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Chair Care Formative Discussion Report

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CHAIR CARE FORMATIVE DISCUSSION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHALLENGES

- **Vaccine Hesitancy:** Some clients may hesitate due to misinformation, side effect fears, or distrust in the healthcare system.
- **Political Beliefs:** Vaccinations have become politicized, necessitating respectful discussions.
- **Limited Interaction Time:** Busy salon environments leave little time for in-depth conversations.
- **Franchise or Salon Policies:** Restrictions may limit vaccine discussions and materials.
- **Addressing Misinformation:** Overcoming false information is challenging.
- **Privacy and Boundaries:** Balancing vaccine promotion with client privacy is crucial.
- **Client Diversity:** Tailoring strategies for diverse beliefs and cultures is essential.
- **Lack of Healthcare Training:** Stylists may feel uncomfortable discussing some medical topics.
- **Emotional Toll:** Emotional conversations require empathy and tact.
- **Dealing with Resistance:** Some clients may resist discussing vaccines.
- **Time and Resource Constraints for Stylists:** Implementation requires additional time and training.

INTERVENTION MATERIALS RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Provide Accurate and Updated Information:** Collaborate with healthcare experts for reliable vaccine information in easy-to-understand language.
- **Create a "Cheat Sheet" for Stylists:** Develop and update a concise reference guide for stylists.
- **Design Easy-to-Read Materials for Clients:** Create informative materials for clients with essential vaccine information for low-literacy with graphics.
- **Utilize QR Codes:** Include QR codes in promotional materials for easy access to reputable sources for more information.
- **Provide Chair Care Clings and Buttons:** Supply visual cues to promote vaccine conversations.
- **Focus on Salons with Decision-making Autonomy:** Prioritize salons with the freedom to engage in vaccine promotion.

APPROACH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STYLISTS

- **Let Clients Take the Lead:** Encourage clients to initiate vaccine discussions by using clings, buttons or stickers that say, "Ask me about COVID-19 and hair loss", "Ask me about Chair Care".
- **Be Casual and Empathetic:** Approach conversations with empathy and in a casual manner.
- **Share Personal Stories:** Empower stylists to share their own experiences with COVID19.
- **Use Client Stories:** Utilize anonymized client stories to illustrate the importance of vaccination.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish Ongoing Data Collection: Implement a data collection system to track vaccine conversations and outcomes.

- **Conduct Midpoint and Endpoint Discussions:** Organize discussion groups with stylists for valuable insights.
- **Collect Stylist Feedback:** Gather feedback weekly through electronic surveys to measure process.
- **Collect Client Feedback:** Gather feedback through surveys to measure impact. Method of surveying was not clear although incentives were important.
- **Monitor Social Media Engagement:** Evaluate the effectiveness of social media vaccine posts by stylists.
- **Recognize and Incentivize Participation:** Acknowledge and reward participating stylists.

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the findings of a formative discussion conducted on July 18, 2023, as part of the Chair Care project's pilot intervention. The project aims to explore the feasibility of hairstylists acting as vaccine messengers within their communities. The discussion group was conducted by the University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) in collaboration with Presbyterian Community Health and Presbyterian Communications.

DISCUSSION GROUP

The diverse group was composed of 10 hairstylists, with representation of 7 females and 3 males, ranging in age from 25 to 64 years. The participants were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including 7 Hispanic, 1 Native American, 1 white non-Hispanic, and 2 Black/African American individuals. Notably, there were Spanish speakers present, some with limited English proficiency, and translation services were provided to ensure effective communication and inclusion.

METHODS

The discussion followed a semi-structured interview guide exploring the implementation of the Chair Care project, focusing on engagement strategies, the role of stylists as vaccine messengers, potential implementation barriers, and the impact of COVID-19 on stylists and clients. A facilitator from the Prevention Research Center ensured equal participation and encouraged open dialogue.

Thematic analysis of the audio-recorded, transcribed session identified recurring themes and patterns, preserving participants' original expressions and viewpoints for a comprehensive understanding.

PURPOSE

This summary highlights the role, importance, and potential of hairstylists as vaccine messengers. It explores barriers to implementing the Chair Care project, offering valuable insights from the formative discussion. Additionally, the report presents potential communication strategies to effectively engage hairstylists in promoting vaccination within their communities, along with feedback on promotional materials.

The insights from this formative discussion will serve to advise the Chair Care pilot intervention.

RESULTS

THE ROLE, IMPORTANCE, AND POTENTIAL OF STYLISTS AS VACCINE MESSENGERS

Hairstylists play a vital role in their clients' lives beyond just providing beauty services. During the formative discussion, participants emphasized the significance of their position as trusted individuals who often hear from clients about their health. They acknowledged the responsibility of encouraging clients to seek professional medical advice when they notice any concerning symptoms, despite not being medical professionals themselves.

Observing and diagnosing early signs: Hairstylists are in a unique position to observe clients' physical appearance up close, including their scalp, hair, and skin. Additionally, they see clients frequently (usually every 4-12 weeks) and therefore have the opportunity to observe changes. Stylists felt they could identify early signs of health issues such as thyroid problems, hair loss, and skin conditions. This early detection can prompt them to encourage clients to consult medical professionals, potentially leading to more timely interventions and better health outcomes.

Building trusting relationships: Clients often share personal stories and struggles with their hairstylists, leading to strong bonds and a sense of trust. This trust can extend beyond beauty topics and may

"I think it's important that we do it because I think we hear more from people than probably even some of their doctors."

encompass health-related matters. Stylists can leverage this rapport to provide valuable vaccine information and address clients' concerns about vaccination. Stylists want to make sure they have accurate information and appreciated access to a physician specializing in vaccines.

Advocating for health and wellness: Stylists expressed the belief that they are advocates for their clients' well-being. By recognizing changes in their clients' hair, nails, or skin, stylists can prompt discussions about potential underlying health issues. Encouraging clients to seek appropriate medical attention shows their commitment to promoting overall health and not just external appearance.

Impacting older clients and isolated individuals: For older clients or those who live alone and lack regular social interactions, the hairstylist may be one of the few people they regularly interact with. This underscores the potential impact of stylists as vaccine messengers, as they can be a reliable source of information for clients who may not have easy access to other healthcare resources.

Addressing political hurdles: While the hairstylists' role as trusted confidants can facilitate open discussions about vaccination, it also presents challenges. Stylists need to be sensitive to political beliefs and personal views that their clients may hold about vaccination. Providing vaccine information in a non-partisan manner, focusing on evidence-based facts, and ensuring respectful conversations will be crucial to overcoming these hurdles.

STYLISTS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH COVID-19 AND THE VACCINE

This section delves into the personal experiences of hairstylists with COVID-19 and vaccination. Their reflections highlight the challenges of vaccine acceptance, the impact on Native communities, encounters with resistance from family members, the lingering effects of COVID-19, and their eagerness to return to normalcy. Some stylists felt they could use their personal stories to motivate clients while others described a need to keep their professional and personal lives separate.

Internal struggles: balancing personal beliefs and professional obligations: One stylist shared the internal conflict she faced when deciding whether to get vaccinated. Juggling her personal beliefs with her responsibilities presented a challenging situation, highlighting the complexities surrounding vaccine acceptance.

Family and vaccination: Some stylists expressed frustration with family members refusing to get vaccinated despite witnessing severe consequences of COVID-19. They emphasized the importance of vaccination in preventing severe illness and death, and expressed concern for the unvaccinated individuals close to them.

Lingering effects of COVID-19: Participants shared stories of friends and family members suffering from long COVID, with some experiencing fatal outcomes. These personal tragedies reinforced the urgency of promoting vaccination to prevent further loss and suffering in their communities.

