

## What does it take to become a CHES?

To know what it takes to become a CHES we must first know what exactly is a CHES.

A CHES or Certified Health education specialist is an individual who meets the required health education training qualification and has successfully passed the certification exam and has met continuing education requirements (Sharm, M. & Roma, J. (2012). A certified health education specialist must have a degree of either bachelors, masters and/or doctorate in health education. Certified health education specialists can be classified as either entry level health educators or graduated level health educators with just a few responsibilities separating them both. Health education specialist jobs consist of hospitals, clinics or any healthcare facility. They also work at public, state or county health departments, as well as schools and universities. Some health education specialists may be employed in different businesses, industries as well as non profit organizations.

Health education specialists perform various roles within private and public health education programs. These programs equip, educate, empower and motivate individuals to happier and healthier living. They help different communities gain access to resources that may be needed to promote healthy lifestyles. The role of a health educated specialist is that they educate new mothers on techniques for breastfeeding, educate the public on smoking and the danger associated with tobacco use. They also work with schools in the community to help with menus and promote healthy eating among the students. Certified Health Education Specialist also

works with schools to promote health education teaching among secondary level education. CHES can be described as investigators, motivators, teachers and advocates. CHES takes on the roles of the communities and the well being of the community by assessing the health needs of the population, and developing policies to help individuals of the community with health conditions. They also define, produce plans for those programs for implementation while coordinating and monitoring progress of the plan they put into place. A certified health education specialist must take on 8 responsibilities. These 8 areas of responsibilities include assessment of needs and capacity, planning, implementation, evaluation and research, advocacy, communication, leadership and management and ethics and professionalism. To review and improve the health education competencies, sub competencies, and responsibilities the CUP model was introduced. The CUP model has 7 area responsibilities, 35 competences, and 163 sub competences. The CUP model or competencies update project discovered three new practices, putting these competences in three categories. These categories of study are entry level, advanced 1 and advanced 2. Entry Levels are for health educators who have received a bachelor's degree, master's degree and have less than 5 year of experience in the field. The advanced 1 level is similar to the entry level but for those who have 5 years or more of experience. Advanced 2 level is for those who have a doctorate degree with 5 years or more of experience.

Health education specialists, as in any other specialization, have a set of principles to follow to be sure their work is done honestly and with integrity. These principles are called code of ethics for health educators. The code of ethics consists of the responsibility to the public which includes the supporting principles of self-determination and freedom of choice for the

individual, next is the responsibility to the profession including the Exhibiting of professional behavior. The third code of ethics is the Responsibility to the employers including the accountability for professional activities and actions. The next code is the Responsibility in the delivery of health education consisting of respecting the rights, dignity, confidentiality, and worth of people. Next is the Responsibility in research and evaluation stating that the CHES must conduct themselves in accordance with federal and state laws, organizational and institutional policies and professional standards. The last code of ethics is the responsibility and professional preparation which states the CHES should provide quality education that benefits the professional in the public

To become a certified health education specialist you must also understand the importance of and functions of health education and how it factors into public health. Public health has 3 core functions. Health education and health promotion summarize these core functions are assessment, policy development and assurance. The first policy is assessment. Assessment is the act of collecting health information and analyzing this information to make it available to the community. Next is policy development. This function includes assisting in the development of public health policies. The third function is assurance. This function ensures that services are provided to communities to help achieve goals. Along with public health functions are public health goals. Along with the core functions are health goals. According to the “Health education

and Health promotion” there are 6 public health goals. These goals are prevention of epidemics and the spread of disease, protection against environmental hazards, injury prevention, promoting and encouraging healthy behavior, response to disasters and in some cases assisting in community recovery, and assure the quality and accessibility of health services. Knowing how these functions and goals work collectively will better help a Certified Health Education Specialist understand their job functions and do their job proficiently.

## References:

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