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Engaging Cultural Navigators

in Public Health Surveillance and Education

What is a Cultural Navigator?

A cultural navigator is a person who utilizes essential linguistic and cultural skills to help obtain a better outcome in public health responses and initiatives for newcomer communities. Cultural navigators are community partners who serve as a trusted and confidential source of information between community members and public health.

Do I need a Cultural Navigator?

If you can check any of the following boxes, a cultural navigator might be able to help you successfully complete public health surveillance and educational activities in newcomer communities:

- ☐ There is a language and/or literacy barrier.
- ☐ You have identified cultural differences.
- ☐ You are unsure how to reach community members.
- ☐ Community outreach efforts have been unsuccessful.
- ☐ There are unanswered calls/messages to complete the public health surveillance process.
- ☐ You are uncertain the community member understands what their test result means and why it is important to discuss their condition with public health.
- ☐ The community member has a lack of understanding, contributing to an unsuccessful case investigation.
- ☐ You are uncertain the community member understands the next steps with public health (i.e., quarantining, etc.).
- ☐ Intensive education on the condition and the conditions' public health relevance is needed.

- ☐ There is fear of testing and/or other public health interventions.

Who are Cultural Navigators?

Depending on your agency's structure, navigators could be contracted through Community-Based organizations, employees at your agency, or engaged through a different model. Ultimately, the goal is to prioritize supporting the diverse spectrum of languages, dialects, and cultures represented in the communities being served and/or the communities that are being affected by a public health event.

What is the role of a Cultural Navigator?

A Cultural Navigator assists in improving public health outcomes by:

- Introducing public health goals and roles to the community member.
- Being on the call with public health staff who are conducting public health interviews.
- Being an essential cultural and linguistic liaison to build trust with the community member.
- Communicating public health messages with the community members using culturally appropriate approaches.
- Helping public health understand case status and barriers expressed by the community member related to the surveillance process, including assets, strengths, and barriers.
- Strategizing with public health to help consider cultural nuances that inform the surveillance approach and data collection strategies.
- Bridging health education messaging during a public health interview by doing more than word-for-word interpretation. The Cultural Navigator digs deeper into what a case is or is not understanding about the messages being shared by the interviewer.
- Consulting with public health on culturally responsive educational messaging and methods for community outreach.

When could I benefit from working with a Cultural Navigator?

- The need for a Cultural Navigator is often identified based on cultural diversity and limited English proficiency.
- Outbreak support is needed in a newcomer community.
- When developing a culturally responsive investigation questionnaire. Either before or during the investigation, for the primary or secondary questionnaire.
- When creating public health messaging, communication campaigns, surveys, or other items for public health education focused on reaching newcomer communities.

- You want to learn the most appropriate outreach strategy for reaching a newcomer community.

How to request a Cultural Navigator:

This process is agency specific. When requesting assistance from a cultural navigator, it is generally helpful to send an encrypted email that includes the case's name, date of birth, phone number, language, and case details. It is also helpful to explain what the perceived barriers are, along with related scheduling details. Email templates can be [located here](#).