



Vaccination Support Operations Communication Resource Guide



This resource covers how to use language effectively in this moment, and ways to be sensitive and empathetic to others' concerns, as you're out there serving communities in need.

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

While you're volunteering on a vaccination support operation and interacting with community members, some individuals will be excited to receive it and others might still have concerns. Celebrate with those who share your enthusiasm!

It's important to realize that vaccine hesitancy isn't always caused by lack of knowledge. There are many reasons people might feel hesitant to receive the vaccine, and it's important to be sensitive to the types of concerns that might exist in the community where you serve¹. Be aware of your own attitudes,

reactions and assumptions about others' concerns over vaccinations. Often our non-verbal actions might signal a response that could be perceived as less supportive or judgmental.

Our duty as volunteers is clear: to support the equitable distribution of vaccinations and help those who want the vaccine get it safely and conveniently. As we embark on this mission to aid the healing of our nation, we must demonstrate empathy and cultural sensitivity to all community members we encounter.

RAISE YOUR CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Be Mindful

Reflect on your own culture and be aware of how it influences your thoughts and judgments.

Have you or anyone you know ever felt hesitant to take medicine, to ask for help with medical needs, or felt mistrust in a medical system, professional, or procedure that was unfamiliar to you?

Use clear and effective language like this:

Adapted from AdCouncil.

Try Saying This	Instead Of This
COVID Immunization or Vaccination	COVID injection or shot
A safe and effective vaccine	A vaccine developed quickly
Get the latest information	There are things we still don't know
Medical experts and doctors	Scientists
Public Health	Government

Build Trust

- Be aware of your nonverbal cues when interacting with people during any deployment and specifically at this sensitive moment for many. Facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and body language convey meaning even when no words are spoken.
- If someone expresses hesitancy or concern about getting the vaccine, listen to them without judging their beliefs or choices. Remain open to listening and be respectful.
- Look for opportunities to build trust by acknowledging and expressing understanding of the other person's concerns. Since our role is not to convince anyone to get vaccinated, just listen. Often, a person just wants to be heard. Instead, speak to TR's support of vaccinations for everyone when they are ready to receive them. Know that your journey has not been their journey through life and through this pandemic experience. Let's be patient with each other and lean toward empathy.

If an individual has questions about the vaccine, you can direct them to a medical expert. Try saying this:

"That's a great question - let me grab one of the doctors or nurses to answer that question."

As we step up to meet this moment, lead with empathy, care, and understanding. Look out for more training to come soon on empathy-building and cultural competence.

1 From "Using a Global Pandemic as a Teachable Moment to Promote Vaccine Literacy and Build Resilience to Misinformation" (2020). American Journal of Public Health. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305906> F4.V1.L1.20210224 02.23.2021