

# Introduction



## Your Role as a Community Health Worker

Your role is critically important to your community. Without you, many people might not receive vital health information.

To be successful, you need to know your community well, enjoy teaching others, feel comfortable speaking in front of people, know how to work with a group, and be willing to try to improve your own health.

### You also should be:

- A good listener
- Caring
- Patient
- Helpful
- Trustworthy
- Nonjudgmental
- Approachable

## Acknowledgments

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute is grateful to the organizations, community health workers, public housing leaders and residents, families, and staff who contributed to the original development of this manual, including:

- Association of Black Cardiologists
- District of Columbia Housing Authority
- Housing Authority of Baltimore City
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Baltimore office

## About *With Every Heartbeat Is Life*

This manual is part of the With Every Heartbeat Is Life community health worker's toolkit on heart disease prevention for African Americans and is meant to be used with the *With Every Heartbeat Is Life: Picture Cards for Community Health Workers* and other heart health education materials.

### Information provided in this toolkit came primarily from the following sources:

- *The Heart Truth*® program: [hearttruth.gov](http://hearttruth.gov)
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases: [niddk.nih.gov](http://niddk.nih.gov)
- Medline Plus: [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov)
- Choose My Plate: [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

## How To Use This Manual

### Community Health Workers

This manual is for you! It can help you learn how to educate people in your community about heart health. It can also help you train other community health workers to do the same.

The manual has 12 sessions and an appendix.

#### The first 11 sessions have:

- Step-by-step instructions on how to teach the session
- Approaches for keeping the attention of the group
- Worksheets and handouts for participants

The 12th session (pages 12.1-12.72) is only for community health workers. It's about how to use the manual and do a project evaluation.

In the appendix, you'll find teaching tips, activity suggestions, and ideas on how to offer this course in your community.

### *With Every Heartbeat Is Life Sessions*

1. Knowledge Is Power: Know Your Risk for Heart Disease
2. React in Time to Heart Attack Signs
3. Get Energized! Say YES to Physical Activity
4. Control Your Blood Pressure
5. Keep Your Cholesterol in Check
6. Embrace Your Health! Aim for a Healthy Weight
7. Protect Your Heart From Diabetes
8. Make Traditional African American Dishes Heart Healthy
9. Eat Heart Healthy—Even When Time or Money Is Tight
10. Take Control of Your Health: Enjoy Living Tobacco Free
11. Review and Graduation
12. Evaluation To Track Your Progress (*Only for Community Health Workers*)

## About the Sessions

### Each session:

- Covers a different topic related to heart health
- Generally follows the same structure
- Includes “More Information” boxes to help you answer participants’ questions
- Lasts about 2 hours

## Evaluation

Session 12, *Evaluation To Track Your Progress (Only for Community Health Workers)*, describes how to evaluate the effectiveness of the With Every Heartbeat Is Life course. The session guides community health workers and evaluators in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

### It provides:

- Ideas for tracking activities
- Tools for measuring changes in participants’ behaviors and clinical values

These ideas and tools will show you whether your activities worked and will help you improve the quality of the course. Having this tracking data will be useful in your discussions with organizations that support your work.

## For More Information

For more information on diseases, conditions, and procedures related to heart disease, visit the NHLBI website at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov) or call the NHLBI Center for Health Information at 1-877-NHLBI4U (1-877-645-2448). For TRS, call 7-1-1.

## Session Outline

Each session begins with a summary page that explains:

- What you want participants to do or learn
- Materials and supplies you'll need
- What you need to prepare, if anything, before the class begins
- Handouts and take-home materials
- The session outline

In addition, each session includes five major parts:

### 1: Introducing the Session

- Welcome the participants.
- Review the information from the last session.
- Ask the participants to talk about their pledges. (See the Weekly Pledge section below.)
- Explain what you'll talk about today.

### 2: Conducting the Session

- Present new information to your group.
- Lead the group in fun, educational activities.
- Ask participants questions.
- Allow them to ask questions.

### 3: Review of Today's Key Points

- Ask questions to help the participants review what they just learned.
- Emphasize the key points.

