

# Invest in Trust

## A Guide for Building Vaccine Trust and Increasing Vaccination Rates Among Long-Term Care Workers

# So What's Keeping Workers From Getting the Vaccine?

- Developed too quickly
- It's dangerous
- Don't need it
- May miss work because of side effects
- Harmful to pregnancy
- Vaccines aren't natural
- Still need to wear a mask

# What Else is Going On?

- Real barriers to getting both doses of the vaccine
- Low trust in employers
- Paradoxical norm
- Fears they're not expressing (fear of needles, doctors)
- Sensing a of lack of choice
- Language barriers

# How We Approached This Project

- Conducted secondary research
- Looked for ‘bright spots’
- Interviewed certified nursing assistants (CNAs)
- Held ‘watch sessions’ with leading social science scholars
- Conducted survey to test messages and their effectiveness with long-term care workers

# What Can You Do to Increase Uptake at Your Facility?

1. Establish trust
2. Remove barriers
3. Make time to listen
4. Offer meaningful incentives
5. Activate trusted messengers
6. Use effective messages
7. Appeal to their expertise
8. Celebrate as a community

# 1. Establish trust

**Building trust in the  
vaccine**



**Building employees'  
trust in you as their  
employer**

*“Their perception is that leadership is saying ‘just do this, accept it and get on board.’ This type of tone can evoke emotions about personal freedoms being restricted and also raise questions about whether employers truly care about the concerns of their staff members. “*

*Aisha Langford, Ph.D., M.P.H., Assistant Professor, Department of Population Health, NYU.*

# Ways to Build Trust

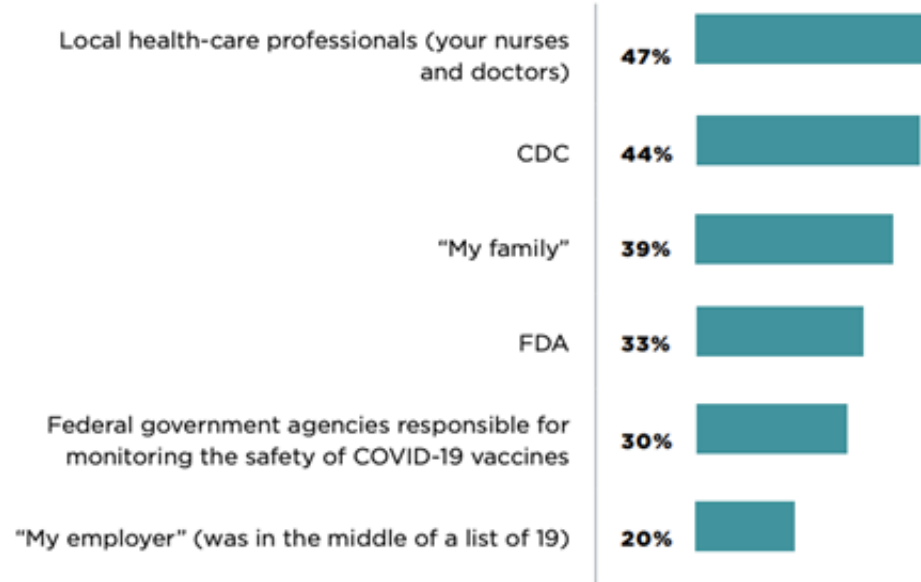
- Communicate transparently
- CNAs are experts. Build on their knowledge and treat them as such
- Listen
- Demonstrate true empathy and care
- Put ‘you’ at the center of your communications

“As someone who works in medical care, you’ve seen profound changes in people’s health as a treatment works and brings them back to themselves. The COVID-19 vaccines can be similarly effective.” (*strongly agree or agree: 65%; neutral: 27%; strongly disagree or disagree: 9%*)

