

Example Role-play Script

Practical Approaches for Discussing COVID-19 Vaccines with Clients

Moderator: *[Name] & [Name] are going to role-play a conversation between a case manager & client. We will pause a few times during the role play to review the techniques [Case manager] is using as they speak with [Name] the client.*

Case manager: Thank you for meeting with me today. I know we don't normally talk about health together, but all case managers at our office are taking a few minutes to check in with clients to see if they have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Client:

- I do have questions about the vaccine. I've heard fewer people are getting COVID in the US and that COVID is over. Do my children and I still need to get the COVID vaccine? I'm not really sure we need it.

Case Manager:

- That is a really great question, I'm so glad you asked. There is a lot of information going around, and it's important to look at accurate, trusted sources in order to make the best decision for you and your family. It's a personal choice. I did choose to get the vaccine for myself and my children who are eligible.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself, your children and your other loved ones against COVID-19 and variants. Although the number of COVID-19 cases may be going down in some areas, people who are not vaccinated do not have the same protections from COVID-19 as people who are vaccinated. Almost all COVID-19 related hospitalizations and deaths in the U.S. are among unvaccinated people.
- In some areas, COVID-19 cases are rising because not enough people have gotten the vaccine. What I know is that when enough people get the vaccine, we will be able to see our family and friends again, and the things we do will be more normal. Again, it is important that everyone make the decision that is best for themselves, their family and community after knowing all the facts.
- I can share some fact-based resources that might help you and your family make a decision.

(Moderator) In answering these questions you'll see that [Case manager] did not say "you should get your child vaccinated". Instead, they demonstrated their role as a trusted source to point people to reputable resources. They shared their personal experience and encourage [Client] to make the decision that is best for [Client] and their family.

Client:

- But I heard that most kids get only mild symptoms if they get COVID. And, the vaccine is too new for us to know what the long-term side effects are.

Case Manager:

- I can tell that you care a lot about your family by wanting to gather all the information you can about the vaccine's safety before making a decision. What have you heard about the long-term side effects?

Client:

- I saw a video on Facebook by a doctor explaining that the vaccine has harmful side effects, like affecting kids' fertility such as puberty. I'm worried it's not safe for my children.

Case Manager:

- There is a lot of information about the COVID-19 vaccine – some factual and some not true. The most important thing is for you to go to sources that are reliable and that use studied, scientific facts. Sometimes it is also helpful to talk to someone you trust and whom you know has accurate information – like a doctor, nurse or a community health worker.
- Sadly, even though many children experience only mild symptoms, some children will become very ill and die from COVID-19. Therefore, the vaccine is much safer than becoming infected.
- Unvaccinated children can also infect vulnerable people around them such as those with serious health conditions or the elderly. Vaccinating children helps keep themselves and vulnerable family members safe.

(Moderator) It can be tricky countering misinformation without repeating the misinformation. However, studies have shown that repeating misinformation, even if trying to say that it's not true, actually increases the chance that a person will remember the myth. [Case manager] asks an open ended question, doesn't repeat the myths and also doesn't tell [Client] they're wrong.

(Moderator) We've also heard from communities that more emphasis needs to be placed on how, although rare, children can become very sick from COVID-19 and even die. By understanding this, parents can make a more informed choice in weighing the risk of vaccination vs the risk of COVID-19.

However, you know your clients best and bringing up the possible death of children may be triggering for certain clients or you may not feel comfortable. It's okay for you to tweak your messaging in a way that still communicates the facts while taking into account your and your clients' needs.

Client:

- What side effects do children experience from the vaccine?

Case Manager:

- While some children may experience no side effects at all after vaccination, it is also normal to experience mild side effects. Side effects show that your child's body is building protection against the virus. Possible side effects include pain, redness, and swelling of the area where your child received the shot.
- Your child may experience tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea. Like adults, these side effects typically last only 1 to 3 days and are due to your child's body building an immune response to the virus, NOT from the vaccine or virus itself.

Client:

- But what about the cases of heart issues in children? How can I take that risk for my children?

Case Manager:

- You're not alone in trying to weigh the decision of getting your children vaccinated. I hear that you want to make the best, safest decision for your children.
- In April 2021, the CDC was made aware of increased cases of heart inflammation in adolescents and young adults after getting the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. These reports are rare, and most have gone away quickly. The CDC is investigating and there is close monitoring to identify any new cases.
- The CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone 12 years and up as the risks of getting sick and dying from COVID-19 are far greater.

Client:

- But how does CDC know it's safe?

