Advancing community health worker models to support youth and families' mental health

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This article offers key recommendations for improving how community health workers (CHWs) are included in youth mental health care. It covers important steps in practice, research, and policy to ensure these models can last and succeed. CHWs are known by a variety of terms, including paraprofessionals, lay health workers (LHW), and peer support specialists (PSS). CHWs can occupy a range of roles in mental health services, including: direct interventionist, stepped-care (i.e., CHWs treat lower acuity cases while licensed providers treat higher acuity cases), auxiliary care (i.e., CHWs provide psychoeducation and address barriers to care), and outreach/navigation.

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