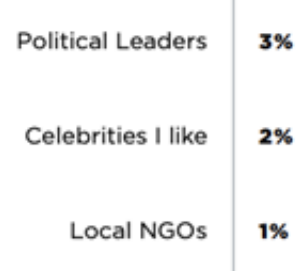
*Message testing with results*



### Total Sample



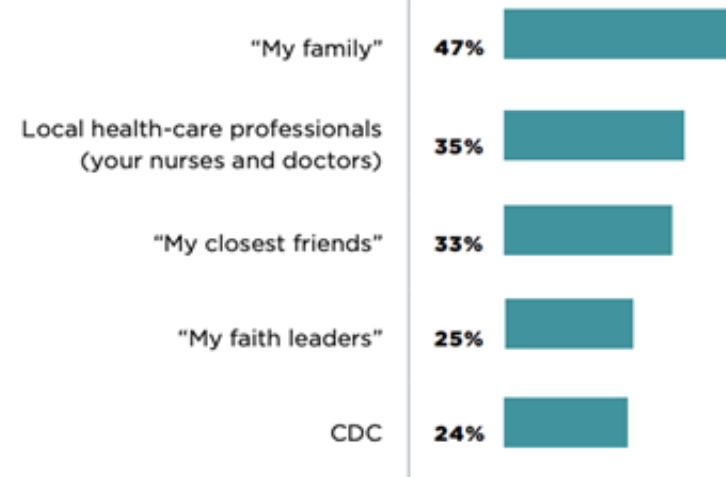
#### Least trusted:



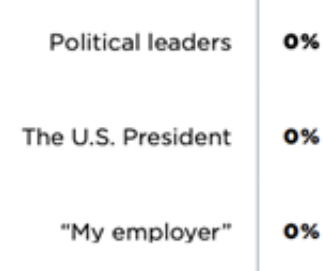
### Vaccine Hesitant Sample

(see note below for vaccine hesitant sample details)

#### Most trusted:



#### Least trusted:



## 2. Remove Barriers

- Provide compensated time off to get the vaccine or if they experience side effects from it
- Help them access the vaccine in their community (including vaccine drives)
- Address childcare challenges
- Consider language barriers

# Make it Easy

- Hold vaccine drives
- Print business cards with QR codes that link to websites where they can make appointments
- Provide Uber or Lyft vouchers
- Offer free childcare at a facility or vouchers for a local daycare
- Provide paid time off before and after their vaccine

# Making it Easier to Get Vaccinated Will Have Two Positive Results

1. Vaccination rates will increase immediately.
2. The perception of getting vaccinated as a norm will increase immediately. When employers communicate with the presumption that everyone wants the vaccine, they avoid creating concerns where people may not have had any.

# 3. Make Time to Listen

- Create time for CNAs to have their questions answered
- Don't assume that unvaccinated is the same as vaccine hesitance
- Take time to understand their real fears
- Hold one-on-one interactions
- Use motivational interviewing to help them identify their reasons to get the vaccine

# Motivational Interviewing

- An evidence-based approach to behavior change
- A guiding style of communication, that sits between following (good listening) and directing (giving information and advice).
- It's designed to empower people to change by drawing out their own meaning, importance and capacity for change

# Things to Keep in Mind When you Have These Conversations

- Acknowledge mistakes
- Be transparent
- Acknowledge distrust in healthcare system
- Work to increase equitable access
- Don't repeat misinformation

# In all Your Talks

- Be prepared!
- Approach the conversations with curiosity
- Stay calm and do not react to defensiveness
- Show respect for CNAs' perspectives and their expertise
- Offer to share sources related to questions they have that you can't answer
- Show you care about them and that the vaccine can protect them personally
- Start with empathy and genuine listening. Hear their concerns and acknowledge their fear
- Avoid using shame, fear or guilt



