Personal Qualities of a Community Health Worker

Although there is not yet a formal, national consensus regarding qualities that a CHW should embody, INCHWA strongly recommends using the following qualities to guide the selection of exemplary candidates when recruiting CHWs for positions in both health and social service settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Qualities</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Connected to the community</td>
<td>A community member OR having a close understanding of the community they serve with shared life experiences and strong desire to help the community</td>
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<td>Interpersonal warmth</td>
<td>The ability to listen and respond to clients and communities with compassion and kindness.</td>
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<td>Trustworthiness and mature</td>
<td>Being honest, allowing others to confide in you, maintaining confidentiality, and upholding professional ethics.</td>
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<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>The willingness to embrace others’ difference, including their flaws and be non-judgmental in your interactions with them.</td>
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<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Striving to work with and view clients and their circumstances without the influence of personal prejudice or bias.</td>
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<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>To be aware of and truly respect the experience, culture, feelings and opinions of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Developing the knowledge and skills required to provide quality services to all the clients and communities being served</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to social justice</td>
<td>The commitment and heart to fight injustice and to advocate for social changes that promote the health and well-being of the clients and communities.</td>
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<td>Good psychological health</td>
<td>Having the mental and emotional capacity to perform your work professionally without doing harm to clients, colleagues, or yourself.</td>
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<td>Self-awareness and understanding</td>
<td>Being willing and able to reflect upon and analyze your own experience, biases and prejudices, to ensure that they do not negatively affect your interactions with clients and colleagues.</td>
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For Policymakers:

When developing statewide policy around CHWs, it is imperative to validate the importance of the CHW Qualities particularly connectedness to community. Policy should be crafted so that barriers for traditional CHWs, community-based individuals who share a connection to the community they serve, are minimized. While it may be challenging to include these qualities in policy, it should always be clear that positions which are not defined in terms of these qualities should not be considered CHW positions.
Sources:
