



# Meet Them Where They Are:

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

There is no one-size fits all solution when you're providing person-centered care for diabetes prevention. Take note...



# The Art and Science of RETENTION

There is no single solution when it comes to engaging and retaining participants in diabetes prevention and care. This is especially true for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Lifestyle Change Program. [↗](#)

## SMALL STEPS. BIG COMMITMENT. THE ART OF RETENTION.

While the focus of PreventT2 [↗](#) is taking small steps to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes, it requires a big commitment from program participants:

- ◆ 3-4 months: 1 hour a week, once a week
- ◆ 5-12 months: Bi-weekly or monthly 1 hour sessions
- ◆ Weekly Food Logs
- ◆ Activity Logs
- ◆ Weekly Weigh-Ins
- ◆ A1C Checks
- ◆ Approximately 24 hours over the course of a year

## IT ALL COMES BACK TO PERSON-CENTERED DIABETES CARE

Whether they're meeting in-person at a community health center, or online through a video conference app, it adds up. Participants must schedule around life, navigating real-world challenges to eating healthy, being active, and managing stress. Retention is closely connected to participants' health outcomes, and this is why it matters.

There is no shortage of webinars [↗](#), workshops [↗](#), or web-based resources on retention strategies. From program scheduling to participant navigation, social determinants of health assessments, to culturally connected curricula, retention requires an integrated approach using multiple strategies. But each of these strategies ultimately comes back to providing person-centered care for diabetes prevention.

## CREATIVE. INSPIRING. HUMAN.

We sat down with three amazing lifestyle coaches with creative and inspiring insights to help you boost enrollment, engagement, and retention for your diabetes prevention program. These are real accounts of what it takes to keep your participants going when they seem lost, defeated, or disengaged. We hope these ideas keep you going to build a successful and sustainable diabetes prevention program.

## RETENTION IS KEY [↗](#)

Enrollment, engagement, and retention are necessary for a successful lifestyle change program. One doesn't work without the other. Here are some creative ideas from the field on how to build trust, invest in your local community, and develop partnerships to ensure participants stay the course.

## Enrollment: Stay Connected

"It's not just about knowledge and experience; participants need to feel connected. They need to know you care, and they need to be ready for the journey. It's our job to build trust and stay the course with them." – Amanda Austin, ARcare

### READINESS

Create a readiness assessment to address barriers to program completion

- ◆ Discuss commitment and provide solutions for roadblocks [↗](#)
- ◆ Be clear and upfront about the time commitment and challenges

### SUPPORT

Create support that is unique to the individual

- ◆ Use plain language to reduce language barriers and increase engagement without talking down to program participants [↗](#)
- ◆ Provide solutions for transportation challenges

## Engagement: Build A Community

"Patients need to know there is no shame or judgement. That they have a community around them and that you are there to provide every resource they need to be successful." – Otila Garcia, Gateway Community Health Center

### FLEXIBILITY

Listen to the needs of the participant and work with them to create a flexible action plan

- ◆ Adjust the plan to work within the unique circumstances of each individual participant
- ◆ Create the program around participants, so they have control and the autonomy to be flexible throughout their commitment

### RESOURCES

Create resources and tools that are specific to your demographic [↗](#)

- ◆ Listen and be connected to your cohort; create educational pieces [↗](#) that are geared to their needs
- ◆ Offer classes in community spaces or locations that are central to the participants (allow the group to decide what works best for all)

## Retention: Make It Personal

"You must make it personal. Patients need to know that you genuinely care. When we see someone struggling, or having difficulty coming to class, we reach out to them and find a solution that fits their needs. Even the way we communicate is catered to their liking—phone calls, texts, or in-person." – Yuliana Reyes, Director of Health, Latino Community Development Agency

### AUTHENTICITY

Make your efforts personable and authentic

- ◆ Participants need to feel like more than just a number. Stay connected with them throughout their journey and be a sounding board. Communicate authentically
- ◆ Building trust and a comfortable environment where participants want to go and engage is key

### BELONGING

Drive retention by creating a place where people feel they belong

- ◆ Each community is unique. Allow the cohort to evolve and grow. If you see a participant struggling to get to class, make every effort to find a way for them to participate (remotely, via-phone)
- ◆ Have fun! You have the freedom to create something that is unique to your community, so have fun and explore things that are "outside the box"

## All Heart

# OTILA GARCIA

Program Coordinator  
Gateway Community Health Center in Laredo, Texas

### ABOUT GATEWAY

Gateway Community Health Center, Inc. is a federally-qualified health center. GCHC has been a local leader in establishing and providing excellence in healthcare for underserved population members of Webb County, Texas.

**Mission:** To provide quality healthcare for everyone.

**Note:** To increase retention of their participants, Gateway uses experienced lifestyle coaches that are from the community and flexible scheduling that allows for one-on-one make-up sessions by phone.

