



# Supporting Vaccination in Tribal Communities

A Guide for Community Health Representatives



**KERES  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH**  
A TRIBAL COMMUNITY GROUP ORGANIZATION

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# Introduction

**Thank you** for your efforts during the pandemic to keep our communities protected and up-to-date with the latest COVID-19 information!

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an alarming decrease in routine vaccinations for adults and children.** Vaccines provide many health benefits including prevention of serious diseases and complications, allowing us to continue practicing our traditions and keeping our relatives safe. Many choose to get vaccinated, while others have their reasons for choosing not to. Common reasons can include not knowing what the vaccine contains, fear of the side effects, mistrust in the health system, or believing that they are not at risk of contracting the disease.

**Connecting with community is a powerful tool to help others understand the importance of vaccination and improve the health of our communities.** As community health representatives, you play an essential role in promoting factual information of the benefits of vaccines and reducing the impact of misinformation. In tribal communities, community health representatives serve as trusted messengers and sources of information due to your ability to connect with individuals with an understanding of the barriers, culture, and values of the community.

This guide is a compilation of recommendations from CDC communication guidelines, Stanford University's Digital Medic series on Supporting Vaccination, and other resources. This guide can be used a reference to increase vaccine confidence within the communities you are assisting so we can all get caught up on routine vaccinations!

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# The Power of Storytelling

The COVID-19 pandemic took the lives of many of our loved ones and impacted the lives of whole communities. Vaccines are a powerful and effective way of protecting our communities from the effects of these illnesses. We can use stories as powerful tools to build trust and motivate others to act.

Vaccination is an individual's choice. Research shows that offering vaccines as a choice may decrease vaccine hesitancy by not forcing people into a decision. Some choose not to vaccinate due to the fear of side effects, mistrust in the medical system from previous experiences or historical occurrences, or not believing they are at high risk of contracting the virus. CHRs can help others understand their feelings or fears before making a decision.

Listening to and understanding others' stories can help you respond with empathy and direct your message in a way that is mindful of their experience. Even telling your own story of why you chose to vaccinate can help you connect with others. Sharing stories helps us relate to others by showing openness and finding common ground based on our values.

## Sharing Your Story



Brainstorm experiences you had during the pandemic.



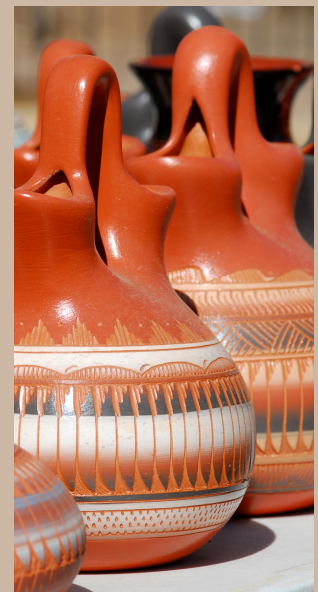
How did you decide to get vaccinated?



Can you share an experience that your client may be able to relate to?



Make a call to action and share why your client should care.



# Compassionate Communication

## Understanding Beliefs and Values



### Beliefs

Ideas that people hold to be true that can influence a person's behavior



### Values

Guiding principles and ideas about what is important to a person

A person's beliefs and values influence how they understand their health and decide which health behaviors to engage in. Our held ideas are influenced by our personal experiences, culture, religious beliefs, and what is learned from our peers.

As a community health representative, you may learn about a person's beliefs by being a part of their community and culture. Also, you may pick up on client's values by listening to their stories. Common values include health, community, and kindness. Recognizing others' values can help you frame your messaging to acknowledge how vaccination supports their goals and values.



## Leading Questions



Why is your health important to you?



How do help to keep your loved ones healthy?



How do feel about getting vaccinated?



Use a welcoming and authentic tone to provide a safe space encouraging discussion rather than debate. Share your own story as a community member and act as a role model.

# Assessing Readiness



The Stages of Change model explains an individual's readiness to change their behavior. By listening to your client's stories and concerns, you can assess how ready your client is to vaccinate then tailor your message to match their current needs. These stages are not linear and clients may jump between stages. Your goal is to identify their current attitude and help motivate them to action.

## Stages of Change

### Precontemplation

No intention of getting vaccinated.



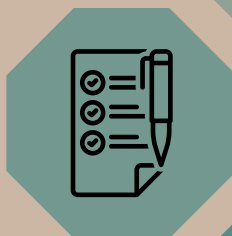
### Contemplation

Weighing pros and cons of vaccination. No commitment to act yet.



### Preparation

Set on getting vaccinated. Planning how and when to receive vaccine.



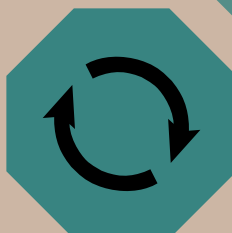
### Action

Getting vaccinated!



### Maintenance

Working to maintain vaccinations. Taking steps to remain up-to-date.



# Addressing False Information

As community health representatives, you serve at the frontline of distributing health information and dispelling myths. It is important to share factual information and help point individuals to resources where they can get accurate and updated information. Some individuals may be hesitant to receive vaccines due to misinformation and disinformation.



