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Best Practices for Community Health Worker Program Referrals

As Community Health Workers (CHWs), you play a crucial role in connecting individuals and communities to healthcare and social services. One of your key responsibilities is facilitating program referrals and following established protocols to ensure clients receive the care they need. This document outlines best practices for program referral and protocols, providing you with guidelines to enhance your effectiveness in this vital aspect of your work.

By following these best practices and answering the associated questions, you can improve your ability to assess clients' needs, make appropriate referrals, and support clients in accessing and using programs and services. Your dedication and commitment to these practices contribute significantly to the health and well-being of the individuals and communities you serve.

Strategy	Recommendation	Question to Consider
Build Relationships	Establish trust and rapport with clients to better understand their needs and concerns.	How can you facilitate open communication? How will you demonstrate respect for the client's beliefs, values and preferences? How can you involve the client as a partner in their care process?
Assessment	Conduct thorough assessments to determine appropriate referrals for these needs.	Have you conducted a thorough assessment of the client's needs and determined the most appropriate referral?
Knowledge of Resources	Stay updated on available programs and services in the community.	How do you identify resources in the community? What are the ways you stay up to date on this information?
Effective Communication	Clearly explain the purpose and benefits of referrals to clients.	How will you ensure that the client follows through with the referral? Will you provide additional support or reminders?
Cultural Sensitivity	Respect clients' cultural beliefs and practices when making referrals.	Does the program or service respect and accommodate the cultural beliefs and practices of the client?
Follow-up	Ensure clients follow through with referrals and provide support as needed.	How will you ensure that the client follows through with the referral? Will you provide additional support or reminders?
Documentation	Maintain accurate records of referrals and outcomes for program evaluation.	Are you keeping accurate records of the referral, including the date, program/service referred to, and any follow-up actions?
Collaboration	Work closely with other healthcare professionals and community organizations to coordinate care.	Have you communicated with other healthcare professionals or organizations involved in the client's care to coordinate the referral process?
Continuing Education	Attend training sessions to enhance skills in program referral and protocols.	Are you staying updated on available programs and services in the community to better inform your referrals?
Feedback	Provide feedback to your organization about the effectiveness of referral processes and protocols.	How can you gather feedback from clients about their experience with the referral process to improve future referrals?

PROMOTING HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' vision is optimal health and safety for all Missourians, in all communities, for life.