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# Community Health Worker Impact

Bridging the Gap: The Role of Community Health Workers in Recovery

Sondra Anderson, Certified Community Health Worker  
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## Introduction

**Sondra Anderson, CCHW**

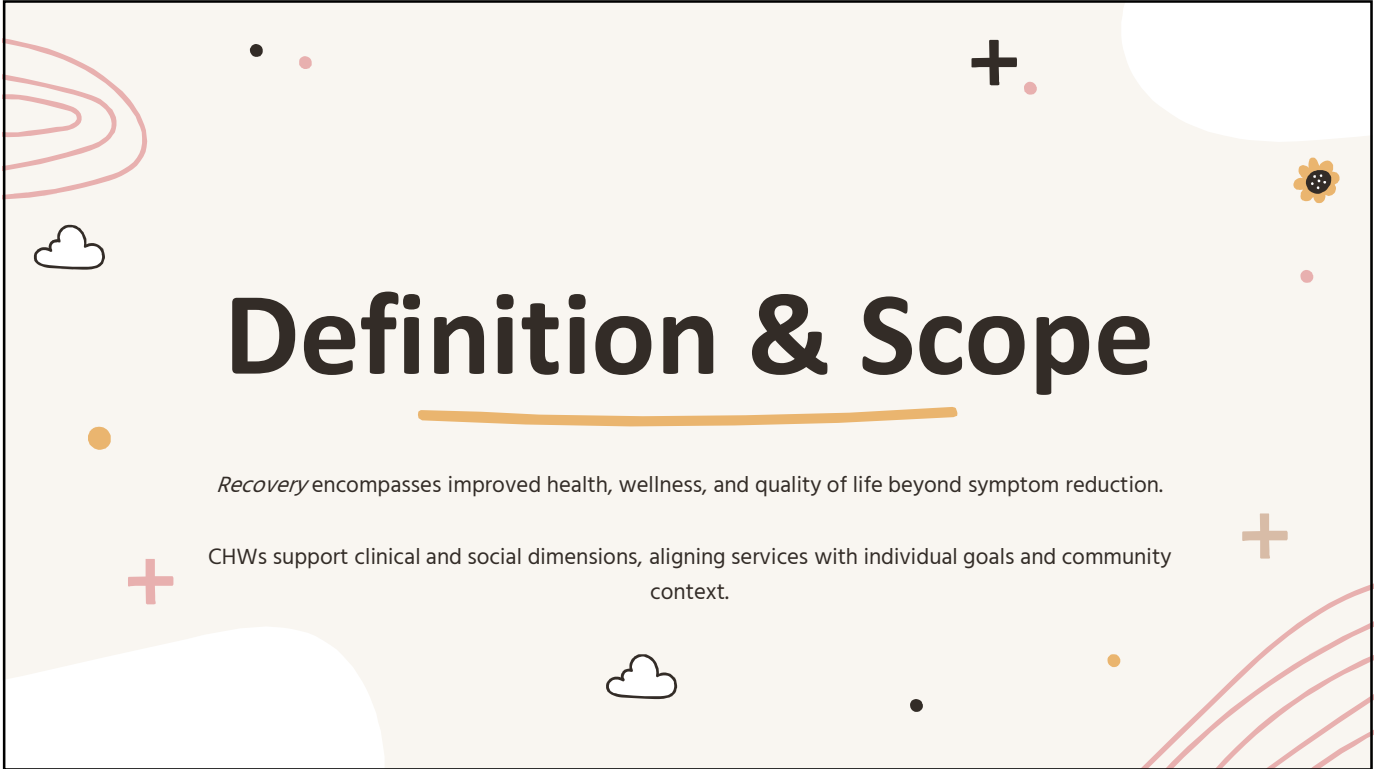
This presentation explains how  
**\*\*Community Health Workers (CHWs)\*\***  
connect people to care, reduce barriers, and  
strengthen long-term recovery through  
relationship-based, culturally competent practices.

