

# Career Spotlight



CDC NERD Academy



## Health Communication Specialist

A health communication specialist creates communication strategies, messages, and products to educate the public, news media, and other audience segments on health issues. During an outbreak response, they develop messages and visuals that communicate culturally relevant, timely and actionable information.



Meet Harper,  
a health communication specialist

### Who do they work with?

Health communication specialists often work with epidemiologists, scientists, policy makers, and other public health experts to translate scientific health information. They work with graphic designers, usability experts, and web developers to create easy-to-understand information. They engage audience influencers, local, state, and federal partners for input and help sharing information through traditional channels (e.g., newspapers, TV) and digital channels (e.g., social media) to best reach those affected.

### Where do they work?

Health communication specialists working in public health may work at government agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, and hospitals. They also work with news media outlets, representatives of the electronic and print media, and web and social media developers.

### What skills do they use?

Health communication specialists must be able to communicate clearly and succinctly and translate complex scientific concepts into easy-to-follow information and recommendations. They use skills in project management and must be willing to work in diverse environments and collaborate with different experts. They must also strive for **cultural competency** (e.g., understanding how a person's background can affect their health and health behaviors).

### What qualifications do they need?

Health communication specialists often have a bachelor's or master's degree in communications, journalism, public relations, or a related communication field.