# Examples of Motivational Interviewing

| If they say   | You might say   | You could ask   | You might close by saying   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>“I’ve already had COVID-19, and so I am already immune.”</p> | <p>“I am sorry to hear that. What was your experience like? Any lasting effects?”</p> | <p>“Have you seen the report from a skilled nursing facility that had five residents who were suspected of becoming reinfected with COVID-19? The report indicated that their illness was more severe than the first time and one of the five residents passed away.”<br/>           (<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7008a3.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7008a3.htm</a> )</p> | <p>“I am getting vaccinated for COVID-19 because I can also protect people with weak immune systems.”</p> |

# Examples of Motivational Interviewing

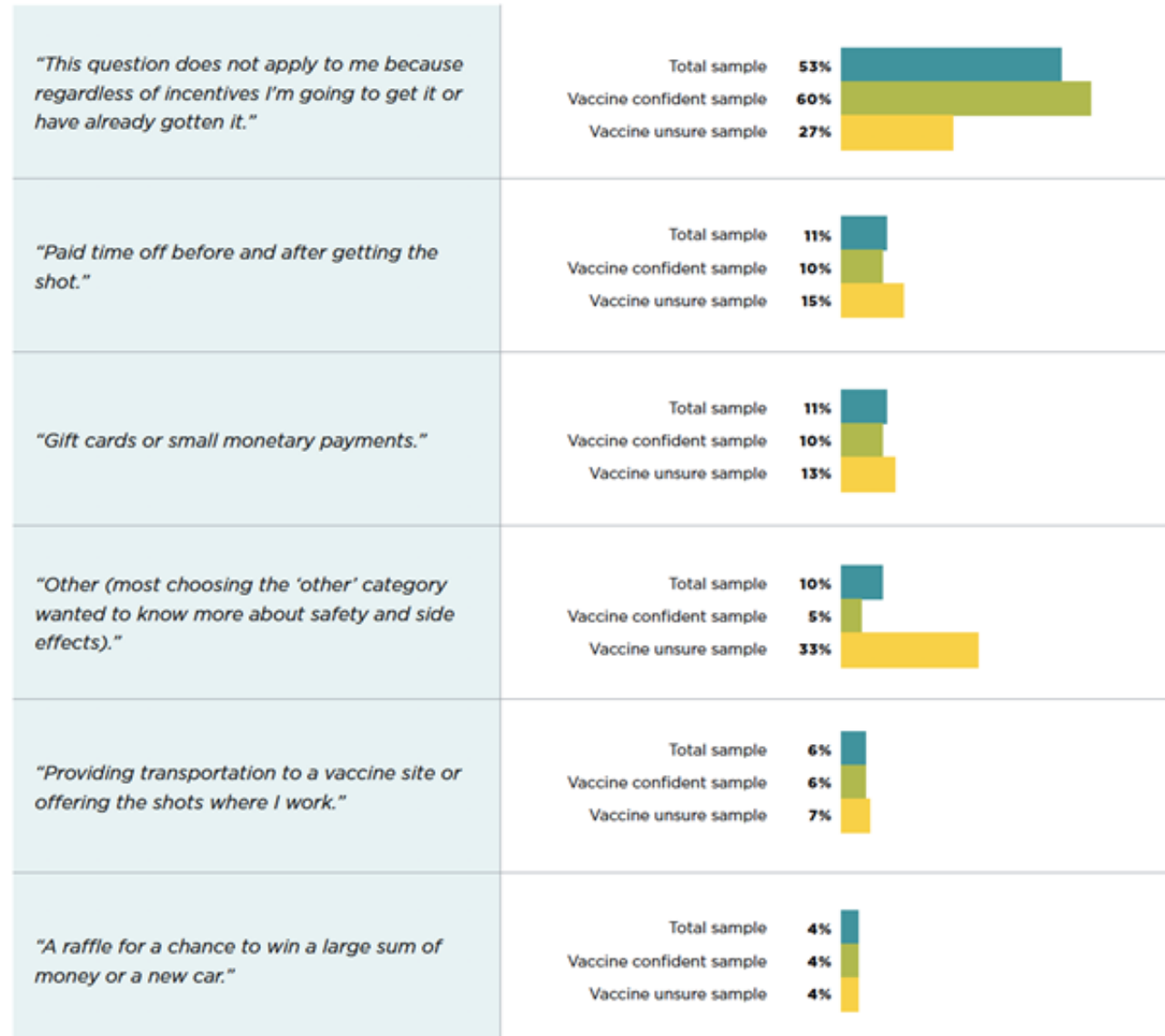
| If they say   | You might say  | You could ask  | You might close by saying   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>“I’m worried that getting the COVID-19 vaccine will make it hard to get pregnant or hurt my child.””</p> | <p>“I know that making the right decision to protect you and your future child is important to you. Mothers who have chosen to get the vaccine have found that it protects not only them but even their new babies.”</p> | <p>“Have you seen the studies showing that the vaccine poses no risk to women who are pregnant, want to be pregnant or breastfeeding? In fact, they even found benefits to the baby. Babies whose mothers were vaccinated are born with the antibodies to protect them from COVID-19.”</p> | <p>“You could talk to your doctor about any concerns you have.”</p> |

