

The 5 Stages of Community Engagement for Public Health

Public health professionals share critical communications every day through fact sheets, community forums, video and audio content, and more. However, these messages can only make an impact if they are trusted, used, and informed by communities and reach intended audiences. Community engagement is an essential component of effective public health, but it can feel vague or challenging to incorporate into communications plans. [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#), referenced in the new [PHCC Academy](#) training on community engagement, breaks community engagement into five developmental stages to support capacity- and relationship-building with communities.

Use these stages to start or better understand your community engagement approach, transform and sustain relationships with your community, and build greater trust in public health. It is important to note that these developmental stages are informed by acknowledging the marginalization that exists in our current systems.

“Whether we are communicating about the latest updates to infectious disease precautions or about an area with water contamination, public health communication is most effective when we engage with communities.”

AMEENA BATADA, DRPH, TRAINING FACILITATOR

1

Inform

Provide the community with the relevant information

2

Consult

Gather input from the community

3

Involve

Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process and inform planning

4

Collaborate

Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions

5

Defer To

Foster democratic participation and equity by bridging the divide between community and governance, through community-driven decision-making

To learn more about [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) and other community engagement tools and strategies, register for a free two-hour course on “Strengthening Public Health Communications through Community Engagement” with Dr. Ameena Batada at academy.publichealthcollaborative.org. This virtual course is part of the PHCC Academy, an initiative of PHCC that aims to equip public health professionals with the confidence and competence to communicate effectively with their communities.