



COVID-19 vaccination training for health workers



Communicating with the
community about COVID-19
vaccination

Health workers play an important role for COVID-19 vaccination

Early recipients of COVID-19 vaccine

- Risk of work exposure
- Critical role in providing essential health services

Vaccinators for COVID-19 vaccine

- Share key messages about COVID-19 vaccine

Advocates for COVID-19 vaccine

- Share own vaccination experience
- Valued and trusted source of information for the community

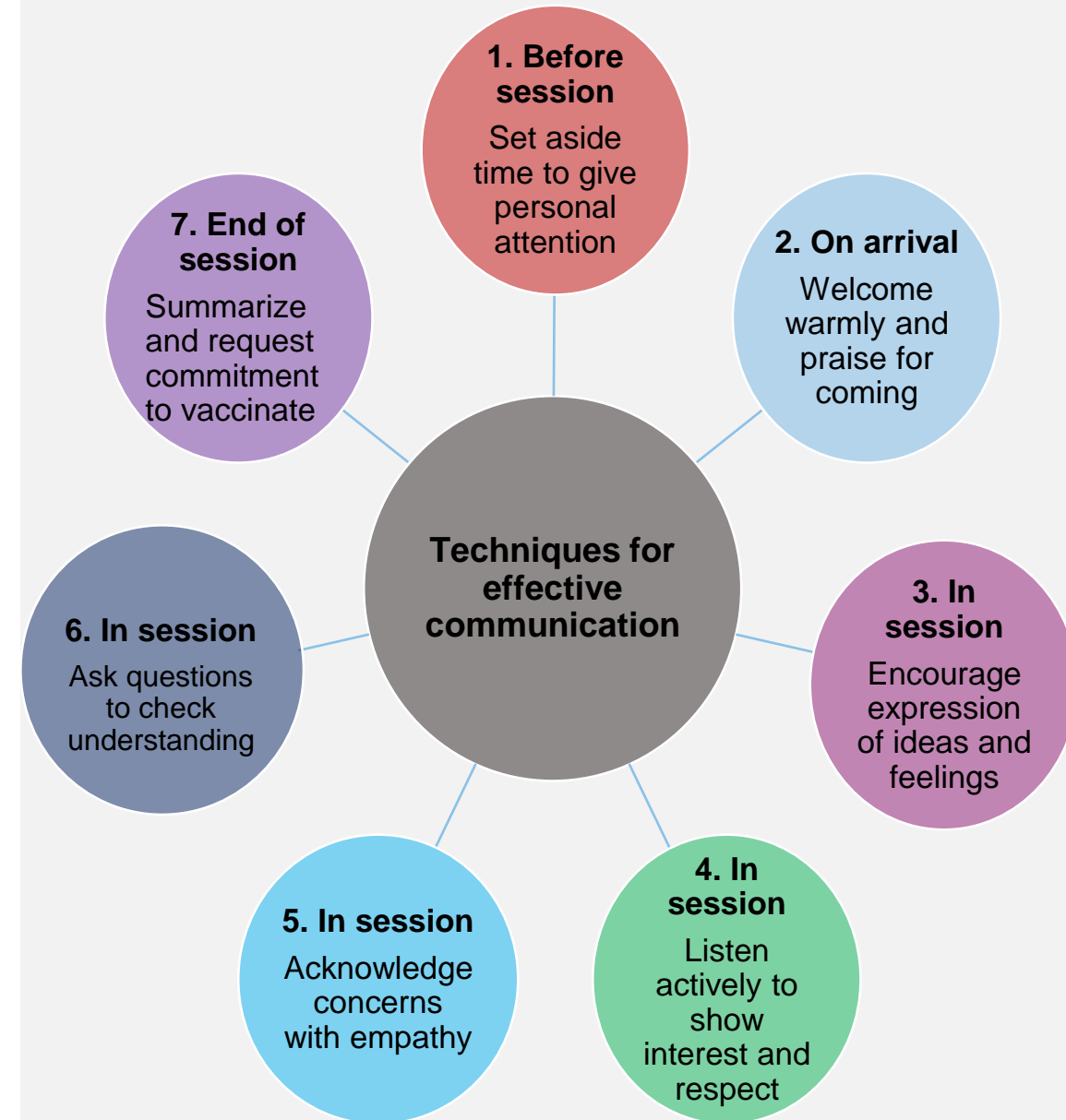
Representatives to the community

- Bridge between the community and health system after adverse events

**How can we build community
confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Techniques for good communication

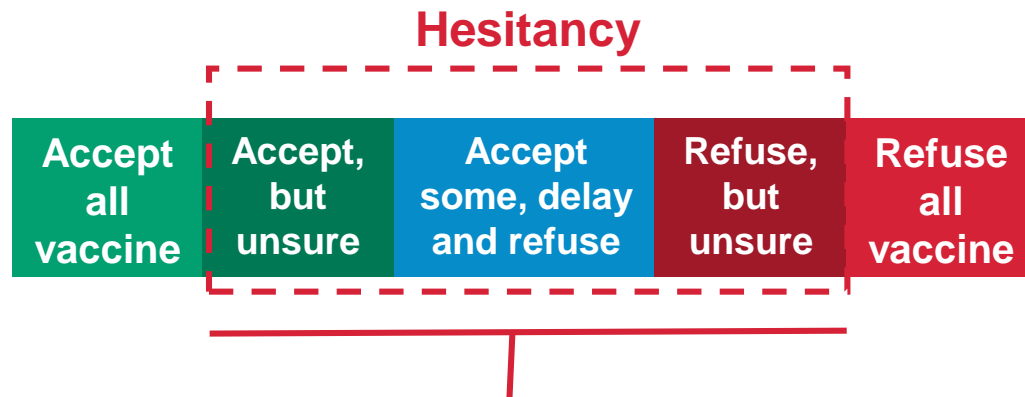
- Good communication helps create and maintain respect and trust between health workers, families and communities.
- Ask questions and listen to better understand community member experiences and perspectives.
- Provide simple, practical information about who will receive the vaccine, why, and where.
- Respond to questions and concerns with empathy to increase trust and reduce refusals.
- Acknowledge local challenges and show respect for customs and cultures.



For additional information on good communication, see Interpersonal Communication on Immunization: <https://ipc.unicef.org>

What is **vaccine hesitancy** and what should I do?

For additional information: see <https://ipc.unicef.org>.



Offer positive encouragement:
"That is wonderful!"

Discuss to better understand questions and concerns: "Tell me more about that." Respond with empathy.

Focus on their concerns:
Show respect and do not argue. Point to trusted community members and sources.

Examples of “**how to respond**” to hesitancy with empathy:

"I know vaccinating will help me, but I am afraid of side-effects."

