

Qualities of a CHW

CHWs embody the following qualities:

- Connected to the community
- Interpersonal warmth
- Trustworthiness and mature
- Open-mindedness
- Objectivity
- Competence
- Commitment to social justice
- Good psychological health
- Self-awareness and understanding

What is an Authentic Community Health Worker (CHW)?

An **authentic CHW** is someone deeply connected to the community they serve, possessing both lived experience and a strong commitment to improving the well-being of others. They are trusted individuals who naturally bridge gaps between healthcare systems and community members, ensuring that individuals receive the necessary resources, support, and advocacy.

Key Traits of an Authentic CHW:

- 1. Lived Experience & Community Connection**
 - Has firsthand knowledge of the challenges and barriers faced by the community.
 - Shares cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic experiences with the people they serve.
- 2. Natural Helper & Advocate**
 - Passionate about serving others and addressing health disparities.
 - Acts as a bridge between healthcare providers and community members, ensuring equitable access to care.
- 3. Trustworthy & Culturally Competent**
 - Earns the trust of community members through consistent support and understanding.
 - Respects and honors cultural traditions, beliefs, and values.
- 4. Resourceful & Knowledgeable**

- Knows about available community resources and how to navigate systems to connect individuals with healthcare, housing, food, and other essential services.
- 5. Compassionate & Empathetic**
 - Listens actively and provides emotional support to individuals facing hardships.
 - Understands the community's struggles and works tirelessly to uplift and empower them.
- 6. Committed to Growth & Learning**
 - They seek ongoing education and professional development to enhance their skills.
 - Stays informed about policies, best practices, and resources to serve the community better.

The Impact of an Authentic CHW:

Authentic CHWs **strengthen communities** by improving access to healthcare, advocating for social justice, and empowering individuals to take charge of their health. Their work leads to **better health outcomes, stronger relationships between healthcare providers and patients, and more equitable healthcare systems.**

Ethical use of the CHW title.

A Community Health Worker (CHW) is more than just someone with a certification from training. Many professionals engage in this behavior primarily because their employers require it for reimbursement purposes. This practice is not only misleading but also unethical. We strongly urge employers to refrain from putting their employees in situations that promote this behavior. If an employee is assuming this title, their role and responsibilities must correspond with the profession's definition and scope of practice.