Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario

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Public Health Neighbourhood Nursing: A Mobile Equity Model

November 25, 2025

Presenters: Amber White, Alana Bowering, Kristen Jones

Region of Waterloo

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Land
Acknowledgement

AGENDA

- Background
  - Relational Ethics Framework
- Neighbourhood Nursing Pilot
  - Pilot project Key Findings
- Components of a successful equity intervention model
- Implementation Considerations

PHO Rounds

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Describe the core principles of the Relational Ethics Framework

02 Identify the project's key goals, outcomes and recommendations for Public Health Practice

03 Discuss how mobile community engagement can be used to improve health equity in public health

04 Reflect on partner collaboration opportunities approaches that increased trust, remove barriers, improve health equity and improve SDOH

Background

- In Canada, there is long-standing evidence of health disparities among racialized groups[1]
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, racialized communities were disproportionately affected, further exposing and deepening the health inequities they were already facing[2]
- Need to improve health equity and to do so by considering systemic factors, social determinants of health and by connecting with racialized communities[3]

"Health equity is achieved when all Ontarians can reach their full health potential and are not disadvantaged from attaining it because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, socioeconomic status or other socially determined circumstances[4]"

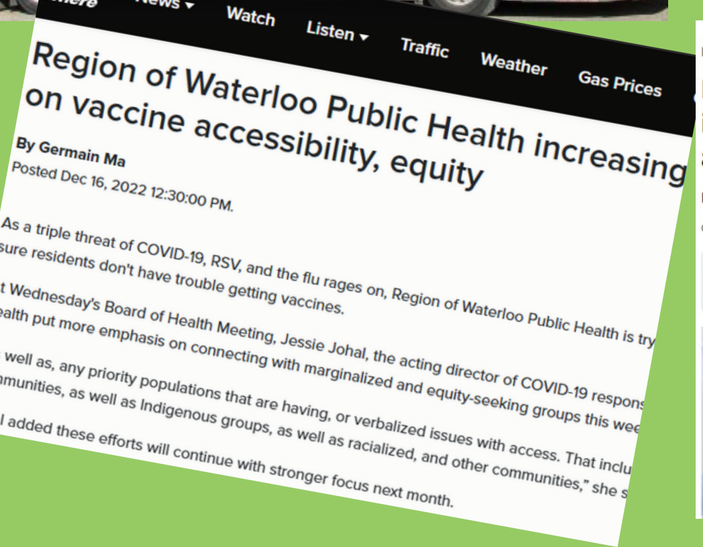
BACKGROUND


ic Health Neighbourhood Bus
cess to vaccines, close to home.


Removing barriers to vaccines for Waterloo Region's refugees


Kitchener-Waterloo
Nearly 400 new COVID-19 cases reported in Waterloo region since Friday, demand high for 3rd doses
Chris Xu got his 3rd dose after waiting in line for vaccine bus for 4 hours Monday morning
CBC News · Posted: Dec 20, 2021 2:14 PM EST | Last Updated: December 20, 2021
No appointment needed


Neighbourhood Bus


News
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Region of Waterloo Public Health increasing on vaccine accessibility, equity
By Germain Ma
Posted Dec 16, 2022 12:30:00 PM.
As a triple threat of COVID-19, RSV, and the flu rages on, Region of Waterloo Public Health is try
sure residents don't have trouble getting vaccines.
t Wednesday's Board of Health Meeting, Jessie Johal, the acting director of COVID-19 respons
ealth put more emphasis on connecting with marginalized and equity-seeking groups this wee
well as, any priority populations that are having, or verbalized issues with access. That inclu
mmunities, as well as Indigenous groups, as well as racialized, and other communities," she s
l added these efforts will continue with stronger focus next month.


