

From Insight to Action: Practice Resources Referenced by Peer Ambassadors

Tools and Trainings to Support Peer Learning and Applied Public Health Practice

This resource post accompanies the blog [“The Power of Peer Ambassadors: Turning Shared Experience into Stronger Public Health Practice.”](#) While the blog highlights how Peer Ambassadors in the first cohort of the Flexible Local Epidemiology for X-factor Emerging Diseases (FLEXED) Learning Community learned from one another through shared experiences, reflection, and dialogue, this companion post focuses on the practical tools and materials that emerged from that work.

During the first FLEXED cohort, participants engaged in facilitated peer learning sessions, applied training, and structured reflection focused on strengthening local epidemiology practice for emerging infectious disease response. Through this process, two types of resources became central to the community’s work:

1. materials developed as part of the FLEXED program to support shared learning and applied practice, and
2. external tools and trainings that Peer Ambassadors identified as especially useful in their day-to-day work.

Together, these resources reflect how the first FLEXED cohort moved from shared insight into action, combining structured program materials with recommended tools to strengthen epidemiology, surveillance, communication, and preparedness across local public health settings.

Resources Developed Through the FLEXED Learning Community

The following materials were developed as part of the first FLEXED cohort to support peer learning, applied practice, and sustained capacity building. These resources were informed by facilitated discussions, Peer Ambassador input, and real-world application across participating local health departments.

Peer Learning and Knowledge-Sharing Infrastructure

Peer Ambassadors emphasized that tools are most effective when paired with structured peer engagement and shared learning environments.

FLEXED Learning Community (Virtual Community Platform)

<https://virtualcommunities.naccho.org/communities/communityhome?CommunityKey=9968278d-6bdd-4b06-8587-01963a48ab54>

A NACCHO-hosted online space for FLEXED participants and interested LHD professionals to engage in peer discussion, share resources, and continue learning beyond structured sessions.

FLEXED Curated Training List

A library of epidemiology and applied practice trainings developed during the first FLEXED cohort to support on-going skill-building and shared learning.

FLEXED Facilitator Guide

A structured 90-minute workshop guide developed through FLEXED that supports epidemiology teams in identifying, assessing, and strengthening communication partnerships essential for surveillance and outbreak response.

FLEXED Learning Path

A practical guide outlining key webinars, peer learning sessions, tools, and resources from the first FLEXED cohort. The Learning Path supports continued learning and serves as an orientation tool for staff newly engaging with FLEXED,

Resources Recommended by Peer Ambassadors

In addition to FLEXED-developed materials, Peer Ambassadors consistently referenced external tools and trainings that supported their applied public health practice. These resources were not created through FLEXED, but were shared by participants based on direct experience using them in local health department settings.

The sections below highlight resources Peer Ambassadors identified as especially valuable for strengthening communication, surveillance, epidemiology practice, outbreak response, and preparedness.

Communication and Plain-Language Practice

Clear, accessible communication emerged as a core competency across Peer Ambassador reflections. The following resources were referenced as especially useful for strengthening both public-facing and internal communication.

CDC Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Training

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/training.asp>

Foundational training focused on communicating clearly, accurately, and credibly during emergencies and high-pressure situations.

CDC Clear Communication Index

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex>

A research-based tool to assess whether public communication materials are understandable, actionable, and audience-centered.

CDC Everyday Words for Public Health Communication

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/everydaywords.html>

A reference guide for replacing technical language with plain, commonly understood language.

Plain Language Readability Calculator (Good Calculators)

<https://goodcalculators.com/reading-level-calculator>

A simple tool to assess reading level and improve the accessibility of written materials.

Surveillance and Epidemiology Practice

Peer Ambassadors highlighted the importance of understanding surveillance systems, data interpretation, and evaluation frameworks to support timely and effective decision-making.

CDC Public Health Surveillance Training

<https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/training.html>

Training resources covering core surveillance concepts, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and communication.

Introduction to Syndromic Surveillance (CDC NSSP)

<https://www.cdc.gov/nssp/overview.html>

An overview of syndromic surveillance methods, use cases, and applications in state and local health departments.

ESSENCE Training and User Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/nssp/essence.html>

Guidance on using the ESSENCE platform, including querying, dashboard development, visualization, and interpretation.

Framework for Evaluating Public Health Surveillance Systems (CDC MMWR)

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5013a1.htm>

A standardized framework for assessing surveillance systems based on attributes such as timeliness, data quality, sensitivity, and usefulness.

Outbreak Response and Preparedness

Peer Ambassadors referenced outbreak response and preparedness resources to support investigation, coordination, and continuous improvement.

CDC Outbreak Investigation and Response Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/outbreaks/index.html>

Guidance on outbreak detection, investigation steps, coordination, and response considerations.

CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

<https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/index.htm>

Resources to support preparedness planning, emergency response coordination, and after-action evaluation.

How to Use These Resources

These resources can be used individually or intentionally integrated into peer learning structures, including:

- Facilitated discussion sessions
- Case reviews and after-action reflections
- Onboarding and mentorship for new staff
- Cross-jurisdiction knowledge exchanges
- FLEXED Year 2 learning activities

Peer Ambassadors consistently emphasized that the greatest value came not from using tools in isolation, but from sharing how resources were applied, adapted, and refined in real-world public health settings.