

# CHART



## Introduction to Adult Learning Principles

Adult learning principles acknowledge that children and adults learn differently. This resource can help you create breast health education to better connect with your audience.

The deeper your understanding of adult learning principles, the more adept you will be at delivering your message. These principles are based on the idea that people learn best when they feel there is mutual trust, respect and cooperation between themselves and the educators. Keep in mind that the Hispanic/Latino norms of respect and trust are also highly relevant to the adult educational setting.

Below is an overview of Knowles' six adult learning principles<sup>1</sup> with guidance on applying these to breast health and breast cancer education in Hispanic/Latino communities.

Principle	Description	Application
1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed.	Life experiences play a major role in adults' motivation to learn. Adults who know a breast cancer survivor or someone who has had a benign (non-cancerous) change in their breast may be motivated to learn about their own risk factors and what they can do to reduce risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite people to share their experience with breast cancer or their reasons for attending the discussion or presentation. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have you been affected by breast cancer in any way?</li><li>• Does anyone in the audience know a breast cancer survivor?</li><li>• Do you want to share your experience with us?</li></ul></li></ul> <p>This will help you to understand what is motivating the listener and what kind of information she or he may need. It can also help to develop connections among participants and with the educator.</p>

Principle	Description	Application
<p>2. Adults bring prior knowledge and experiences to the learning environment.</p>	<p>In addition to culture, information about and prior experiences with breast cancer can affect the way people approach the subject of breast health. For instance, a learner who has cared for a loved one with breast cancer may be able to easily understand her own risk of breast cancer. However, misperceptions and misinformation can lead her to ignore warning signs if they do not match her prior experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the audience about personal knowledge and previous experience related to breast cancer. This will help you to determine their level of knowledge. This will give you the chance to replace myths and incorrect information with accurate information, and to build rapport with the audience.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Adults are goal-oriented.</p>	<p>Generally, adults come to the learning experience with set goals in mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the start of a discussion or presentation ask participants what they would like to learn about breast cancer.</li> <li>• If you are comfortable with it, let participants know that they can ask questions at any time during the presentation.</li> <li>• Try to answer their questions or concerns in order to meet those learning goals.</li> </ul>

Principle	Description	Application
<p>4. Adult learning is relevancy oriented.</p>	<p>Adult learners need to have a firm understanding of why the information being taught is relevant to them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When meeting anyone for the first time, share that breast cancer is a problem in the community and that many people do not know about it.</li> <li>• You can modify your talking points based on the audience, personal knowledge and experience of the audience.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1073 569 1456 892" style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p><a href="#"><u>Sample Talking Points for One-to-One Conversations</u></a></p> </div>
<p>5. Adults are practical.</p>	<p>Adults tend to learn best by practicing what they have learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give your audience opportunities to practice what they are learning from you. For example, instead of simply describing questions that a person might ask a health care provider, you can engage in role play activities that allow participants to ask each other questions. See <a href="#"><u>Questions to Ask the Doctor</u></a> for more information.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1073 1436 1456 1734" style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p><a href="#"><u>Questions to Ask the Doctor</u></a></p> </div>

Principle	Description	Application
<p>6. Adult learners need to feel respected.</p>	<p>Adults do not learn well when they feel degraded, inexperienced or unknowledgeable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always treat people as equals with relevant experiences and knowledge.</li> <li>• Allow listeners and audience members to express themselves without fear of criticism.</li> <li>• Foster respect and connection with people by introducing yourself and any personal experience or reasons that you are passionate about your work.</li> <li>• Ask participants to introduce themselves and share their knowledge and experiences about breast cancer.</li> </ul>

---

1 Knowles M. The adult learner: A neglected species. Houston, TX: Gulf; 1984.