15 to 20 minutes at the end of the panel discussion for learners to ask questions. The moderator can ask people to raise their hands if they have questions and can call on each person, or, if the audience is large, you may want to ask learners to write down their questions and pass them to the front or ask for a volunteer to collect the questions.
**CHW Panel—Experts in the Field** *(continued)*

**OPTION** If audience questions are left to the end, you may want to give learners a few minutes to get into pairs and talk to one another about what stood out to them before the question and answer portion of the panel begins. This gives learners a chance to get to know each other better, as well as identify questions and share highlights from the panel discussion, and it can encourage quieter learners to ask more questions.

Some people prefer to have two or three learners ask one question each, before giving panelists a chance to respond. This gives panelists a set of questions to respond to, and they can pick and choose the question that they wish to answer. This method allows for more questions to be asked, especially if there is limited time, and it also helps minimize the amount of time spent answering less-relevant questions, since panelists can choose to avoid responding to those questions altogether.

### 4 Reinforcement

Make any closing remarks and thank the panelists again for coming and sharing their expertise. Give them a warm round of applause and conclude the session.

You may want to reinforce any key messages shared by the panelists at this time by asking learners to share one key message or takeaway lesson they heard from the panel discussion. You can have learners share these key ideas popcorn style, meaning that each person can share spontaneously as they feel inspired, rather than going around the room in a circle. You may want to give the instruction that each person has to share a unique idea or takeaway that hasn’t been said already.

**OPTION** You can invite learners to spend a few minutes doing a writing reflection on the following questions before doing the popcorn-style sharing, and then collect the writing reflections before people leave. This will give you some useful information about where your learners are and what questions are coming up for them.

Here are possible questions for the writing reflection. These can be modified as needed.

- What are three key messages you heard from the panelists?
- What is something you want to learn more about or are not sure of?
- What is a question you have for the future?

There may be issues or statements that arise during the panel discussion that warrant further conversation after the panelists have left. For example, a panelist may say something that is not true or accurate or might share a controversial view. Note these issues and come back to them for further discussion, either that same day if there is time after the panel discussion, or in subsequent sessions.
Activity 1.3  For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion

Done well, a panel discussion can provide an engaging and dynamic forum from which to hear from diverse experts in the field. However, a successful panel discussion requires advance planning and preparation. Follow these steps to create a powerful and effective panel presentation for your classroom or training.

CLARIFY THE GOALS OF THE PANEL

Before you invite panelists, take some time to clarify the goals of your panel presentation. It will help you create a more focused and cohesive event. Here are a few guiding questions to help determine your goals in holding a panel discussion:

⦁ What is the purpose of this panel discussion?
⦁ What do I hope learners will gain from listening to the panelists?

Write down the goals. They will be useful when you are inviting panelists to participate, as well as when you are introducing the panel discussion to learners.

DETERMINE THE LOGISTICS AND DETAILS

Before you start reaching out to your potential panelists, there are a few key details you need to decide.

Date and Time

When will you have the panel discussion and how long will it last? A good rule of thumb for panel discussions is that they should be no longer than 60 to 75 minutes, including time for questions from the audience.

Place

Where will the panel discussion be held? How do people get there?

Stipends

Will you offer panelists payment for their time? If so, determine how much you will offer to each person.

Food

Will you provide food or beverages? If so, make sure to plan for this ahead of time.
For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion  (continued)

Technology
Do you need microphones, a computer, projector, or other technology? If so, make sure to plan for this ahead of time.

IDENTIFY THE PANELISTS
Now that goals have been developed and preliminary logistics finalized, it's time to identify potential panelists. When determining whom to invite, consider the following questions:

- Where will you find your panelists? You may have relationships with local organizations or individuals who can connect you with potential panelists. Consider proximity, as well as places where you are likely to find individuals with the experiences you want reflected on the panel.

