

What a Dinámica Experience!



Building Trust: Connect through Dinámicas

Building relationships is fundamental to effective engagement. Dinámicas – intentional exercises based upon key Popular Education principles – help create opportunities for participants to share, listen, and connect with others in a supportive space.

With the growing demands placed on health centers, it's more important than ever for community members to take active roles in their health and well-being – and it starts with trust. Community Health Workers (CHWs) are instrumental in establishing this trust, as they understand supporting individuals goes beyond offering resources or making referrals. As frontline public health professionals, CHWs often have deep ties to the people they serve, whether through shared lived experience or existing relationships. This close connection allows them to serve as vital links between a person and health or social services (American Public Health Association, 2009).

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“In every session, the sessions often start quiet ... participants seem nervous. But after starting this dinámica, they smile, they lose their fear, they enjoy the time, they connect with each other, they relax ... they leave as new friends.

I tell them, ‘We all have something in common: sadness, children, difficulties, likes and dislikes ... that’s how we are to help and support each other ... to always have a friend at your service.’

— Lorena De Leon, CHW, MHP Salud

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One of our most powerful tools to build this trust is through using Dinámicas. These activities help CHWs:

- break the ice,
- promote discussion,
- and create meaningful connections.

CHWs: Creating Connections to Improve Health Outcomes for Farmworkers

Though farm workers are the backbone of our food system, they often face challenges that can affect their health and well-being — both on and off the job. Challenges can include long hours, weather conditions and exposure to harmful chemicals (Harwell et al., 2022).

This is where CHWs step in to:

- Help farm workers access vital resources
- Offer 1:1 conversation to form genuine connections
- Provide help with resources that fit the individual’s needs



Through authentic relationship-building, CHWs can better understand individuals' unique needs and strengths; when farmworkers share their lived experiences, CHWs can tailor support to match their needs more effectively – dinámicas can lay the foundation for these delicate conversations. Lived experience refers to insight shaped by a person's identity, background, and perspective, beyond formal training (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, designed 2022).

Through these popular educational activities, participants embrace the following:

- Learning begins with their own real-life experiences.
- Everyone has something to teach and something to learn.
- Inspiration and action lead to meaningful change.
- Learning can happen anytime, anywhere, and at any age.

By integrating effective communication strategies, you can foster stronger relationships, enhance engagement, and better serve those who rely on your support.

Are you ready to transform the way you connect with your community?

Dive into our **Dinámicas e-book** today and discover new ways to build trust and inspire meaningful engagement!



Creating Connections: Facilitator Tips

Many individuals, including farmworkers, can be hesitant to discuss personal topics – including their health needs and challenges. As you facilitate dinámicas, you lay the foundation to develop stronger connections, which can allow those you serve to feel more comfortable sharing their health needs, challenges and questions. Don't overpower the conversation – approach each activity with an open mind and stay focused on your goal: **to form connections**.



Connection Before Content

- ✓ Find common ground
- ✓ Use active listening
- ✓ Create a comfortable environment



Meet Them Where They Are

- ✓ Use open-ended and probing questions
- ✓ Use active listening (again!)
- ✓ Use affirmations



Educate

- ✓ Don't lecture
- ✓ Relate back to the individual
- ✓ Focus on 1-2 key points
- ✓ Give options

The more we can truly connect with farmworkers and others we serve, the more open, proactive conversations we can have – and the more likely they are to embrace active participation in preventive care to improve health and well-being.

References

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