

Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network

Convened by the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement

June 22, 2018

Unity Care Northwest, Bellingham

Present:

Name	Organization (if any)
Brooke Eolande	DVSAS
Don Cook	Unity Care Northwest
Johanna Maybach	Unity Care Northwest – Dental Access
Katie Zoerb	Sea Mar CHC – Community Resource Navigator
Laura Reardon	Unity Care Northwest
Megan Stephenson	Unity Care Northwest - Outreach & Enrollment (Navigator)
Rafael Ayala	Sea Mar CHC
Starleen Lewis	Unity Care Northwest
Tanya Rojas	Educational Service District 189
+ Australia Cosby (WAHA Staff), Jessica Alvaro-Glantz (WAHA Intern), Lara Welker (WAHA Convener)	

Welcome and Introductions

Group members introduced themselves; first time attenders added themselves to the CHW Connections Map, and returning people shared some observations and reflections about the map.

CHW Definition Discussion

At the May Network meeting, the group talked about creating its own definition of what a CHW is.

For this discussion, the focus was looking at the American Public Health Association (APHA) definition and exploring what some of the key words mean to us (rather than starting a new definition from “scratch”).

The APHA definition says a CHW is “...a frontline **public health** worker who is a **trusted member** of and/or has an **unusually close understanding** of the **community** served.”

Community (in general):

- Finding connections with strangers
- Group with shared experiences and norms
- Who you’re close with (physically vs. emotionally etc.)
- Bond
- My neighbors/Birchwood area where I live, friends, family, aunts and uncles, mentors
- Your neighbor (residential or work place)

Communities (specific communities we work with):

- Homeless
- Anyone who needs help
- Homeless families
- Survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault/sexual exploitation – anywhere, mostly Whatcom

- Low income families
- Families and children
- Low income children in Whatcom County
- Students, families, singles, seniors
- Vietnamese/E Asian
- Latinx/indigenous
- Western students
- Latinx
- Underserved families in Whatcom; Point Roberts
- Persons of color communities
- All Whatcom residents
- Immigrants, refugees, Latino/@
- East county residents



Trusted member (of the community):

- No ulterior motives
- Well established relationships
- Collaborative leadership
- With knowledge, with skills
- Who determines trust?
- Am I publicly known?
- Non-judgmental
- Open, empathic and transparent
- Respect (mutual)
- Lives in the area
- Establishing trust by following through
- Only gathers information that's "need to know"
- Working for a health clinic – does reputation matter?
- Trusted individuals and/or trusted organizations



Unusually close understanding (of the community):

- Based on lived experience
- Immersion: training, stories, shared experiences
- Shared experiences
- Not overtly political but has clear interest areas
- Does not formally work for a community organization
- Uniquely close
- Lived experiences, "they thru _____." A LOT of exposure with community (authentic exposure); you got a presence

Health & Public Health still to be discussed – all this good dialog took the entire meeting!

➔ Next Whatcom CHW Network meeting Friday, July 27, 9:00-11:00 AM at the [Roosevelt Neighborhood Center, 2303 Moore St.](#) (Alabama and Moore St, at end of the block; just across I-5 from Trader Joe's.)