Eager for normalcy: Some stylists eagerly embraced vaccination, with one humorously admitting to getting vaccinated to enjoy vacations without the worry of infection. This perspective showcased the desire to return to a sense of normalcy and enjoy life without fear of the virus.

Stylists as trusted advocates: The stylists' firsthand experiences with COVID-19 and the vaccine underscored the gravity of the situation and the critical role they can play as vaccine messengers. Although some stylists were hesitant to divulge too much of their personal stories, they felt their relationships and empathetic connections with clients position them as trusted sources of information and advocates for vaccination.

Impact on the Native American community: One stylist discussed the unique challenges brought about by lockdowns in tribal communities. The process of transitioning between work in town and their Tribal community added emotional burden, putting significant strain on their well-being.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

This section explores community perceptions and positions that may influence Chair Care implementation.

Historical issues and generational perceptions: Participants acknowledged that community perceptions are influenced by historical issues of trust and distrust of institutions. For example, participants talked about distrust of the healthcare system including healthcare services provided by the Indian Health Service. Negative experiences historically likely impact the community's trust in new initiatives, including COVID-19 vaccination. These negative experiences and distrust need to be considered when implementing Chair Care.

Political influences and family dynamics:

Participants also highlighted the political nature of conversations surrounding vaccination and health. In some communities, discussions about the COVID-19 vaccine are politicized, leading to divided opinions among families and community members. This political context can create challenges for hairstylists working in areas where clients have strong views against vaccination. Negotiating such political influences while providing a safe and welcoming environment for clients will be essential to overcoming this barrier.

"I have heard that in the chair. Like, 'I wanted to [get vaccinated] but, you know, my spouse doesn't believe in it'...I think they just need a safe place..."

Concerns and hesitations about vaccination: Participants brought up a range of concerns and hesitations that they had heard about the COVID-19 vaccine. These included beliefs that vaccines may have negative effects, such as sterilization. They had also heard people question the necessity of getting vaccinated. The duration of COVID-19, and the continuous updates regarding booster doses, raised uncertainty for some participants. These concerns and hesitations indicate the importance of addressing vaccine-related information gaps and providing evidence-based explanations to build trust and encourage vaccination, particularly for booster doses and new variants.

Communication strategies and overcoming misinformation: Participants also discussed the challenges of addressing misinformation among clients. Effective communication strategies were deemed essential to tackle misconceptions and hesitations. Hairstylists emphasized the significance of sharing their own vaccination experiences with clients and providing factual information to foster understanding and encourage vaccination. Overcoming misinformation requires meeting people where they are with personalized and empathetic communication that addresses individual concerns.

So, when you talk about the young people, they think it's a plot from the government like oh, the government just wants to get in our bodies and give us this vaccine to sterilize us so we don't have children and stuff. So, that's the conversation I get with a lot of young people so they don't want to do it. But the older people, they've already gone to their doctor. They've had the vaccines and stuff done. So, they're like, "Oh, no. I've got mine done."

REVIEW OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS BY GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

During the formative discussion, graphic designers presented a series of promotional materials aimed at empowering hairstylists as vaccine messengers. The participants provided valuable feedback and insights on the designs, colors, and messaging, which will be instrumental in refining the promotional materials for the pilot project.

Colors preferences and typography: Participants liked the bright orange color used in one of the designs, noting its catchiness and visual appeal. They suggested exploring the use of red color as well, which can be attention-grabbing like a stop sign. The group acknowledged the importance of colors that pop to attract attention and promote engagement with the materials. They unanimously agreed on avoiding the use of blue in the promotional materials due to its association with salon products like Barbicide. The curvy typography was also unanimously favored over blocky styles, as it appeared more inviting and approachable.