Kitchener-Waterloo
How and where to get your COVID-19 vaccine in Waterloo region, Wellington and Guelph area
Health Canada approved the Pfizer vaccine for use on adolescents on May 5
CBC News · Posted: Mar 15, 2021 1:21 PM EDT | Last Updated: May 11, 2021
Listen to this article
Estimated 6 minutes

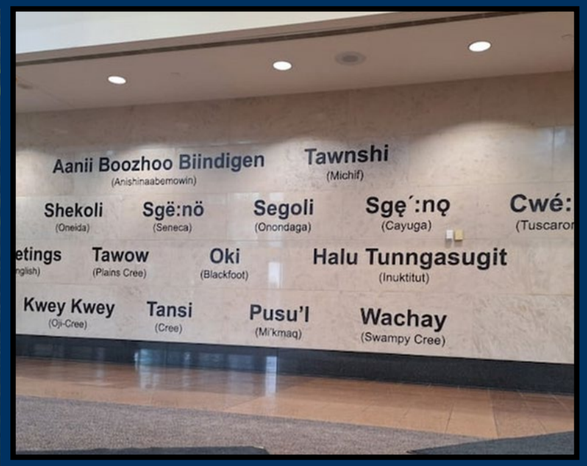

COVID-19 pandemic has 'highlighted disparities'
Safia Ahmed, executive director of the Rexdale Community Health Centre west of Toronto, says she sees a clear health disparity in the communities her organization serves.
"What COVID-19 has done is that it's highlighted those disparities," she said.
Ahmed says her organization provides health promotion services to residents in the community of Rexdale and addresses social determinants of health that may prevent them from accessing care.
Many of their clients are either new immigrants or Black Canadians and have either lost their jobs due to COVID-19 or are working on the front lines, she says.
"People in these communities are experiencing food security issues, unemployment issues, and some are struggling to pay rent," she said. "There are all these other social factors impacting one's health ... not having access to medication, your outcome when you contract disease is worse."


GRT
Grand River Transit
@GRT_ROW · Follow
The first vaccine bus has hit the road!
We're incredibly proud of all the work th
getting the bus ready to roll. The second
being being prepped now!
The vaccine buses will help bring vaccine
served areas in priority neighbourhoods.
Fast, free COVID-19 vaccination on this bus.
No appointment needed.

What is Relational Ethics[5]?

- Considers human connection and care
- Emphasizes the interconnectedness of people, their environment, and their knowledge
- Emphasizes mutual respect, trust, and responsibility
- Focuses on how ethical understanding emerges within relationships —through lived experiences, mutual care, and responsiveness

5 CORE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL ETHICS



1. Engagement

To establish an engaged relationship with others. Foster ongoing, participatory, and reciprocal relationships.

2. Mutual Respect

Respect for oneself and reciprocal respect for others[6]. Treat communities as equal ethical partners. Recognize dignity across difference.

PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL ETHICS

3. Embodied Knowledge

Getting to know client and partner needs, preferences, and values. Focus lived experiences and community wisdom alongside biomedical data.

PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL ETHICS

4. Environment

Relationship between the person and the context of social environment (taking into account needs, values, family, community and history) address social and ecological determinants of health.

5. Uncertainty

Embraces ethical complexity and navigate it with openness and trust.

PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL ETHICS

- Balancing population-level policies with individual needs.
- Advocating for structural changes while maintaining compassion in individual interactions.
- Care is inclusive, equitable and grounded in human connection.