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**Slide 1**

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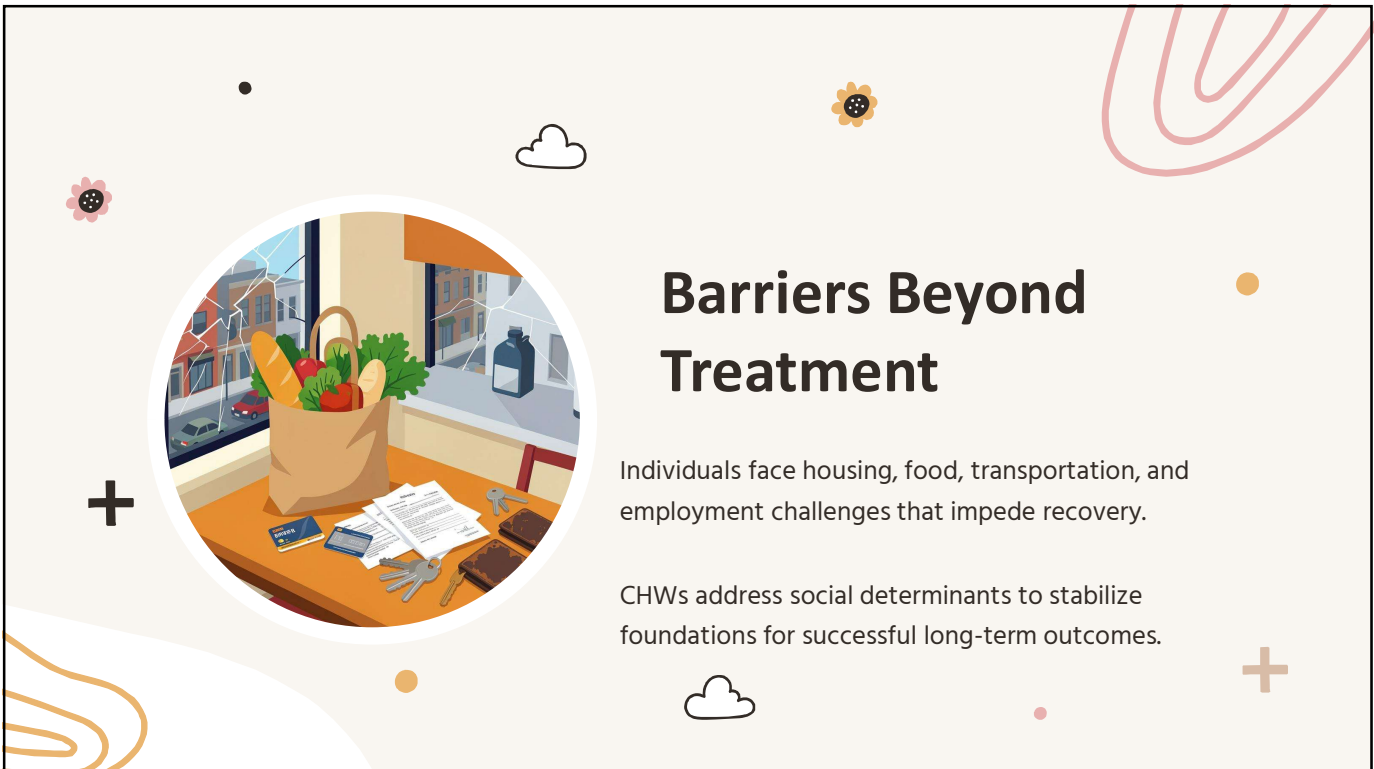


# Definition & Scope

*Recovery* encompasses improved health, wellness, and quality of life beyond symptom reduction.

CHWs support clinical and social dimensions, aligning services with individual goals and community context.

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## Barriers Beyond Treatment

Individuals face housing, food, transportation, and employment challenges that impede recovery.

CHWs address social determinants to stabilize foundations for successful long-term outcomes.

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## CHW Roles

Who are Community Health Workers (CHWs)?

- **Trusted Community Members**
- **Connectors between individuals & systems of care**
- **Provide culturally, competent, person-centered support**
- **Often bring lived experience\***

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# Trusted Community Link

CHWs are trusted, often local, connectors who reduce stigma and fear of systems.

They build rapport, facilitate access, and promote culturally competent, person-centered care.