- How do you create a diverse panel? A dynamic panel has diversity in terms of age, experience, race, gender, and background. It's much more interesting to hear about different experiences and viewpoints, even when people disagree, than it is to have four people saying the same thing. Consider panelists who can speak to different aspects of the topic, either because they have different relationships to it or because they come from different backgrounds or experiences. So, when planning a CHW panel discussion, you might want to consider constructing a panel that reflects some of these types of diversity:
  - A new CHW or a CHW in training
  - A CHW who has been working in the field for many years
  - Someone who works in a clinical setting
  - Someone who works in a nonclinical setting
  - CHWs who share aspects of their clients' experience (formerly incarcerated, former clients, or from the same community as their clients)
  - CHWs of different genders and ages
  - CHWs from different cultural backgrounds

Make a list of people or organizations to reach out to and prioritize based on the considerations just listed.
INVITE PANELISTS TO PARTICIPATE

Draft an invitation to send to panelists, making sure to ask panelists to participate early (ideally at least six weeks before the panel discussion), as schedules tend to fill up. Don’t forget to include the following key pieces of information:

- What the panel discussion is and who it is for
- The goals of the panel discussion
- Why you believe the person would be a good fit on the panel, or what you hope they will contribute (be specific here)
- The logistics, including date, time, location, and compensation, if any
- Expectations of the panelists, such as how long you expect them to speak, whether there will be preparation meetings beforehand, and whether they need to prepare or bring materials
- A request for confirmation by a certain date

Follow up with a phone call or a second e-mail if you haven’t heard from people, and have a backup list of people to ask if your top choices are not available. As people confirm, pay attention to the diversity of your panel. For example, if you asked six people but only three men confirmed, prioritize filling that last spot with a woman. Some people recommend asking and confirming one more person than you planned for (i.e., five rather than four people), assuming that one person will likely have to cancel at the last minute.

FINALIZE THE STRUCTURE AND FLOW

Now that you have identified your panel participants and confirmed the logistics of your panel discussion, it’s time to finalize the structure and flow of your panel discussion using these steps.

Determine Who Will Moderate

This may be you, or you may ask someone else to moderate. Either way, the moderator plays an essential role in creating a successful panel presentation. The moderator usually introduces the panel and welcomes everyone, keeps the flow of conversation moving and on-topic, sometimes keeps track of time, and holds the structure of the panel discussion together. An effective moderator is able to gently reel people back in if they go off track or spend too much time on a particular point, and this moderator can help facilitate a question-and-answer session in a way that is relevant and effective for the panelists and learners.
For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion  (continued)

Finalize the Questions

Review the questions you have developed for the panel and finalize them, using the goals you set for the panel discussion to help shape the questions.

Finalize the Structure

Determine how you want the panel discussion to be structured. Here are some questions to help determine the structure you want to use.

- Will each panelist talk for 10 minutes, covering all of your questions before handing the microphone to the next person, or do you want the panel discussion to be more conversational, where the panelists respond to each question as a group? The second option tends to provide more opportunity for spontaneous interaction and discussion between the panelists, whereas the first allows panelists to share more prepared remarks and talking points.
- Are panelists expected or allowed to bring PowerPoint slides?
- Do you want audience members to be able to ask questions throughout the panel discussion or only at the end? Either way, make sure you leave time for questions from the audience.

PREPARE THE PANELISTS

Now that you've decided the structure and other details of the panel discussion, it's important to give panelists ample time to prepare. At least two to three weeks before the panel discussion, provide the panelists with information about who the audience is, the questions they will be asked, the structure of the panel discussion, and the logistics. Let them know if they are expected to bring prepared speeches or if they will be in conversation with the other panelists. Ask them to give you short bios (about a paragraph) that you can use for their introductions. Find out if they need any additional support and make yourself available if they have questions.

PREPARE THE MODERATOR

If someone else is moderating, review the goals and structure of the panel discussion, as well as the expectations you have for the moderator. Make a plan for timekeeping. Generally speaking, if panelists are giving prepared remarks (for example, a 10-minute talk) it is helpful to have a timekeeper who lets them know when they have 1 minute left and when they have run out of time. This person can sit in the front row and hold up time-remaining cards. If the panelists are having more of a conversational flow in which each person responds to
For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion  (continued)

questions and to one another’s responses, the moderator can keep an eye on time and move the conversation forward, as needed.

REMINDERS

A week before the panel discussion, send out a reminder with the date, time, and other logistics. Ask the panelists to arrive early so that you can have a pre-meeting.

THE DAY OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

Some people recommend having a meeting with all panelists prior to the panel discussion, but in practice it can be difficult to gather everyone together on a separate day, and conference calls tend to be a less-effective forum for generating interest and momentum. A pre-meeting right before the panel discussion tends to be most effective. Ask panelists to arrive 15 to 30 minutes early. It’s helpful if there is a class break right before the panel discussion, as it provides time for panelists to arrive and for you to hold the pre-meeting and prepare the room.

