9 TIPS TO INTEGRATE PROMOTORES(AS) INTO HEALTH CENTER CARE TEAMS

Changes in health care policy have shifted delivery systems towards more patient-centered models of care. To adapt, Health Centers have sought new strategies, such as Promotor(a) de Salud programs, to reform the way their care teams function. As members of the communities they serve, Promotores(as) (or Community Health Workers) are in a unique position to contribute to Health Center care teams. Their expertise in the culture of the community can help a care team better understand the context behind a patient’s condition, leading to the development of more effective care plans. Although Promotores(as) can be an asset to any care team, to flourish in this role they need Health Center support. These tips will help your Health Center integrate Promotores(as) into a care team.

1. **PREP THE TEAM**
   Clearly explain to the care team what the Promotor(a)’s role will be and what services they will provide. As a member of the team with their own distinct expertise, the Promotor(a) should be treated as a peer. Explain that although they will be contributing as a peer, they will play a supportive role, as they do not have the same clinical training.

2. **HIRE A FULL-TIME PROMOTOR(A)**
   This will reinforce that they are a peer and that they are bound to the same ethical and confidentiality codes as other employees.

3. **RECRUIT THE RIGHT CANDIDATE**
   Look for the essential traits recommended for a Promotor(a) and for experience, even in a different role, in the health field. Be sure the candidate will be comfortable speaking up at team meetings. If the applicant has not completed all of the required training, provide it for them.

4. **PROVIDE AN INTENSIVE ORIENTATION**
   For many Promotores(as), it can be intimidating to work alongside clinical staff. Providing the appropriate training will not only ensure that they have all the necessary skills and knowledge to work in a clinical setting, but it will also help the Promotores(as) build confidence in their abilities.

5. **REGULAR SUPERVISION MEETINGS ARE KEY**
   They allow the supervisor and Promotor(a) to problem-solve difficult cases, track accomplishments, and identify and discuss areas for further training. As non-traditional health workers, this one-on-one time is very important in making the Promotor(a) feel supported.

6. **INCLUDE PROMOTORES(AS) IN FREQUENT TEAM MEETINGS**
   Team meetings build a cohesive team and are the optimal time for the Promotor(a) to provide input into a care plan as it evolves. This will also allow the team to stay up-to-date on the Promotores(as)’ work, and vice-versa.3

7. **ALLOW PROMOTORES(AS) TO DOCUMENT THEIR WORK ON EHRs**
   This allows clinical staff to directly see and benefit from the impact of these services. Also, Promotores(as) are often in a much better position to collect accurate and honest patient data, particularly for social and environmental factors.

8. **SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
   Ongoing training will help Promotores(as) fill gaps in their knowledge or skillset. They will also benefit from networking opportunities by participating in local professional groups and attending conferences.4 In addition, periodically offer their direct supervisors relevant training opportunities.1,6

9. **SHARE RESULTS WITH LEADERSHIP**
   If the Promotores(as)’ work has been carefully documented, conducting an evaluation and getting results will be much easier. The results obtained from a meaningful evaluation are critical to the sustainability of a program. Share them with leadership often to gain continued support for the program.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MHP Salud’s *Promotor(a) Program Implementation Guide* provides a comprehensive overview of the key aspects of developing and running a *Promotor(a)* program.

Please contact MHP Salud with questions or for further assistance: info@mhpsalud.org.

REFERENCES