MOBILE MODELS

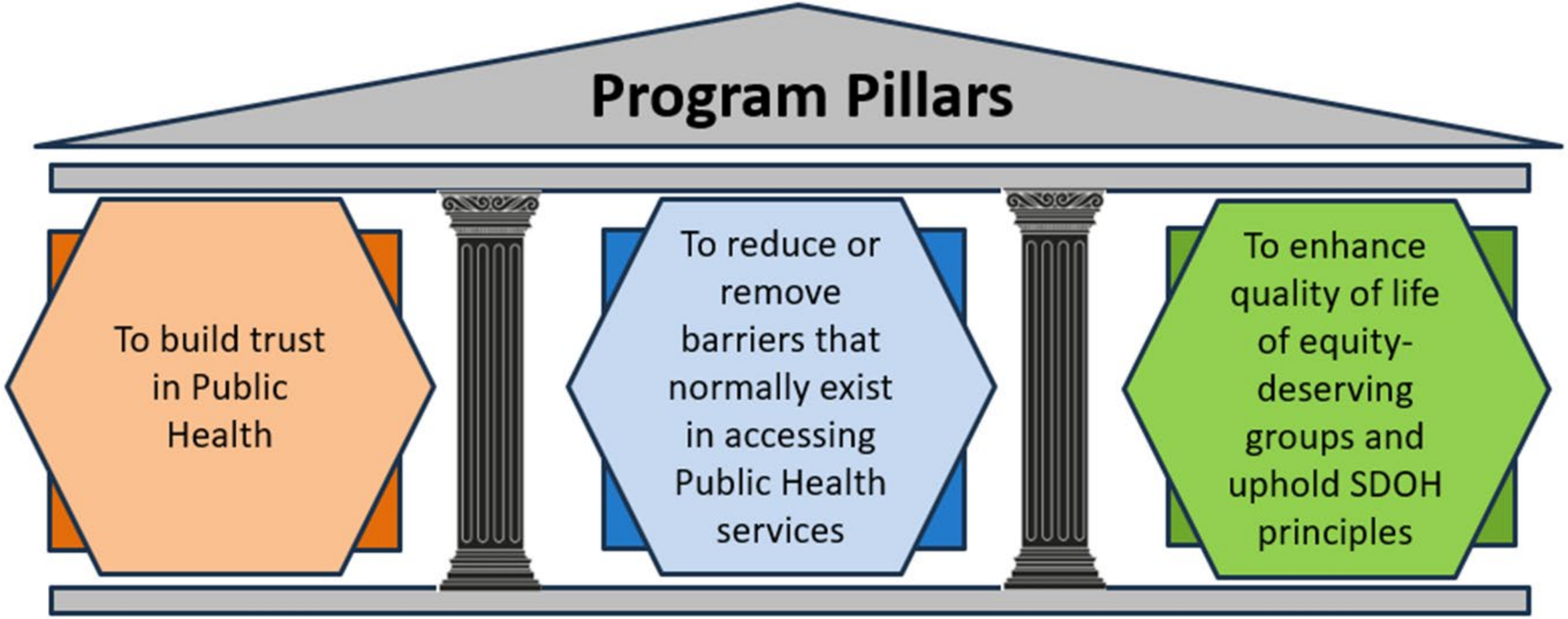
- Strong community support
- Builds trust with marginalized and groups public health has a hard time reaching
- Improves health outcomes through local partnerships and is cost-effective
- Delivers culturally grounded care that meets people where they are

> *By uprooting the traditional practice methods of medical services, new approaches to genuine community engagement become more feasible*[7]

