Training Community Health Workers/Promotoras to Address Sexual Violence in Rural Arizona: An Evaluation
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The Arizona Rural Women’s Health Network began as an initiative in 2006 to address gaps and services in the expansive rural regions of our state. In 2013, a needs assessment revealed a major lack of resources and services related to sexual violence. As 44% of Arizona women will experience some type of sexual violence throughout their lives and women in rural Arizona have limited access to healthcare facilities overall, this was identified as a priority for the Network.

The Sexual Violence Curriculum was developed to train Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Promotoras on how to identify, respond to, and advocate for victims of sexual violence in their communities. CHWs are trusted community members, and are often the sole link connecting people to health services, especially in rural areas, so they were a logical and effective choice for working to address sexual violence as a united community.

Community Health Workers participated in a 7-hour course that provided them with a general overview of sexual violence, prepared them to give appropriate support to survivors and victims, equipped them with strategies for addressing sexual violence, and offered a training experience that provided hope and empowerment. Through the first phase of this program, the Network has provided training to nearly 150 CHWs across Arizona, with plans to continue to offer more trainings, as well as add Spanish and online versions.

This presentation will include details on both how this curriculum was implemented (to what audiences and with what strategies), as well as data on the effectiveness of the course based on participants’ evaluations and assessments. This will help participants better understand the components of an effective CHW curriculum, in addition to considering whether this type of training would be beneficial to their own communities.