



CHWS ON FIRE BUT NOT BURNT OUT

Julie St. John, DrPH, MA, CHWI; Katharine Nimmons, MSc, MPH, CHWI,

APHA 2014
New Orleans, LA

Presenter Disclosures

Julie St. John

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose.

A red decorative graphic consisting of a large, stylized arrow pointing to the right, located at the bottom of the slide.

Objectives

- ▶ List factors that contribute to burnout & high job turnover rates in CHWs.
- ▶ Discuss ways to support & empower CHWs & to reduce burnout/job turnover.
- ▶ Dialogue strategies for sustaining CHW positions & funding sources.





CHW

FAMILY
FEUD

CHWS

Name a current CHW “Hot Topic.”

1

5

2

6

3

7

4

8

:12

CHWS on FIRE

SUBMIT

CHW Hot Topics



- ▶ CHW definition
- ▶ Scope & practice
- ▶ Certification & credentialing
- ▶ Competencies & training
- ▶ Best Practices
- ▶ Cost-benefit ratios
- ▶ Funding & reimbursement;
- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Job turnover
- ▶ Burnout

CHWS

Name top two reasons for job turnover.

1	
2	

:12

CHWS on FIRE

SUBMIT

Factors contributing to Job Turnover



Funding

- Typically supported by short-term “soft” money (grants)
- Higher paying position
- Proliferation of job titles related to funding
- Growing competitions; shrinking funds

Factors contributing to Job Turnover

Supervision

- Limited understanding of the occupation
- Dictatorship
- Lack of knowledge of the target community
- Improper/unrealistic expectations



Factors contributing to Job Turnover

Supervision

- Dissimilar backgrounds
- Lack of supervisory skills & training
- Lack of mentoring relationship
- Judgmental
- Hands-off



CHWS

**Name a factor contributing to
CHW burnout.**

1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

:12

CHWS on FIRE

SUBMIT

Factors contributing to CHW Burnout

- Employers place unrealistic demands
- Community goals vs. the employer's goals
- Insufficient support, compensation, & recognition
- Professionalization & credentialing



Factors contributing to CHW Burnout

- Lack of:
 - Systematic job design
 - Standardized training
 - Career advancement
 - Common standards or definitions across programs



Factors contributing to CHW Burnout

- Job responsibilities
- Case load
- Lack of “tangible” results
- Loss of community trust & credibility
- Training requirements & provision



How to respond strategically?

- Engage stakeholders
- Encourage dialogue between CHWs, employers, & community members
- Focus on ways to empower CHWs & reduce burnout and job turnover



The Ultimate Goal:

Cultivating effective,
empowered, &
passionate CHWs.



Lessons learned



1. Include CHWs in all phases of a project
2. Clearly identify CHW roles/responsibilities;
3. Involve CHWs in decision making
4. Allow CHWs to identify areas of needed training
5. Generate professional development opportunities identified by the CHWs

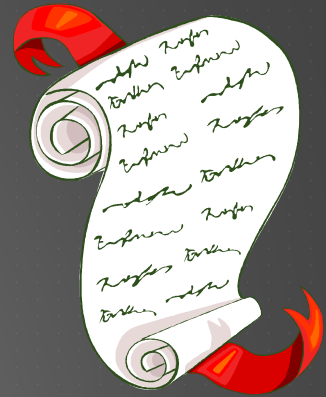
Lessons learned



6. Develop peer-to-peer mentoring programs
7. Include CHWs in sustainability activities
8. Allow CHWs to give back to their communities in their own unique and creative ways
9. Seek out opportunities for CHWS to showcase their work.

Activity

Divide into small groups and create a “Wish List” for the topics below:



- 1) **Yellow**: engage & support CHWs
- 2) **Red**: prevent burnout in CHWs
- 3) **Green**: Ideal qualities of a supervisor
- 4) **Blue**: Ideal qualities of a CHW program

Questions?



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Julie St. John, DrPH, MA, CHWI

julie.st-john@ttuhsc.edu

Katharine Nimmons, MSc, MPH, CHWI

knimmons@sph.tamhsc.edu

National CHW Training Center

<http://nchwtc.tamhsc.edu/>



YOUR LIFE

— *our purpose* —

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