Neighbourhood Nursing Team

- Relational Ethics Framework
- Local context and experience
- Mobile model

NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH

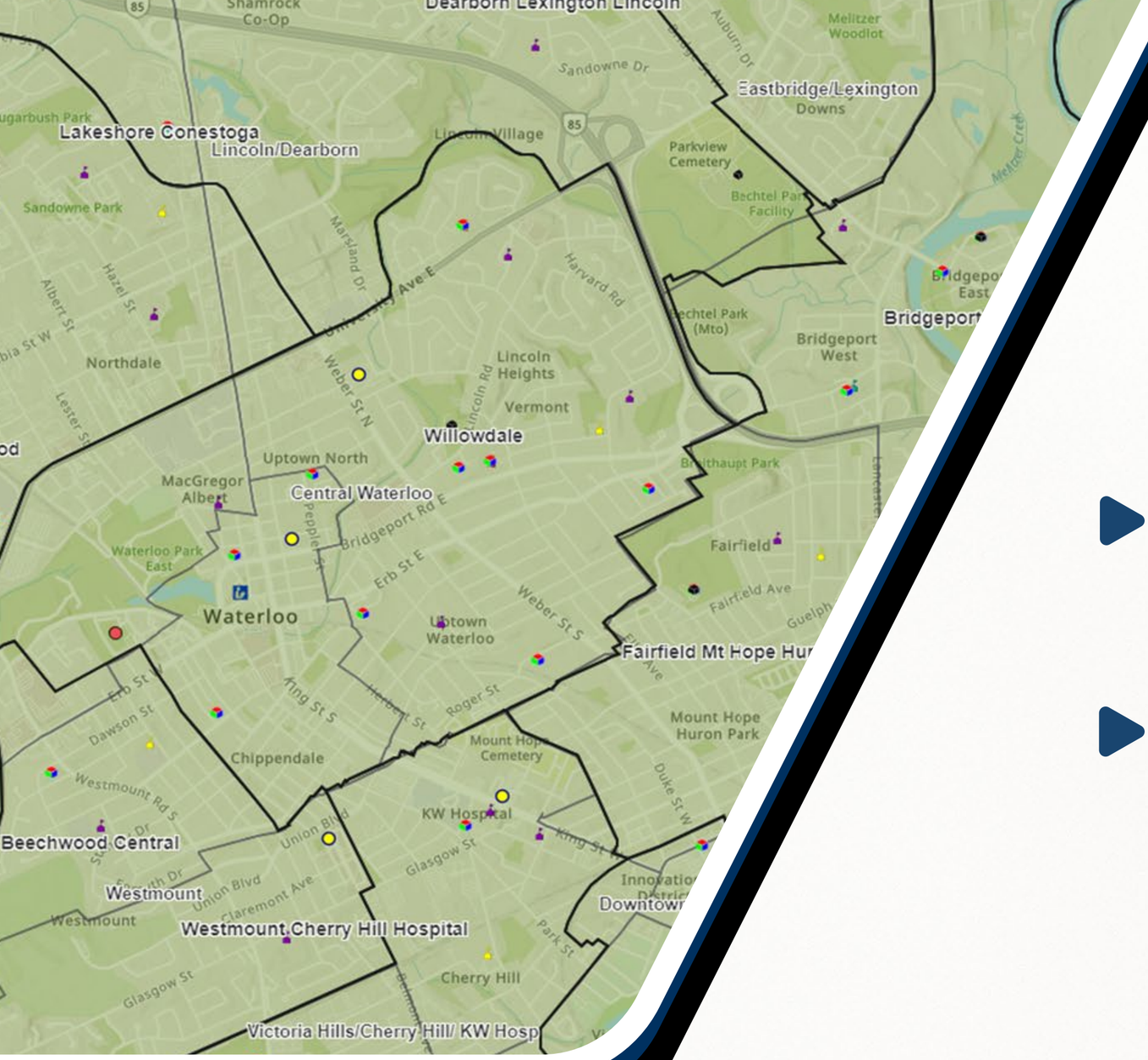


Cross departmental initiative

Full scope of Public Health services

Mobile in Community

Focus on equity & partnerships



IMPLEMENTATION

- **Areas were selected based on a review of local data**

- **Communities selected based on a combination of factors:**
  - Census and local epidemiological data
  - SDOH indicators
  - Community partners in the area
  - Vaccine rates
  - Special community needs

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Mobile

Fully mobile modality joining into existing programming and at community events

Build Trust

Foster authentic relationships where community members feel safe asking for support

Partner Sites

Presence at community sites and visiting community spaces to become part of the community

your friendly neighbourhood nurse

Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Talk to a Neighbourhood Nurse!

Do you have questions about your health?
Are you looking for support?

ALL Services are FREE
No Health Card Needed

The nurse can help with:

- Vaccines
- Pregnancy
- Infant feeding
- Child care and development
- Connection to dental care
- Sexual Health
- Harm reduction supplies
- Connection to other community supports
- General health questions
- Navigating healthcare

Contact us at:
phnnt@regionofwaterloo.ca
519-575-4400 ext. 5897

519-575-4400
TTY: 519-575-4608

NNT Services

EVALUATION

Session Visit

To collect information on program areas, service delivery, referrals, session topics and attendance

