

10 WAYS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



1. Bridging Cultural Gaps

CHWs often share similar backgrounds with the populations they serve, helping reduce stigma around mental health and making services more accessible and culturally appropriate.

2. Providing Health Education

They educate individuals and communities on mental health topics, substance use, coping strategies, and available resources, helping to build awareness and reduce misinformation.

3. Offering Peer Support

CHWs often act as trusted listeners, providing emotional support, encouragement, and guidance based on shared experiences or strong community ties.

4. Connecting People to Services

They help individuals navigate complex systems by linking them to behavioral health providers, support groups, housing assistance, or insurance programs.

5. Assisting with Care Coordination

CHWs work with healthcare teams to ensure follow-ups, medication adherence, and continuity of care for individuals with behavioral health needs.

6. Conducting Screenings and Assessments

With appropriate training, CHWs can assist in conducting basic mental health screenings and referring individuals for clinical evaluations when necessary.

7. Supporting Crisis Intervention

While not a replacement for clinical crisis responders, CHWs can help de-escalate situations, provide immediate support, and connect individuals to urgent care services.

8. Promoting Wellness and Prevention

They advocate for healthy behaviors—such as exercise, stress management, and nutrition—that support overall mental well-being. (nachw.org)

9. Addressing Social Determinants of Health

CHWs help address non-medical factors that affect mental health, like food insecurity, unemployment, and unsafe housing, which are often barriers to recovery.

10. Advocating for Community Needs

They give a voice to underserved populations by informing policymakers and providers about the mental health challenges their communities face.