Health worker: "I understand that you want to make the best choice for yourself. What side-effects are you concerned about?"

"I am not sure what to do. My community leader objects to vaccines."

Health worker: "I can see you are questioning vaccines. How do others you know deal with vaccination? What are your concerns?"

"I read rumours about COVID-19 vaccine online. I do not know what to believe."

Health worker: "Social media and websites can spread false information. You can get the latest on COVID-19 vaccine from the source I trust at www.who.int I am also here to answer your questions."

How to tailor messages about COVID-19 vaccine?

Tailoring messages by risk group will help people understand why they are eligible and build trust and confidence in the vaccine.

Risk group	Suggested key message
Health worker	As a health worker, the COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you from exposure while you are performing your job. By getting vaccinated, you can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to your patients, family, neighbours and community, and continue to provide essential health services.
Elderly or older person	COVID-19 has been shown to affect older people more adversely. The vaccine will help protect you from COVID-19 or from becoming severely ill if you are infected with the virus.
People with chronic conditions	COVID-19 has been shown to affect people with chronic conditions more adversely. The vaccine will help protect you from COVID-19 infection or from becoming severely ill if you are infected with the virus.
Other essential workers (e.g. teachers, truck drivers, food service, cleaners, etc.)	As an essential worker who encounters other people in your day-to-day routine, the COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you from exposure while you are performing your job.