### 4: Weekly Pledge

- Help participants come up with a pledge to use what they learned during the session.
- Give a few examples of specific, realistic pledges.
- (*Optional*) Talk about the role of personal values—qualities you consider important in yourself and others—for motivating lifestyle changes.

### 5: Closing

- Ask participants what they thought of the session. Thank them for their comments.

### Picture Cards

Along with this manual, you'll find picture cards that show a different aspect of heart health, from controlling blood pressure to being physically active and aiming for a healthy weight. Show participants the picture while reading out loud the text on the back.

### Symbols

These symbols tell you what to do next, including when to use a picture card:



**Do an activity.**



**Use a picture card.**



**Give out a handout.**



**Help participants make a pledge for heart health.**



**Give out a recipe.**



**Do a training activity.**

### Breaks and Refreshments

Take a short break about halfway through each session. Consider using the time to:

- Do some easy stretches (see the “Walking and Stretching” handout in Session 3 on page 3.27).
- Serve a healthy snack, such as yogurt, fruit, or vegetables with low-fat dip. Or you can prepare a recipe from this manual for participants to try. Have a pitcher of water and paper cups available or encourage participants to bring a reusable water bottle to class.

# Getting Started

## At Least 6 Weeks in Advance

1. **Find** a location to teach a class. Make sure you have a room to accommodate the number of participants you expect. Contact local clinics, schools, libraries, churches, recreation centers, or community centers. Depending on who signs up, you may need a space that's available after regular work hours.
2. **Promote** the course to community leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, local clubs, and your friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. Ask medical clinic staff, clergy, educators, and caseworkers to recommend the course. See the sample emails and social media posts on *The Heart Truth* website, and the flyer on page (I.16) for promoting the course.
3. If your organization uses social media, **promote** the course on your organization's social media accounts, and encourage others to share your posts. Also, put up flyers at health fairs, clinics, grocery stores, churches, libraries, and other places in your community.
4. **Put** announcements in online neighborhood listservs, and in online and print newsletters and local newspapers or magazines.

### Here are talking points for promoting the course:

- Heart health experts developed the course, and it's free.
- The course is for anyone who wants to learn more about protecting their heart health and those who are under a health care provider's care for heart disease.
- Participants will learn about risk factors for heart disease and how they can prevent it.
- The sessions will help participants learn what steps to take to protect and improve their—and their families' or friends'—heart health.
- Specifically, the sessions cover:
  - How to prevent or control high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes
  - How to prepare healthy food, particularly traditional African American meals
  - How to be more physically active, have a healthy weight, and quit smoking

### At Least 1 Week Before Each Session

1. **Read** through the sessions, the picture cards, and the handouts. Read them two or three times so you feel prepared.
2. **Practice** your presentation in front of a mirror or a friend or family member. Be sure to use the picture cards. Also, try making a few healthy changes in your own life.
3. **Review** the instructions for each activity. Make a list of what you need to do before the session, such as displaying items on a table or making a list of local places to get blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose (blood sugar) levels checked.
4. **Pay attention** to the “More Information” boxes. They can help you answer questions you may get from participants.
5. **Ask** a health educator, registered dietitian, nurse, or doctor at a local hospital or clinic to explain any information you don’t understand. You can also contact the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s Center for Health Information at [nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov](mailto:nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov) or 1-877-NHLBI4U (1-877-645-2448). For TRS, call 7-1-1.
6. **Review** the list of handouts, materials, and supplies you’ll need for each session to make sure you have enough of everything.
7. **Make** enough copies of the handouts for all participants.

### The Day of the Session

1. **Review** the list of materials, supplies, and handouts. Make sure you have everything.
2. **Arrive** 30 to 60 minutes ahead of time to set up the room.