## Misinformation

False or inaccurate information



## Disinformation

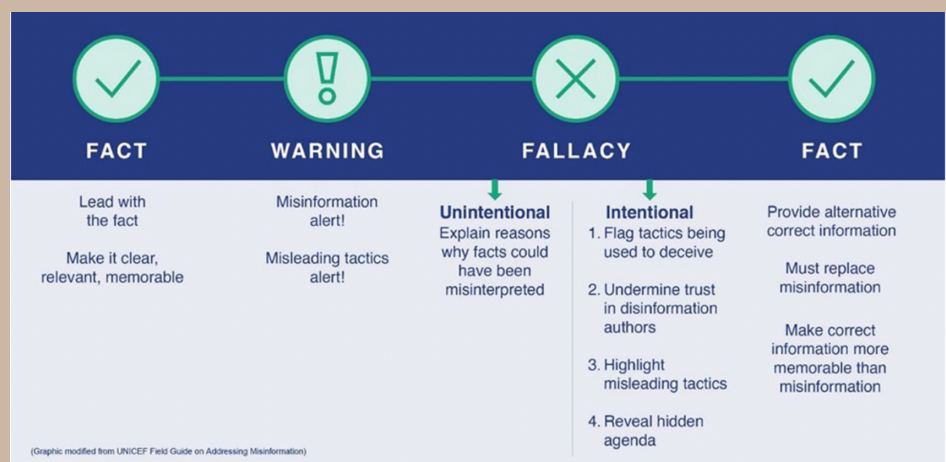
False information which is intended to mislead

The spread of false information through media outlets can greatly affect vaccine confidence. As trusted messengers in the community, CHRs are entrusted with the responsibility of finding credible information to share regarding vaccines.

As a community member and through your outreach, you may be able to identify circulating misinformation. By listening to those you serve, you can understand the perspectives leading to or sources of misinformation. You can combat misinformation by presenting factual information in plain language that dispels the false information. Additionally, you can provide individuals with materials containing up-to-date information or give them additional resources to look at on their own and share with their peers.



## How to Effectively Address False Information



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# Supporting Those Who are Ready

In visiting with your clients, you may understand how to better support them in staying up-to-date with their vaccines. Some may be vaccinated, while others may still be considering it or not even thinking about it. You can continue to have regular conversations with the vaccinated and unvaccinated to assist in scheduling additional doses or addressing their concerns.

When your client comes to the decision of receiving a vaccination, you can continue to be supportive by addressing any new questions or hesitations that come up before and after vaccination.

## How to Help Clients Prepare



Help find a time and day that works for your client



Assist in finding a vaccine clinic, pharmacy, or clinic that has required vaccine



Ensure your client has the proper documentation for appointment (i.e. ID, vaccine card)



Inform your client of mild side effects and encourage them to talk to the provider about which medications they can take to alleviate any symptoms



## Follow-up

Following vaccination, if possible, check in with your client to answer any of their questions about vaccine benefits, receiving another dose, or assist them to schedule any future vaccines.

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# Other Resources



## Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Find information on vaccine importance, recommended vaccines by age and timing

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)



## New Mexico Department of Health

**Immunization Program:**

<https://www.nmhealth.org/about/phd/idb/imp/>

**Got Shots Clinics for Child Vaccination:**

<https://hsc.unm.edu/about/administrative-departments/community-health/programs/nmic/got-shots.html>



## Stanford Center for Health Education – Digital Medic

**Supporting Vaccination: A Toolkit for CHWs:**

<https://digitalmedic.stanford.edu/our-work/vaccine-ed/>



## Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center

Find educational materials with the latest COVID-19 information

<https://db.aastec.net/covid-19/index.html>



## Urban Indian Health Institute

Find information and resources related to the COVID-19 vaccine

[www.uihi.org/projects/covid-vaccines/](http://www.uihi.org/projects/covid-vaccines/)



## DHHS Covid-19 Public Education Campaign

Find information to increase confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and updated prevention measures

<https://wecandothis.hhs.gov/>



## CDC Partnering for Vaccine Equity Resource Hub

Find infographics, toolkits, and other materials to improve vaccine confidence and access

<https://vaccineresourcehub.org/>



## Keres Community Health

Find materials focused on the importance of routine vaccination and updated COVID-19 vaccine recommendations

<https://www.kerescommunityhealth.com/copy-of-current>



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# Acknowledgement

Keres Community Health would like to thank the community health representatives and other personnel who we were involved in tribal COVID-19 response and assisting with administration of COVID-19 vaccines. The protection and health of our communities is critical to continuing our culture and traditions for generations to come. If you have any questions or comments about information included in this guide please email [VaccineEquity@keresnm.com](mailto:VaccineEquity@keresnm.com).



## Sources

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- Supporting Vaccination: A Toolkit for CHWs, Digital Medic, Stanford Center for Health Education, <https://digitalmedic.stanford.edu/our-work/vaccine-ed/>
- Vaccine Communication Toolkit for Community Health Workers Serving African American Communities, University of South Carolina, <http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/docs/CHW-Vaccine-Toolkit-UofSC.pdf>
- *The importance of offering vaccine choice in the fight against COVID-19*, Hughes M.T, [doi: 10.1073/pnas.2117185118](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117185118)
- How to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/addressing-vaccine-misinformation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/addressing-vaccine-misinformation.html)

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