Staff Focus Group

To collect experience of delivering the program

Client Survey

To assess our client experience and feedback the pilot program

Partner Survey

To assess our partners experience and feedback on the pilot program

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM

2,700

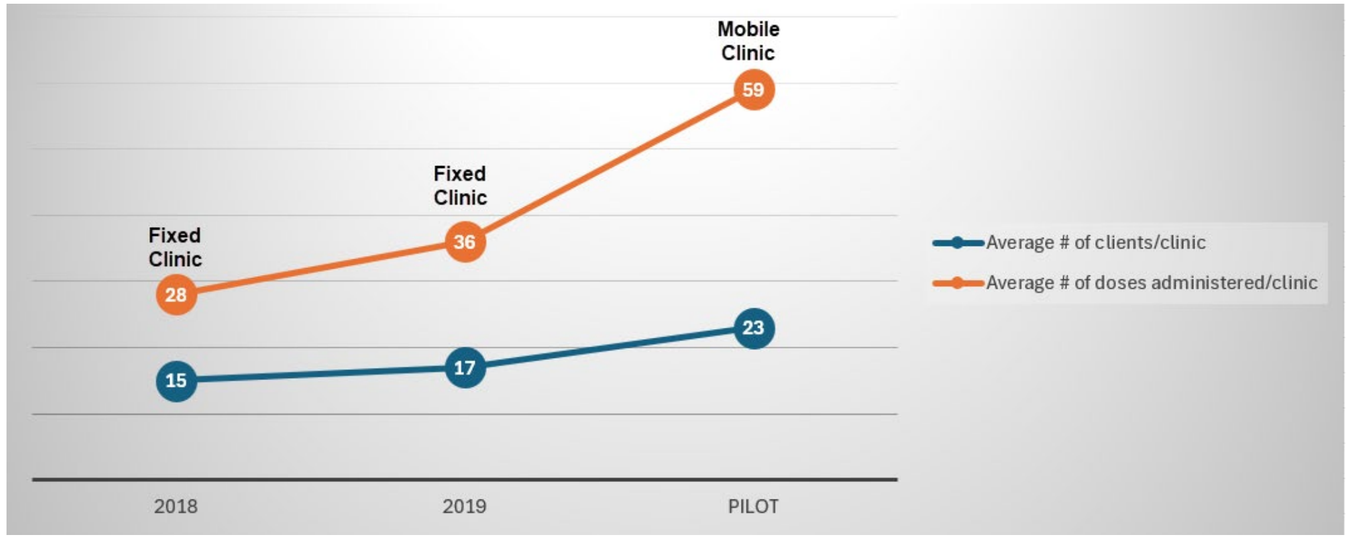
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS SERVED

+250

SESSIONS DELIVERED IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

↑+50

NEW COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTIONS



REFUGEE VACCINE SUPPORTS INCREASED

In the words of our Partners....

"... all the nurses who came by worked so well with the neighbours and were able to provide personalized care in a safe space that the neighbours already know and are comfortable with."

"I can identify numerous ways to involve them [nurses] in the communities I serve, thanks to their cultural sensitivity and the perception that they are part of the community"

" The program is invaluable in helping the most vulnerable in the community"

"Setting up directly in temporary accommodation has given a means for clients to ask sensitive questions directly to health professionals with interpretation"

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Connecting with staff at partner locations
- Connecting with nontraditional community leaders
- Regularly attending partner programs
- Logo and branding
- Attending community events

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

PARTNER VOICES

Video will be played in live recording.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

01 Program Design

- Clear program goals
- Co-design with partners
- Promotion
- Time to build client and partner connections

02 Micro -Mobile Modality

- Consistent presence at partner sites
- Onsite space for confidential conversations
- Immunization events (example)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

03 Partnership Approach

- Open and adaptable to partner needs
- Open communication about program goals
- Support data sharing

04 Staff Approach

- Cultural safety and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices
- Client centered approach
- Active community participation
- Interpretation and translation services
- Site specific engagement strategies
- Referral mechanisms

SHIFTING THE WAY WE WORK

Partnership Connections

- Relational ethics characteristics of connection and service
- Attitude and approach

Mobile Modality

- Guests at partner sites
- Different from centralized service delivery

Scope of Practice

Flexibility

- Pathways of service
- Internal collaboration and coordination
- Public health leadership

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

01 Data results around effectiveness and efficiencies of the mobile model

02 Importance of the model of care

03 Approach to decision making

04 Partner relationships to build trust and engagement with hard to connect communities/ individuals

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Questions

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