

MODULE ONE: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

VHW ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

MODULE ONE: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Goal: To enable VHWs to understand their role in the community

Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participant should be able to:

- Understand her role as a VHW; and
- Know how to work with other health workers in the community

Teaching aides

- VHW training guide
- Writing materials

Lecture: VHW role in improving health status of mothers, children and community at large

Who is a Village Health Worker?

- Define the VHW as a support member of the health team that is closest to the community.
- She connects and mobilizes the people to utilize the health care services and facilities.
- She knows the norms, culture and problems of that community; and
- All of her working time is spent in the village.

Lecture: VHW role in improving health status of mothers, children and community at large 2

Explain that the VHW should:

- Be readily available to members of the community
- Conduct home visits to provide health education
- Link members of the community to health services
- Be a role model within the community
- Keep the patient's health information private
- Follow up with members of the community about the services that they have accessed
- Explain to participants that they will be required to work for a minimum of 20 hours a week

Discussion: How VHW improves the health of mother and child

- Ask the participants to brainstorm on how their role as a VHW improves the health status of mothers , children and the family

Note the points; and

Contribute as follows:

- VHW improves community maternal and neonatal health by **educating** on:
 - ▣ The importance of antenatal care (at 16 weeks, 20-24 weeks, 28 -32 weeks, 36 weeks and later) and tetanus toxoid immunization

Discussion: How VHW improves the health of mother and child 2

- the importance of delivery by a skilled birth attendant
- The importance of postnatal care, including breast feeding
- Healthy child spacing techniques
- Involving men so they know when/how to support their wives and children to access quality healthcare services

Discussion: How VHW improves the health of the community

- VHW improves community health **through referral services:**

- Encourage women to go for focused ANC visits
- Encourage women to give birth at the primary health care facility, assisted by a skilled birth attendant
- Encourage women to go to primary health care facility if there are complications during pregnancy or after birth

Discussion: How VHW improves the health of the community 2

- VHW also improve community health by encouraging families on proper nutrition and proper child spacing
- Refer family members to the PHCs when there are danger health signs and symptoms; and
- Provide Basic first aid, to injured members of the community

Lecture: Working with other health workers and stakeholders in the community



- Stress the importance of the VHW visiting other community health workers,
- introducing herself, and
- discussing responsibilities and
- on-going programs in the community from time to time.

Discussion: Working with other health workers and stakeholders in the community 2

- Ask participants to identify other categories of health and health-related workers in the community and their duties
- Notes responses
- Mention the other community health and health-related workers within the community as:
 - ▣ Those in the health facilities: Midwives, Nurses, CHOs, CHEWs, JCHEWs,
 - ▣ Those in other government services that contribute to health: Teachers, Agriculture Extension Workers,
 - ▣ Those in the informal health sector: TBAs, “massagers”, bonesetters etc

Discussion: Working with other health workers and stakeholders in the community 3

- Explain to participants that they can work with other health workers in the community by:
 - ▣ Having conversations with them,
 - ▣ Asking questions, and
 - ▣ Providing the other workers with a perspective of what is happening in the community in terms of health outcomes

Lecture: Definition of key terms



Define community and community participation:

- ▣ Community: a group of people living in the same geographical area and sharing the same norms, culture needs, and values
- ▣ Community Participation/Mobilization: when a group of people agree to work together to make the community better. It involves making the community aware of their needs and involving them in resolving these needs

Discussion: Definition of key terms

- Ask participants why it is important to work with the community
- **Note responses**
- Contribute by stating that:
 - ▣ By working closely with the community, the VHW will **better understand the needs of the people and how to help meet these needs**
 - ▣ Working with the community will enable the VHW to see better ways of solving the problems of the community
 - ▣ If the community is involved in the project, the programme is likely to be better supported and successful
 - ▣ Community participation builds a sense of belonging

Group Work: Definition of key terms



- The participants would work in a group
 - ▣ Encourage members of the group to discuss how they would conduct community participation/ mobilization in their communities
 - ▣ These should be collated and presented by the group leader
- Guide and correct process

Lecture: Strategies for conducting community outreach

- Stress the importance of conducting community outreach, specifically home visits
- Explain **that home visit is an important part of the work of the VHW**
- Tell the participants that they can learn a lot through home visits, because when people are in their homes they usually feel happier and more relaxed to talk
- Tell the participants that they will develop a schedule for their visits, with your guidance.

Discussion: Strategies for conducting community outreach

- Ask the participants why they think home visits are important

Note responses

Tell the participants the importance of home visits:

- It helps in maintaining a good relationship with people and families.
- It helps in detecting family health problems early, and ensures that they are referred to the health center before the problems become too big to handle
- It helps in monitoring the progress of pregnant women

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach

- Explain to participants that the purpose of the role-play is for them to practice how to conduct home visits
- Ask four participants to act in the role play. The roles to play are that of:
 - a father,
 - mother and
 - two children

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach 2

The VHW is visiting this particular home for the first time, because she heard that the mother in the house is pregnant.

The reason for her visit is to familiarize herself with the family and find out ways of helping the pregnant woman.

The VHW arrives to find the family engaged in their typical daily activities.

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach 3

Stop the role play after 10 minutes

Ask the participants:

- ▣ What they thought about the role play
- ▣ If they thought the family was comfortable with the presence of the VHW in their home

Note the responses

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach 4

- Contribute by stating the following steps as a proper way for conducting a home visit:
 - ▣ The VHW should start by greeting and exchanging pleasantries in the locally accepted way
 - ▣ Then, Introduce herself
 - ▣ Then, ask the head of the family to introduce the members of the family

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach 5

- Tell them the purpose of the visit
- Ask them about themselves, especially their health
- Tell them what the VHW role is in the community
- Ask the woman:
 - ▣ whether she is pregnant and if so how many weeks,
 - ▣ if she has registered for ANC, and if so if she is regular with her appointment
 - ▣ If she has changed her diet and work/chores, as a result of the pregnancy

Role-play: Strategies for conducting community outreach 6

- Tell the woman:
 - ▣ About the services provided at the PHC
 - ▣ Tell her you will go with her to the ANC at the PHC, if she has never been
 - ▣ Tell her to go to the PHC, if she has any problems
 - ▣ Ask after the children and enquire about their immunization status
 - ▣ Plan another visit with the family in two weeks, to check in on the woman

Discussion: Outreach to pregnant women

Brainstorm the reasons for home visits to pregnant mothers and their families with the participants. Reasons include:

- ▣ Educating the pregnant women on the importance of MNCH care such as antenatal and postnatal care
- ▣ Check up on the progress of the pregnancy and identifying necessary action (e.g. referral to the PHC in the case of any complication)
- ▣ Summarize the discussion and stress **that home visits should be conducted to a pregnant woman's home at least once every two weeks**