## 4. Offer Meaningful Incentives

Incentives can increase vaccine uptake among CNAs but **paid time off** is the most meaningful, particularly for those who are hesitant.

## Which incentives are most meaningful?

While incentives have been broadly used to increase vaccine uptake among long-term care employees, their responses here suggest that paid time off is the most meaningful incentive, particularly for those who are hesitant. Public acknowledgement was significantly less motivating.



# 5. Activate Trusted Messengers

We use trusted messengers as mental shortcuts to decide whether information is worthy of our trust and attention.

# Trusted Messengers

- May be outside of your organization's management or leadership
- Local experts are better than distant ones
- Surveys suggest local health-care experts, but also CDC and FDA
- CNAs see themselves as experts. Messengers outside of health care scored low in our survey
- Trust health professionals above others, like faith leaders, community group leaders, etc.
- They trust their family

*“It's important to normalize that many people are hesitant because, frankly, the last year has been very confusing in terms of how COVID-19 and the related vaccines were discussed. You will have early adopters for the vaccine, those who are a hard no initially, and people who are on the fence. Health professionals need to create safe spaces for people to share their concerns. We also need to give people room to change their minds.”*

*Aisha Langford, Ph.D., M.P.H., Assistant Professor,  
Department of Population Health, NYU.*

## 6. Use Effective Messages

- Use the right emotions
- Appeal to CNAs expertise and pride in being a caregiver
- Emphasize choice and agency, using phrases like: “By choosing to get the vaccine, you’re helping us keep everyone healthy
- Use messages that activate social proof—things they can observe themselves
- Make your calls to action specific and actionable
- Help them see how choosing to get the vaccine now is consistent with their choice to wait and see how others fared
- Consider “fresh start” messaging



*“The third respondent, she opened up by talking about how much she likes to help people and how they'll hold people's hands and like really conveying that it's such a caring profession. And I think that's one opportunity for tapping in, affirming that and then sort of using it to convey how getting vaccinated is very much aligned with the identity and the values that they do seem to hold.”*

*Rose Hendricks, Ph.D., Program Director, Society Civic Science Initiative at ASCB*

# Use the Right Message in the Right Setting

Messages that emphasize care for others, return to usual and expertise may work best for broad appeal. Use in emails updates, personal letters or posters with specific directions on how to get vaccine.

*“Vaccines are in high demand throughout the world, but you’re at the front of the line because of your importance as someone who cares for and protects others.” (strongly agree or agree: 75%; neutral: 21%; strongly disagree or disagree: 3%)*

*“For decades, America has made what it needed. We made these vaccines to help us make a better America in which we can all live free from fear and return to the things that matter most.” (strongly agree or agree: 74%; neutral 19%; strongly disagree or disagree: 6%)*

*“People respect me for my expertise, and it’s important to me that I give them accurate information about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines.” (strongly agree or agree: 67%; neutral: 28%; strongly disagree or disagree: 5%)*

# Use the Right Message in the Right Setting

Messages emphasizing care for coworkers and residents resonate most in individual appeals and would be useful in one-on-one communications.