Bridging beauty and health: The group discussed the significance of combining beauty and health elements in the promotional materials. While they appreciated the "Where Beauty Meets Health" tagline,

they recommended visually incorporating health symbols like a vaccine needle or the health sign with a snake (Caduceus) to further emphasize the link between beauty and health. This addition could better represent the project's objective of integrating vaccine messaging with hairstyling services.

Communicating long-term effects: The designers presented materials with hair loss as a focus, which resonated well with the participants. They recognized that clients often seek advice on hair-related concerns, making it an opportune moment to discuss vaccine-related information. Additionally, the group noted the potential to include messages about other long-term effects of COVID-19 on nails and skin, strengthening the association between health and beauty in the promotional materials.

Involvement of other salon staff: One participant expressed an interest in involving the entire salon staff in the project, suggesting custom shirts for a designated COVID-19 vaccine/Chair Care day. The designers acknowledged this idea and indicated the possibility of tailoring promotional materials for broader salon participation, creating a unified approach to delivering vaccine messaging. Presbyterian Community Health indicated that there might not be sufficient funding to do this.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

This section explores the barriers and challenges to implementation as discussed by the participants.

Limited client interaction and engagement: One notable observation from the formative discussion is the limited interaction between the hairstylist and clients during some appointments. The hairdressers mentioned that in franchise salons, customers typically receive quick haircuts and leave without engaging in significant conversation. This observation highlights a potential barrier to implementation, as it may be challenging to introduce new services or products without ample opportunity for direct communication with clients in these settings.

Challenges of implementing visual prompts: During the formative discussion, the idea of using visuals in the salon to prompt clients to ask questions about specific topics, such as Chair Care or hair loss and COVID-19, was proposed. The visuals are meant to engage clients without directly initiating conversations. However, concerns were raised that franchise salons might not allow such promotional strategies. Franchise restrictions could limit the creativity and effectiveness of implementation efforts, or affect the types of salons/stylists that participate or that are recruited.

Political hurdles in communication: A participant pointed out that hairstylists often hear about various personal experiences from clients who may not disclose everything fully. The participants believed that hairstylists tend to listen without taking a specific political stance. This suggests that some clients may hold back information due to concerns about judgment or ideological differences, potentially impeding effective communication. Addressing this barrier requires fostering an environment of trust and non-judgmental communication to encourage clients to share their preferences and concerns openly.

Impact of COVID's duration: Another significant barrier discussed is the impact of COVID-19's prolonged presence on clients' decision-making. Some participants expressed concerns that the extended duration of the pandemic may lead clients to feel vaccinating is unnecessary or that it is too late to get the vaccine. This perceived barrier calls for targeted communication efforts to address client hesitations, emphasize the relevance and benefits of vaccinations despite the duration of the pandemic, and adapt to changing consumer needs.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND BOUNDARIES FOR EFFECTIVE CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

The formative discussion provided valuable insights into the communication strategies and boundaries employed by hairstylists during their interactions with clients. Understanding these preferences can inform Chair Care's approach in empowering hairstylists as vaccine messengers.

Client-centric approach: Hairstylists highlighted the importance of adopting a client-centric approach during their communication with clients. They emphasized the significance of maintaining boundaries and avoiding excessive self-disclosure. Instead, the focus should be on the clients' needs and concerns, ensuring that the conversation revolves around their hair care and health requirements. By adhering to a client-centric approach, hairstylists can create a comfortable and engaging environment, establishing trust and rapport with their clients.

Authenticity and attraction of like-minded clients: Participants observed that hairstylists naturally attract clients with whom they resonate on a personal level, regardless of other factors. This emphasizes the importance of authenticity in communication. By being genuine, hairstylists can foster connections with clients who share similar values and preferences, facilitating open and meaningful discussions about various topics, including vaccines. Leveraging this attraction towards like-minded clients can enhance the impact of vaccine messaging as it aligns with their existing rapport and trust. However, if clients are like-minded and have already been vaccinated, this will reduce the opportunity to influence behavior.