Case Manager:

- Good question. They've done careful studies which show that COVID-19 vaccines are safe for children in the approved age groups and have met the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) high scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing.

- In fact, over 328 million doses of COVID vaccines have been administered in the United States to people 12 years and older of different ethnicities, ages and health conditions (data from July 2, 2021).
- Beyond the careful studies, the vaccines continue to be monitored for safety, more than any vaccine in U.S. history.

(Moderator) [Case manager] lets [Client] know that having questions or concerns is normal and practices empathetic listening especially with their fear about side effects and safety. They also repeat themselves which is okay – they are reinforcing key messaging in slightly different ways.

Client:

- Earlier you mentioned variants. What is the Delta variant I keep hearing about & will the vaccine protect me & my children against these variants?

Case Manager:

- That's another important question we've heard from many clients. I am by no means an expert so I've consulted the latest information from reputable sources such as our local health department.
- COVID-19 is caused by a virus, and viruses are always changing. When a big change happens, scientists call it a variant. Some variants disappear and never cause harm, while others can make a virus easier to spread, harder to treat, and/or more deadly. When variants occur, scientists and experts monitor them closely.
- The Delta variant is one of the COVID-19 variants that scientists are monitoring. This variant was first discovered in December 2020 and has now spread to more than 90 countries. It was first found in the U.S. in March 2021 and is already the most common variant in the United States.
- Experts are worried about the Delta variant for two main reasons. First, the Delta variant spreads much more easily between people. In fact, right now it is severely affecting US communities who are not vaccinated. Second, there is also concern that the Delta variant might cause more severe illness.
- Right now, scientists think that the COVID-19 vaccines in the United States are effective against the Delta variant and other variants that have been discovered.
- Getting our entire communities vaccinated is one way to prevent variants like Delta from developing and spreading.

(Moderator) [Case manager] is building up trust and staying within their knowledge base. They acknowledge that they are not an expert and explain that they've heard this information from reputable sources.

Client:

- Hmm I'm just not sure. School is starting soon. Is the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for school? Will my child be able to attend school and after-school activities if they are not fully vaccinated?

Case Manager:

- I'm not certain. We will need to contact your child's school to learn about their expectations for student vaccinations. If you need assistance with this please let me know.
- What I do know is that unvaccinated children and teens are at risk for contracting COVID-19 in schools and other social settings including after-school activities, summer camps, parties, and social events. Having your child vaccinated as soon as they are eligible will help prevent infections and spread of COVID-19, making it easier to safely reopen schools.

Client:

- And will my children still have to wear masks at school? I thought the CDC had said we don't need masks anymore.

Case Manager:

- That is a question many people are asking right now and I can see how it is confusing. The CDC experts update their guidance based on the current COVID situation. They are now recommending that due to increased cases and the Delta variant, everyone, including those who are vaccinated, should wear masks indoors in public settings if they live in a place with high COVID rates.
- Even in areas with lower COVID cases, people may choose to wear masks to be extra cautious. Masks are also required while traveling and in healthcare settings.
- As for schools, experts have advised that schools should require all children to wear masks. It's tough for schools to track who has been vaccinated and who hasn't. Also, younger kids under 12 still aren't eligible for the vaccine and those who are immunocompromised may never be able to get the vaccine. By having all kids wear masks it's helping to protect everyone, keeping everyone safe so that our children can go back to in-person school, which is so important for us parents and for our kids' health.

(Moderator) [Case manager] normalizes [Client]'s questions about masks and through their non-judgmental response is building trust where [Client] can feel safe bringing these concerns to [Case manager]. [Case manager] is up to date with the latest guidance which can be difficult to track. If

your office hasn't already, you may want to establish a person or multiple people who help track and share what the latest COVID guidance is nationally and locally.

Client:

- You've given me a lot to think about. If I do decide to get my children vaccinated, which vaccine should I choose?

Case Manager:

- All COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are safe, effective, and for severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 and variants like Delta. Therefore, when considering being vaccinated as an adult, the vaccine recommended is the one that is available to you (whether it is Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson). Children and teens under 18 are eligible for the Pfizer vaccine only at this time.
- Did that address all of your questions? I'm happy to follow up with the relevant resources in your language in any of the topics we talked about.

Client:

- Thank you I would like some resources please.

(Moderator) Here [Case manager] is facilitating [Client]'s self-learning and autonomous decision making by offering to share reputable resources in [Client]'s preferred language. [Case manager] also shares some facts while staying within their knowledge base as a non-clinician.