The pre-meeting can be short (15 to 20 minutes) and should include the following:

Introductions

Make sure everyone on the panel has met each other, as well as you and the moderator (if that’s not you).

Overview

Briefly review the structure of the panel discussion and remind panelists of your expectations. If appropriate, encourage them to disagree with each other and respond to one another’s comments. Remind them of the role of the moderator and timekeeper.

Questions

Leave a few minutes for any questions the panelists have.

Paperwork

Depending on your institution, you may have to complete paperwork and have panelists sign forms in order to process payments. It’s best to prepare this paperwork in advance so panelists can sign the day of the event. Have people sign before the panel discussion, as they may need to leave quickly after the panel discussion ends or may be engrossed in conversations with learners or colleagues.
For the Trainer 1.3 A: Hosting a Panel Discussion  (continued)

THE PANEL DISCUSSION

You (or the moderator, if you aren't serving in that role) should start by introducing the panelists and welcoming them. Briefly share the goals of the panel discussion or the reasons you brought this group of people together. Let the audience know whether they can ask questions throughout or if they will have an opportunity to ask questions at the end.

As the panel discussion is taking place, the moderator should help move conversation forward and keep track of time. If one person is dominating the conversation, the moderator can choose to ask panelists directly to answer questions, or say, “I’d like to hear more from __________ about this” to support participation from quieter panelists. The moderator can also ask prompting questions, such as, “Can you say more about __________?” or “Can you share an example of what that looks like?” to encourage the panelists to be more specific or illustrative.

There are several ways to facilitate if audience questions are left to the end. You can have people with questions raise their hands and be called on, or write down their questions and hand them to the moderator or a volunteer. You may prefer to have two or three learners ask one question each, before giving panelists a chance to respond. This gives panelists a set of questions to respond to, and they can pick and choose the question that they wish to answer. This method allows for more questions to be asked, especially if there is limited time for questions and answers, and it also helps minimize the amount of time spent answering less-relevant questions, since panelists can choose to avoid responding to those questions altogether.

Close the panel discussion by giving appreciation and a round of applause to your panelists.

AFTER THE EVENT

Send thank-you notes to the panelists and the moderator, expressing your appreciation for their participation and letting them know the positive impact they had on your learners.
Training with Videos from Chapter 1 of Foundations

In addition to the videos that accompany the activities in this guide, we have developed videos that accompany Chapter 1 of *Foundations*. We encourage you to use the textbook videos as training resources.

All of these videos can be found on the *Foundations* YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCKSB1~LQsSfsRp24Q9W2Jlw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKSB1~LQsSfsRp24Q9W2Jlw)) and are described in the Video Directory included in the appendix of *Foundations*.

There are two video interviews in Chapter 1 about the role of CHWs:

- Becoming a CHW
- The emerging roles of CHW

You can use the video interviews to facilitate discussion by posing questions such as these:

- What were the central messages conveyed in this interview?
- How might these concepts be helpful to your work as a CHW?
- What additional information do you want to highlight about this topic?
We have included a selection of assessments that cover important skills for this chapter. There is not an assessment for every activity or for every learning outcome in this chapter. We encourage you to adapt these or add any other assessments from your own resources.

**ASSESSMENT 1.1: Identifying CHW’s Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics**

- A short-answer quiz in which learners must identify and explain CHW roles, competencies, and characteristics, using statements from CHWs

**ASSESSMENT 1.2: Matching Quiz**

- A ten-question matching quiz to differentiate between roles, competencies, and characteristics
Identifying CHW’s Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics

Assessment 1.1

Your Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

Please read the following statements from CHWs provided in Foundations. After each statement, you will answer the three following questions, applying your understanding of the roles, competencies, and characteristics of CHWs. Write your answers in the space provided. This assessment is worth _________ points.

LETIDA SOT

As a CHW, I work regularly with doctors to assist them in communicating with our Cambodian patients. Because the Cambodian community is so small, sometimes patients have to wait many hours to speak to someone at a clinic who can understand them. Because of my work at the clinic, the patients don't get lost in the system—they can easily come to me for what they need. Besides not understanding English, some of our patients don't read or write well and have a hard time understanding their medications. One of the patients I worked with suffered from hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. She thought that she needed to finish one type of medicine first before she could start on another, even though sometimes she needed to take 15 different medications a month. Because of this, her diabetes was out of control and the doctor asked me to aid in the arrangement of her daily medication schedule. When I explained to her that she could take the medications simultaneously, she was shocked because she had been doing what she thought was right for ten years.