The WHO SAGE roadmap has additional information on priority groups:

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/immunization/sage/covid/sage-prioritization-roadmap-covid19-vaccines.pdf>

Potential for vaccine acceptance

Wan is a 38-year-old woman at the health facility for her infant's well-baby care visit. Wan has diabetes and is overweight. She does not ask about the COVID-19 vaccine. Wan always brings her baby for health visits and accepts routine vaccines.

Is Wan eligible as a member of a priority group? What would you say to Wan?

If eligible for COVID-19 vaccine:

- **Use a presumptive approach: assume they will accept the COVID-19 vaccine.**
 - State that they will receive the vaccine today.
 - Share key messages about the COVID-19 vaccine, benefits, common side-effects, care and follow-up.
 - If you receive consent and there are no questions or concerns, proceed with vaccination.
 - If questions or concerns, listen and respond with empathy. Use medical evidence or stories to convey the safety, effectiveness, and need for the vaccine.

Communication strategy

Hesitant due to misinformation

Yumi is a 25-year-old female who arrives at the health facility for a family planning visit. She works as a nursing assistant in a high-risk area but has not received COVID-19 vaccine. When asked, Yumi says, "I read it can cause health problems. Is that true? Should I trust the vaccine?"

Is Yumi eligible as a member of a priority group? What would you say to Yumi?

If eligible for COVID-19 vaccine:

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- **Use a participatory approach: identify and address misinformation/rumours; help them to understand the importance/need for vaccination.**
 - Ask questions to discover misinformation. Share facts and stories to debunk myths and respond to concerns.
 - Acknowledge risks and benefits of COVID-19 vaccine. Ask about vaccine perceptions and preferences; listen and respond with empathy.
- If you receive consent and there are no questions or concerns, proceed with vaccination. If a person remains hesitant, be respectful and provide information to take home; encourage to consider vaccination.

Not part of a priority group

Maria is a healthy 28-year-old female who brings her infant for a wellness check. She says that while she is at the health facility, she would like to have a COVID-19 vaccine.

Why is Maria not eligible for COVID-19 vaccine? What would you say to Maria?

If not eligible for the vaccine:

- Recognize and appreciate interest in keeping self and family healthy.
- Explain that the current guidelines do not indicate that they should get a COVID-19 vaccine at this time.
- Advise her on COVID-19 prevention measures.
- If available, provide information on when the vaccine will be available to non-priority groups.

Make sure you know who the COVID-19 vaccine AEFI focal point is for your area.

Reassure community members that the vaccine is given to protect them from COVID-19.

Explain why the vaccination is given, benefits of vaccination, safety of the vaccine, common side-effects, and care for side-effects.

If you see that a person recently vaccinated has fallen seriously ill after vaccination:

- start treatment immediately, refer to the appropriate health facility as needed; and
- inform your supervisor immediately (over the telephone); complete the COVID-19 vaccine AEFI reporting form within 24 hours.

As a vaccinator, do not speak to the media if they approach you about a serious illness after vaccination.

- Refer the media to the AEFI focal point who will have up-to-date information on what has happened and what needs to be done.

Communicate with the community. Tell them an investigation is being carried out by the government.

- Show empathy to the family and the community.
- Do not give incorrect/false information.
- Tell them that you will share follow-up information at a specific date/time.
- If no additional information is available at that time, maintain communication and provide them a new follow-up time.

Key points on communicating about COVID-19 vaccine

- Health workers play important roles in COVID-19¹ vaccination as vaccine recipients, vaccinators and health educators, trusted advocates, and representatives to the community after AEFI.
- Use empathy to put yourself in community members' position to better understand and respond to their challenges and fears about COVID-19 vaccine.
- Demonstrate caring and respect to community members to foster trust and increase uptake of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Tailor your communication strategy and messages to community members' risk groups and levels of demand for COVID-19 vaccine.
- Direct media to the AEFI focal point in your area; communicate with the community about AEFI early and honestly. Explain when you will share updated information.

Thank You