

# ADDRESSING COVID-19 VACCINE HESITANCY AMONG ETHNOCULTURAL MINORITY COMMUNITIES

FIVE LESSONS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

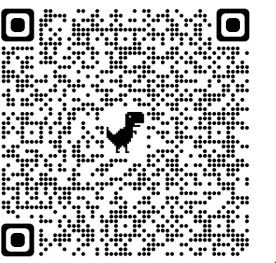
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## MORE INFO



### Identify and address the roots of systemic mistrust.

Philosophers such as Dr. Maya Goldenberg have proposed that vaccine hesitancy does not simply stem from a lack of education; rather, it comes from a lack of **trust**. Historically marginalized communities often have **lower trust in governments and healthcare systems due to histories of racism and abuse**. For example, in the United States, Black Americans are significantly more likely to be hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, a phenomenon which has been largely attributed to the lasting legacy of the Tuskegee trials and other unethical and abusive health studies. In Canada, similar hesitations have been observed among Black and Indigenous populations.

1

### Emphasize empathy, non-judgement, and free dialogue in conversations with vaccine-hesitant individuals.

Psychological factors such as **cultural cognition** of risk and **confirmation bias** may explain why simply "throwing facts at the problem" is not enough to change the minds of many vaccine-hesitant people. To overcome these factors, healthcare providers should have candid and understanding conversations with those who are vaccine-hesitant, rather than simply labelling them as "anti-vax".

Through the **PromovaC project**, Dr. Arnaud Gagneur of the University of Sherbrooke has utilized **motivational interviewing** to address the fears of vaccine-hesitant new mothers and increase vaccine coverage among newborns in Quebec.

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### Prioritize transparent and culturally-sensitive outreach to marginalized populations.

Prioritizing historically marginalized communities in public health interventions such as vaccine rollouts is an important first step to **building trust between these populations and healthcare systems**. In order to be effective, there needs to be transparency and effective collaboration between community groups and healthcare providers.

2

### Combat the spread of vaccine misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a proliferation of misinformation over social media and traditional media. Recent studies have shown that individuals from ethnocultural minority communities are more **susceptible to misinformation and conspiracy theories**, which can affect people's views of the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

3

### Support community-based vaccine outreach and education initiatives.

Community-based organizations are uniquely valuable in persuading community members to be vaccinated because they are **sensitive to the various cultural and religious factors** that influence the decision whether to be vaccinated. Additionally, from a psychological standpoint, seeing other community members support the vaccine likely helps to **reduce the impacts of cultural cognition of risk**. Finally, resources that are distributed by these groups will likely be **more accessible** to community members.

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Upstream solutions ..... Downstream solutions