Creating safe spaces for open communication: Participants acknowledged that clients often perceive hairstylists as relatable and approachable individuals, creating a safe space for clients to express their concerns and ask questions. This observation highlights the significance of hairstylists establishing a non-judgmental and empathetic environment. Encouraging open communication about vaccines within this safe space can help address vaccine hesitancy and provide clients with accurate and reliable information.

Addressing concerns casually and normally: Hairstylists emphasized a preference for addressing client concerns as a regular part of conversation, making clients feel at ease when discussing vaccines. This approach can prove effective in dispelling myths and misconceptions around vaccines, and downplays politics.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING VACCINATION AT HAIR SALONS

In this section, we will discuss the implementation strategies for promoting vaccination awareness at hair salons based on suggestions from participants in the formative discussion. These strategies aim to create an informed and supportive environment, empowering stylists to engage in constructive conversations with clients about COVID-19 vaccines.

TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT

Comprehensive training: Conduct training sessions for all stylists, salon owners, and staff members to equip them with accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines. Ensure they are knowledgeable about vaccine benefits, safety, efficacy, and common misconceptions.

Facilitate open dialogue: Encourage an open dialogue among team members to share personal experiences and knowledge gained from their vaccination journeys. This helps build a supportive and well-informed community within the salon.

Age-appropriate communication: Emphasize the importance of tailoring communication to the preferences and needs of different age groups. Provide guidelines on how to communicate effectively with clients of various generations.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES, CREATING SAFE AND WELCOMING SPACES

Visual indicators: Create visual indicators like clings for mirrors at stylist stations and buttons for aprons to signal that they are approachable for conversations about COVID-19 vaccines. This promotes a safe and welcoming space for clients to ask questions and allows clients to take the lead. If T-shirts are used, they recommend having messages about Chair Care on the front and the Presbyterian name and or logo on the sleeve. They felt the logo on the back wouldn't be seen by clients and that people would wonder if they worked for Presbyterian if the Presbyterian logo was large on the front.

Respectful approach: Advocate for a gentle and informative approach that educates clients without being pushy or aggressive. Respect their decisions while providing them with the necessary information.

Offer variety: Provide a range of materials, including pamphlets and QR codes, to cater to different generational preferences. This ensures that clients can access information in a format they are comfortable with.

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA AND FEEDBACK

Engaging social media posts: Provide stylists with pre-made, informative, and engaging content about COVID-19 vaccines that they can post on their social media platforms. Prioritize accuracy and respect.

EVALUATION

Weekly feedback loop: Establish a weekly text communication for stylists to share the number of vaccine-related conversations they've had and any feedback received. Send the text on Fridays with a final reminder on Mondays to submit feedback by Monday night. This system for collecting real-time, updates provides crucial support and helps assess the campaign's effectiveness promptly.

Mid-point and end-point discussion groups: Bring hairstylists together for discussions mid-way through the initiative and at the end of the initiative. This will provide more in-depth information and discussion of the program, its challenges and successes, and recommendations for moving forward.

Feedback from clients: Employ subtle methods like anonymous surveys or post-appointment texts to gather feedback from clients about their vaccination status or intent to vaccinate. Participants did not think that clients would complete surveys in the salon with the stylists there. Participants recommended offering incentives like discounts on hair services to clients who show proof of vaccination. This was thought to encourage vaccine uptake.

CONCLUSION

This report summarizes a formative discussion session on the Chair Care pilot intervention, exploring hairstylists as vaccine messengers. The diverse group provided perspectives on the stylists' role in observing health issues, building trust, and advocating for wellness. Overcoming challenges such as political hurdles and client concerns, effective communication strategies were highlighted, including client-centric approaches and safe spaces for dialogue. Collaboration with healthcare providers and incentives for vaccinated clients enhance the campaign's impact. The gathered insights offer a foundational framework for empowering hairstylists to promote vaccination and combat hesitancy, contributing to broader public health efforts.