# Tips for Working With Your Group

## Leading the Group

- **Get to know** the participants. They may have varied backgrounds, interests, and needs.
- **Encourage** participants to ask questions. Asking questions will help them apply the information to their lives and remember what they've learned.
- **Keep** the sessions flowing, so everyone is interested and involved.
  - If someone talks for too long, thank them for sharing their opinion. Then quickly ask if anyone else has something to share.
  - If only a few people are talking, ask more questions or change the discussion topic.
  - Help participants who don't read or write well, but do this quietly and without bringing attention to them.
  - Offer help without being pushy.
  - Be observant. Watch for clues that people don't understand or are losing interest, such as:
    - Looking puzzled
    - Looking away from you
    - Being quiet
    - Looking at their phone
- **Ask** participants to leave their phone in their bag or pocket and to turn the sound off, unless they're expecting an urgent call.

## Motivating Participants

- **Praise or reward** participants' efforts.
  - Praise and rewards can make the information you're teaching more meaningful to participants.
  - Praising and rewarding people can help them stay committed.
- **Encourage** participants to share their opinions.
- **Show interest** in participants and what they say.
- **Be patient.** Some people may not speak because they aren't used to sharing their ideas in a group.
- **Try to involve** everyone in the discussion and activities, but don't force it. People will speak up when they become more comfortable.

### Getting People To Attend

- **Tell participants** that at every session they'll:
  - Learn something new that helps them and their family or friends
  - Be with other motivated people
- **Suggest** they remind each other to attend the sessions or carpool to class.
- **Remind** them what time the sessions start and how long they last.

### Answering Hard Questions

Remember that it's okay not to know all the answers! Say that you'll have the correct answer by the next session. Call a local health educator, registered dietitian, or nurse to find out the correct information. If participants ask personal medical questions, it's best to tell them they should talk to their health care provider.

### Keeping People on Track

If a participant says something incorrect, thank them for any part of the information that's correct. Then say:

- There's a lot of incorrect information out there, particularly on the Internet.
- This is one reason why you're coming to the sessions—to get correct information!

### For More Information

Review the handouts on pages A.7-A.8, "Tips To Teach the *With Every Heartbeat Is Life* Manual" and "12 Ground Rules for Teaching Groups." They are in the Appendix.

### And Finally...

Have a good time. You're doing an important service for yourself and your community. Thank you!

## Let's Hear From You!

Thank you for helping African Americans to protect their hearts. Please tell us how you're using the *With Every Heartbeat Is Life* manual and picture cards in your community.

Your feedback will help make sure NHLBI continues to provide useful educational tools to help you promote heart health in your community.

Please send your feedback to *The Heart Truth* Program Team at **[HealthEdu@nhlbi.nih.gov](mailto:HealthEdu@nhlbi.nih.gov)**.

# Did You Know...?

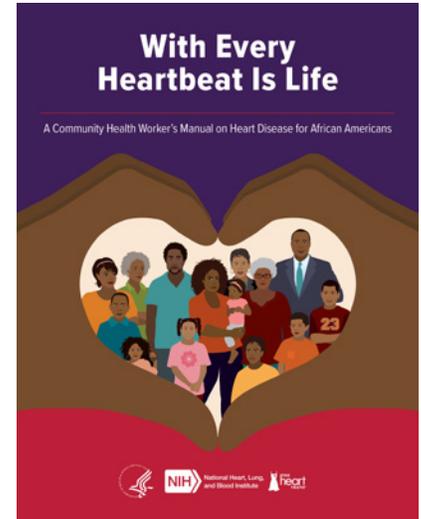
About one out of four African Americans dies of heart disease.  
But you can do something about it!



## Take the free course: With Every Heartbeat Is Life!

It's designed for you.

- ♥ Learn how to keep your own heart healthy, and help your family and friends do the same.
- ♥ Participate in games, role-playing, and other fun learning activities.
- ♥ Find out ways to be more active, eat in a heart healthy way, keep a healthy weight, and quit smoking.
- ♥ Learn how to talk to your family, neighbors, and friends about heart disease and how to help prevent it.
- ♥ Get take-home materials you can share with others.



## Classes meet once a week for 11 weeks.

Classes meet on \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Day/time \_\_\_\_\_

Classes begin on \_\_\_\_\_

For more information or to register, contact \_\_\_\_\_



**The Course is Free!**

**Everyone who completes the classes will receive a certificate.**

# Begin With a Heart

Use this shape to cut out the heart. You will use these heart shapes in Session 1. (See page 1.1.)

