

Tackling Vaccine Hesitancy

What can nurses do?

Create a dialogue.

Each discussion provides another opportunity to create a dialogue and potentially plant the seeds that may facilitate future decision making. Immunization is a personal health decision, and nurses can provide clear, evidence-based information about the vaccine to support informed decision making in a therapeutic environment.

Use multi-modal forms of communication.

Some people like to learn by reading books or articles, while others may prefer auditory learning or even visual representations. Try using different modes when communicating with different people. This could include: speaking clearly and articulately, sharing images, charts or diagrams, referring to peer-reviewed articles that others can read for themselves, and more.

Normalize it.

Speak frequently, openly and honestly about vaccine safety and effectiveness. Do not guilt others but let them know about the increased risks without vaccination. Be consistent with your messaging and make vaccination the norm.

Understand your audience.

Talking to another health care provider may not be the same as speaking to different clients and patients. Tailor your conversation to meet the needs of the person with whom you're speaking.

Don't focus on absolutes.

There is no need to have an either/or conversation. Instead, speak thoughtfully and listen openly to keep the discussion going. Ensure that your approach does not push the other person to become defensive, which adds another barrier to constructive action.

Understand the trusted role that nurses play in the health care system.

Nurses consistently rank as one of the most trusted professions in the world. This is because nurses know how to take complex information and distill it into what makes sense for most people. Nursing is based on evidence and science, and when combined with a person centred care approach, there is a huge opportunity to provide clarity. When clarity and facts on immunization are presented by those in trusted positions, uptake increases.