### CHALLENGES

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Regional Language Barriers/Nuances

97% of our residents are Hispanic. They come from Mexico, Honduras, Central America—each population is unique and the language nuances are different from region to region. A lot of our demographic do not have documents, they are afraid and can be stifled by language barriers and a lack of education.

### SOLUTIONS

We constantly adapt and ensure the educational tools we have are in the right language. Our instructors are all bilingual and multicultural.

- ◆ We create our educational pieces to fit the language needs of our participants. Each tool we create comes from listening and fulfilling a need.
- ◆ We ensure that every participant is treated like an individual and there is no communication barrier. We educate each individual and meet them where they are.

### NOTE OF ADVICE FOR RETENTION

Always have strong communication with participants. We call a day before to remind them about the group. We are in constant communication. We send reminders and ask them how they would like us to communicate with them. Make them feel special and treat them with respect and dignity.

## The Impact Of Community

# YULIANA REYES

Director of Health  
Latino Community Development Agency

### ABOUT LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Latino Community Development Agency is a behavioral health agency that is family-centered and community-driven. LCDA is the leading community service provider of a wide range of programs offered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

**Mission:** Working to enhance the quality of life of the Latino Community through education, leadership, services, and advocacy.

**Note:** Yuliana's team noticed participants were struggling to get to their location, so the team decided to start offering classes in community spaces where they live. To increase retention, Yuliana's team looked at everyone to find out why they couldn't make it to a specific class. The team member then connected individually with each person to support their unique needs.

### CHALLENGES

- ◆ Communication/Language
- ◆ Transportation

We work directly with the Latino community in Oklahoma City. Most are low income, uninsured, Spanish speakers. Language and transportation are big issues.

### SOLUTIONS

Providing coaches and classes that are all Spanish-speaking and creating classes in the community where our participants live and work.

- ◆ All DPP classes are in Spanish and all coaches are bilingual.
- ◆ We move the site to where our participants live, learn, work, play and worship: churches, community centers, fitness groups, and schools.

“Retention is about truly caring. It's about helping an individual through all challenges; emotional, physical, and circumstantial.”

### NOTE OF ADVICE FOR RETENTION

Be more personable. Participants are more involved and show up when they don't feel like a number. We reach out to our participants via text messages, and some require a little more time and information to make lifestyle changes. We listen to them and provide feedback and assistance depending on what they are needing.



Ready to Serve  
**AMANDA  
AUSTIN**

Director of Chronic Care Management  
ARcare in rural Arkansas

**ABOUT ARCARE**

ARcare is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) with discounted rates, so all can receive the care they need. With board-certified family care providers, community health centers, and the very latest in medical technology, ARcare partners with patients from rearing to retirement.

**Mission:** Ensure patients are able to benefit from affordable, routine medical care.

**Note:** Amanda works closely with physicians and other healthcare providers to increase awareness and benefits of the Diabetes Prevention Program. ARcare also has an established referral system, so when a provider identifies an eligible patient, they can send the referral to Amanda who directs that patient to a lifestyle coach.

**CHALLENGES**

- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Engagement

We are in an extremely rural location. It's difficult for people to gather and stay engaged when they must drive a great distance.

**SOLUTIONS**

We create a comfortable routine for participants and make sure we check in weekly to see if anything in their life has changed and if we need to adjust their routine.

- ◆ Once you establish a routine, stick to it.
- ◆ We started meeting people where they were going, or hanging out at churches, after Zumba class, at the library. Take the program to them.

**NOTE OF ADVICE FOR ENROLLMENT**

Put yourself out there! In the local paper. Create an article about diabetes, what it is and how to prevent it. Put your literature in waiting rooms. Get referrals from physicians. Talk to everyone where anyone might be. Educators, lifestyle coaches, providers, churches—put yourself out there.

Uniquely **You.**  
**INNATELY  
HUMAN.**

Every playbook is unique and there are many factors and audibles that present challenges along the way. The Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists has a wealth of resources to help you enroll, engage, and retain participants in your CDC-recognized lifestyle change program.

The most important factor is you! The more you can connect, communicate, and meet your participants right where they are in life, the more successful the outcome will be. The numbers, data, resources, calculations, and statistics will never fully be able to account for the twists and turns a participant will face throughout their commitment. Stay positive and know that the work you are doing has a resounding effect on the community you serve and a life-changing impact on the participants in your program.

Keep going...

**La Libertad esta  
en ser duenos de  
nuestra vida.**

**Freedom consists  
of owning your  
own life.**

**“I’ve been doing this for 26 years. I love what I do. I help people. It’s gratifying to see a patient get better. To see them happy and well. When I see them smiling and living a good life, it makes it worth it. Every single moment I have with them matters. My time with each of them is precious.”**

Otila Garcia,  
Gateway Community Health Center

## **A GREATER CALLING**

A successful program cannot be articulated with numbers alone. People are complex and ever-changing. Understand what your participants are facing and get to know them on a personal level. Know the community you’re in. Meet people where they are and stay connected, because life happens, and it will. Building an authentic relationship is key to seeing your participants succeed!

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