1. Name one role from Letida's statement and explain why it might be an important role for CHWs to play. Think about the roles that CHWs typically perform, as discussed in Chapter 1.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

2. Name one competency from Letida's statement and explain how that competency can help CHWs carry out their roles.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Identifying CHWs’ Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics (continued)

3. Name one characteristic from Letida’s statement and explain how it can strengthen a CHW’s work.

ALVARO MORALES

One of the most important ways that I know that I am doing a good job is when my clients no longer need me, or don’t need me as much. Everything I do is based on supporting the clients to not be dependent on me anymore. I want to support them in taking charge of their own health, in negotiating healthy relationships, in navigating the health-care system, and in communicating with health-care providers to get the treatment they want and deserve. And sometimes I get to work with communities and support them in speaking out for policy changes. Instead of me testifying before the board of supervisors (city council) on behalf of the communities I work with, I want to support them as they testify and speak out for themselves. They are the experts about what they need and want, and their voices are the voices that need to be heard.

1. Name one role from Alvaro’s statement and explain why it might be an important role for CHWs to play. Think about the roles that CHWs typically perform, as discussed in Chapter 1.

2. Name one competency from Alvaro’s statement and explain how that competency can help CHWs carry out their roles.

3. Name one characteristic from Alvaro’s statement and explain how it can strengthen a CHW’s work.
Assessment 1.1 Answer Key

We recommend conducting this assessment in class, providing learners with at least 30 minutes to complete it. Determining the point value depends on whether or not you will be grading this assessment.

Acceptable answers may vary from trainer to trainer. We are including our version of what the correct answer may be to these questions, but feel free to adjust this marking guide to fit your unique situation.

These answers apply to the statements from both Letida Sot and Alvaro Morales.

1. Name one role from their statements and explain why it might be an important role for CHWs to play. Think about the roles that CHWs typically perform, as discussed in Chapter 1.

   Roles can include these:
   - Assisting individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors
   - Conducting outreach
   - Providing information on available resources
   - Providing social support and client-centered counseling
   - Advocating for individuals and community health needs
   - Providing services such as health education
   - Engaging in case management or medication management
   - Participating in community organizing
   - Assisting patients with system navigation
   - Capacity building

2. Name one competency from their statements and explain how that competency can help CHWs carry out their roles.

   Competencies can include these:
   - Able to work on a multidisciplinary team
   - Has client-centered counseling skills
   - Has a culturally relevant practice
   - Possesses knowledge of public health
   - Understands behavior change
   - Demonstrates ethical practice
   - Knows community resources
Answer Key: Identifying CHWs' Roles, Competencies, and Characteristics (continued)

- Has an ability to provide health information
- Able to conduct an initial client interview or assessment
- Able to advocate for clients
- Able to develop relationships with clients and service providers

3. Name one characteristic from their statements and explain how it can strengthen a CHW's work.

Characteristics can include these:
- Interpersonal warmth
- Trustworthiness
- Open-mindedness
- Self-reflectiveness
- Objectivity
- Sensitivity
- Competence
- Commitment to social justice
- Good psychological health
- Self-awareness and understanding

GUIDELINES FOR GRADING

One way of grading this assignment is to weight each question equally. For example, you might assign 10 possible points for each question. There are 60 total possible points to be earned (6 questions). In this case, a passing score of 70% would be 42 points.

Letter grades could be assigned as follows: A = 54–60 points; B = 48–53 points; C = 42–47 points; D = 36–41 points; F = 35 points or less each.
### Assessment 1.2  Matching Quiz

Your Name: ____________________________________________

Date: ______________________________

The following statements describe aspects of an effective and successful CHW. In the following table, fill in the blank next to the description in the first column with the letter of the correct term from the second column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TERM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrates client-centered counseling skills</td>
<td>A. Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Assists individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors</td>
<td>B. Competency</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Is trustworthy and ethical</td>
<td>C. Characteristic</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Possesses knowledge of public health</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Is self-aware and willing to reflect on and challenge assumptions and prejudices</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Conducts outreach to identify prospective clients</td>
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<td>7. Is warm and compassionate</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Demonstrates skills needed to conduct initial client interview and assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Conducts patient navigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Possesses skills needed to work in a multi-disciplinary team</td>
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</table>
Answer Key: Matching Quiz

Acceptable answers may vary from trainer to trainer. We are including our version of what the correct answer may be to these questions, but feel free to adjust this marking guide to fit your unique situation.

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