*“Getting a COVID-19 vaccine myself will protect the residents at the facility where I work from COVID-19.” (strongly agree or agree: 75%; neutral: 18%; strongly disagree or disagree: 8%)*

*“Getting a COVID-19 vaccine myself will protect my fellow employees at my place of employment from COVID-19.” (strongly agree or agree: 72%; neutral: 21%; strongly disagree or disagree: 8%)*

*“I would get vaccinated for COVID-19 because I can also protect people with a weak immune system.” (strongly agree or agree: 70%; neutral: 19%; strongly disagree or disagree: 10%)*

# Getting the Message Out

*Nursing home workers rely on email for information from their employer more than any other channel.*

## Other Channels

- Environmental signage
- Message with paycheck
- TV screen in break rooms
- In-service trainings
- One-on-one conversations
- Personal letters mailed to their homes
- Text messaging services
- Email newsletters
- Bulletin boards where staff can share updates or pin photos of themselves getting vaccine

# Avoid

- Vague phrases that may present too sunny a picture of a post-COVID world.
- Messages that hint at vaccines being mandatory.

## 7. Appeal to CNAs' Expertise

- CNAs see themselves as experts. Treat them as such
- Increase their sense of agency
- Friends, family and residents recognize their expertise
- Help them use their own critical thinking skills to evaluate their choice
- Connect vaccine to the other precautions they take daily to keep the residents safe

# Shifting Norms

- Use dynamic norms
- Emphasize positive behaviors, not negative ones
- Put social proof and goal posts to work

*“And what I heard from the hesitant participant was her situating her hesitancy in her own medical expertise and what she sees on a day-to-day basis as a medical professional. Being a health professional really seemed to be a source of authority for her to say, ‘You know what? I see mistakes doctors make every day. I see how medical recommendations change over time. I see how medicine doesn't turn out well for people all the time. And I'm not willing to be one of those people. I'm going to use my agency and my authority to make this decision.’”*

*Heidi Lawrence, Associate Professor, George Mason University*



## 8. Celebrate

- Emphasize and celebrate positive behaviors
- Send thank-you notes
- Create personalized recognition
- Recognize milestones

# Posters



**CNAs do what's  
needed to care for  
our country's elders.**

CNAs across the USA are getting the vaccine to protect the people they care for. Make your appointment today.

CALL:  
EMAIL:

# Enamel Pins



# Information Cards



## Ready to get vaccinated?

Scheduling your COVID-19 vaccine is easy →

**Here's how to schedule your appointment today:**

- CALL:
- EMAIL:
- VISIT:

**AREA VACCINE SITES:**

**! Have side effects?**

# Increase Uptake at Your Facility

1. Establish trust
2. Remove barriers
3. Make time to listen
4. Offer meaningful incentives
5. Activate trusted messengers
6. Use effective messages
7. Appeal to their expertise
8. Celebrate as a community



**CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC INTEREST  
COMMUNICATIONS**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

[RealGoodCenter.jou.ufl.edu](http://RealGoodCenter.jou.ufl.edu)

**Ann Searight Christiano**, Center Director  
[achristiano@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:achristiano@jou.ufl.edu)

**Annie Neimand, Ph.D.**, Research Director  
**Jack Barry, Ph.D.** Research PostDoc  
**Natalie Asorey**, Research team member

Link to the Guide:  
<https://bit.ly/3zXv1ux>



SCAN ME

# Invest in Trust

**A Guide for Building COVID-19  
Vaccine Trust and Increasing  
Vaccination Rates Among CNAs**



# Thank You

**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network**

