

BCID

Brooklyn Center
for Independence
of the Disabled



A Community Health Worker Program for people with disabilities by people with disabilities.



What is a Community Health Worker?

Community workers have a close understanding of the community they serve. This trusting relationship and peer support they provide enables them to serve as liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.



Peer support...

is not based on medical or psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria.

It is about understanding another's situation emphatically through a shared experience, including on physical, emotional and psychological levels.



Effectiveness and Promise



There is mounting evidence of the cost-effectiveness of CHW programs, and the promise of this workforce's ability to move the nation into more effective and efficient healthcare.

Peer support has four core functions:

- **1. Assistance in daily management**

Peer supporters use their own experiences with diet, physical activity and medicine adherence in helping people figure out how to manage a disability or chronic medical condition in their daily lives. They can also help in identifying key resources, such as where to buy healthy foods or pleasant and

2. Social and emotional support



Using empathetic listening and encouragement, peer supporters and CHWs are an integral part of helping clients cope with social or emotional barriers and to stay motivated to reach their goals.

3. Linkages to clinical care and community resources

CHWs can help bridge the gap between clients and health professionals and encourage individuals to seek out clinical and community resources when it is appropriate.



4. Ongoing support, extended over time

Peer supporters successfully keep participants engaged by providing proactive, flexible, and continual long-term follow-up.



A partnership is born: BCID and Empire BlueCross BlueShield

- BCID conducted research on how a community health worker program could be used to help people with disabilities.
- In 2012, BCID was invited to join the Community Advisory Board of the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center, a joint venture of SUNY Downstate, the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health and the Brooklyn Borough President's Office.
- In 2013 SUNY Downstate and BCID proposed the Partners in Health Equity Project and applied to the United Hospital Fund.
- A BCID proposal to Empire BlueCross BlueShield in 2016 leads to a contract.
- The BCID contract with Empire for CHW phone support, initially a one-year pilot program, ran for three years.

Getting the project off the ground...

- Bi-weekly BCID & Empire BlueCross BlueShield touch base meetings
- Empire conducts outreach to their members
- Program Manager interviews and hires twelve people with different disabilities
- PM conducts 35-hour community health worker training and distributes certificates of completion
- Following HIPPA regulations and confidentiality, separate business computers and phone lines are purchased and set up by BCID IT personnel.
- Documentation is established
- Program manager makes initial calls and assigns Empire members to CHWs
- CHW supervision meetings
- BCID reports updates to Empire in bi-weekly trackers; referral trackers for services

Improving on a good thing: Changes to the program...

BCID, with Empire's approval, makes program changes to increase effectiveness and maximize outcomes:

- CHWs make weekly calls rather than bi-weekly per requirement, so as to increase engagement and continuity in the CHW/participant relationship.
- CHWs keep progress notes for each contact as well as Empire documentation forms.



Live Events

We also introduced live events. A Meet & Greet, included hands-on exercises, talks on nutrition and stress management. Our participants could now see the “face behind the voice”. Other events included a museum field trip to, again, increase socialization, reduce isolation, and create an enjoyable experience.



Outcomes for our members

- Improved mood
- Increased motivation and self-care
- Increased socialization, reduced isolation
- Increased ability to navigate health care system
- Transportation accessibility
- Employment & housing support

The value from a system's perspective

The BCID Community Health Worker Program has led to:

- Improved access to health care
- Fewer emergency room visits
- Fewer avoidable admissions
- Medication compliance
- Gaps in care completed

Outcomes for our CHWs

- Training and certificate of completion
- Work experience
- Viable employment
- Increase in communication skills
- Increase in self-awareness

Positive feedback and success stories





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