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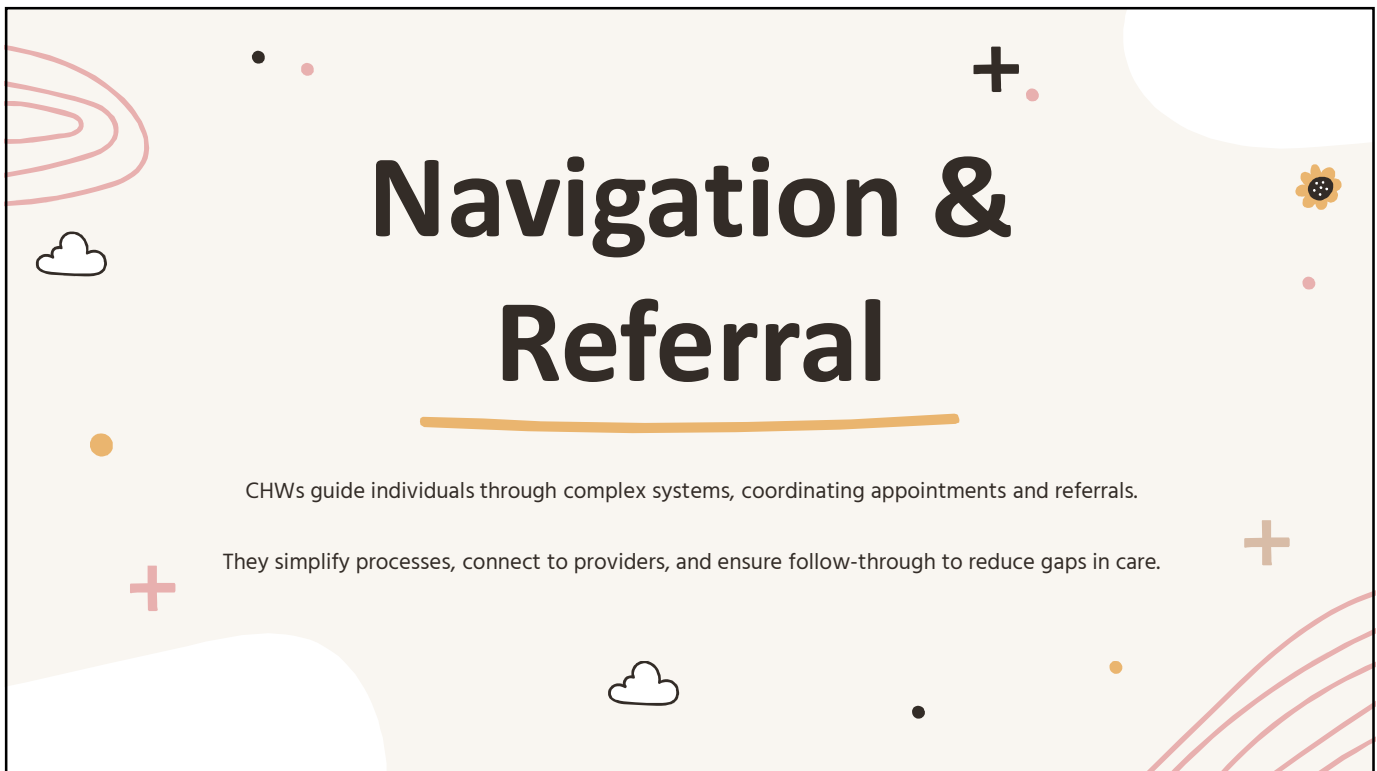


# Crisis & Disaster Response

CHWs act as informal first responders during emergencies, offering emotional support and practical guidance.

They maintain continuity of care when systems are disrupted.

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# Navigation & Referral






CHWs guide individuals through complex systems, coordinating appointments and referrals.

They simplify processes, connect to providers, and ensure follow-through to reduce gaps in care.

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## CCHW / CRS Comparison

### Comparison of Scope of Practice

Feature	Community Health Worker (CHW)	Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS)
 Focus Area	Broad health, social needs, wellness	Specific to substance use recovery
 Foundation	Knowledge of community/culture	Personal lived experience in recovery
 Core Skill	Health coaching & navigation	Peer mentoring & role modeling
 Setting	Clinics, communities, homes	Treatment centers, courts, community
 Clinical Role	No (non-clinical)	No (non-clinical)

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## Addressing Social Needs

CHWs assess and link clients to housing, food, transport, and employment supports.

Addressing these determinants stabilizes daily life and enables recovery progress.



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**Health-Related Social Needs**

Utility Needs

Housing Instability

Family and Social Support

Food Insecurity

Interpersonal Violence

Employment & Income

Education/Training

Transportation

## Addressing Health Related Social Needs

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## Empowerment & Self-Activation

CHWs foster goal setting, decision-making, and confidence to promote long-term independence.

The focus is on building skills, not dependency.

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# Person-First Language

Use non-judgmental terms that emphasize the individual, not the condition.

**Person-first language** reduces stigma and strengthens therapeutic relationships.

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## The Five Rules of Recovery



- Change your life
- Be completely honest
- Ask for help
- Practice self-care
- Set and maintain healthy boundaries

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**CHW Success Story**

- Lost job → depression & risk of eviction
- CHW connected her with rent assistance & unemployment benefits
- Landlord gave extra time to catch up
- CHW supported her in finding new employment
- Today: stable, employed, and thriving

→ CHWs provide resources, hope, and guidance to help people rebuild their lives.

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## Why CHWs Matter in Recovery

- Increase access to care
- Improve engagement and retention
- Reduce relapse risk
- Strengthen community connections
- Provide hope and continuity of care
- **CHWs fill gaps that traditional systems often miss.**

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**Slide 16**

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# Conclusions<sup>+</sup>

## CHWs Bridge the Gap by:

- Connecting systems & People
- Addressing real-life barriers
- Empowering individuals in recovery
- Walking alongside individuals—not **AHEAD** of them

CHWs bridge systems and communities by addressing practical barriers, offering lived-experience support, and promoting empowerment.

Their role enhances access, engagement, and sustainable recovery outcomes.

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# Any Questions?

# Thanks!

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