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University of Washington
Center for Public Health Nutrition

But What Do You REALLY Think?
LESSONS FROM THE LUNCHROOM TRENCHES

8th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference
June 30, 2015
SESSION OBJECTIVE

• Attendees will be able to align program interventions with goals and values of key staff to help assure program success.

• Focus is on school cafeteria managers – but will weave in other perspectives
FUNDING SUPPORT

- Grant 70549 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Healthy Eating Research program
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Community Transformation Grant (CTG) Program, which is made available through the Prevention and Public Health Fund of the Affordable Care Act (Grant # 1H75DP004595-01; PIs: Saelens and Krieger)
- The CDC Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program through funding from Public Health - Seattle & King County and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- The contents of this presentation are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or other funders and partners.
DATA SOURCES – 3 PROJECTS
2011 THROUGH 2015

• 40 Cafeteria Manager Interviews
  • Training evaluation results
  • 1 focus group
  • Many field notes!
WHAT WE LEARNED...

Will talk about main themes in these areas:

• How staff think about their job
  • Their role(s) and priorities
  • Concerns and barriers to getting their job done
• Involvement in planning and decision-making
  • Do they feel included in key decisions?
• Information and training
  • Do they report feeling well-informed?
  • How adequate is their training?
• Personal knowledge, values and beliefs
  • How do these things influence how they approach their job?
PRIORITIES

• Nutrition Administrators
  • Increase meal participation
  • Control costs
  • Comply with Guidelines – “healthy food”

• Cafeteria Managers
  • Increase meal participation/keep meal numbers up
  • Serve what kids like!
  • Serve attractive and tasty food
  • Get students through lines quickly!
CONCERNS AND BARRIERS

• **Nutrition Administrators**
  - Hard to fill some school-level positions
  - Wear many hats! Limited time to provide adequate support, bring staff together, involve in planning
  - Unions/labor issues
  - Lack of support for/integration of nutrition services within the education system
  - Lack of understanding of complexity of nutrition program by “outsiders”
  - Funding for special projects—not always a good match for resources and priorities of individual schools
  - Perceived resistance of staff to change
“TYPICAL” CAFETERIA MANAGER
CONCERNS AND BARRIERS

• Cafeteria Managers
  • Limited information from administration – feel “out of the loop” sometimes isolated
  • Exclusion from key decisions around implementation of standards/interventions – goals are not always “part of their job”
  • They see a lot of programs and ideas start and stop – hard to get excited about new things sometimes
  • Low pay-limited hours and time
  • Feeling that they are having to do more with less
  • Feeling unappreciated at times – their job is difficult!
  • Care deeply-want to change things but “don’t have the power”
  • Not always proud of the food they are serving – some feel “blamed” for the childhood obesity crisis...
INFLUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS

• Cafeteria Managers
  • Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs can influence:
    • How food is prepared and displayed
    • How they communicate about the food to students
    • What food they put out on the line
    • Self-efficacy – whether or not they feel empowered to make a change
APPLYING THE LESSONS LEARNED TO BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS PROJECT

• **Funding**: Community Transformation Grant-CDC via Public Health Seattle & King County

• **Project Period**: December 2012 – September 2014

• **Setting**: 1 Urban School District, 6 secondary schools

• **Project goal**: Increase the number of students making healthier choices in the cafeteria

  • A student-led marketing campaign will support the behavioral economic strategies in the cafeteria
  
  • Schools will use behavioral economic approaches to attain 3 or more of the objectives encouraging healthier choices
HOW WE “ROLLED IT ALL UP”

- Consulted cafeteria managers and involve in planning as much as possible
- Customized the intervention to the needs and priorities of the schools
- Provided baseline and ongoing training
- Built in peer-support
- Communicated a LOT using multiple methods
- Recognized them for the hard job they do…from Nutrition Administration but especially their own School Administrators
# Needs-Based Work Plans

## Kent School District CTG Behavioral Economics Workplan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Objectives (minimum of 3)</th>
<th>Behavioral Economic Strategies (minimum of 2 strategies per objective)</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase student selection of:</td>
<td>Products/tool/equipment</td>
<td>Additional Staff</td>
<td>Estimated Cost</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Fruit</td>
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<td>2. Vegetables</td>
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<td>3. White Milk</td>
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<td>5. Reimbursable Meals</td>
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## Kent School District Behavioral Economics Project

**INCREASE FRUIT OBJECTIVE - Strategy Options**

- Increase pre-cut fruit
- Increase fruit availability by placing in multiple locations
- Increase visibility of fruit – easily see fruit
- Increase access to fruit by removing barriers
- Change location(s) of fruit on line for easier student access
- Add fruit to a la carte line
- Consider student height and reach and keep fruit at eye level
- Fruit is placed close to check out register
- Improve lighting (small lamp or accent lighting) to promote fruit selection
- Place fruit in attractive fruit bowl, basket or stand (out of stain pans)
- If fruit is served to students focus on visibility and display
- Promote fruit selection using photographs (priming)
- Add attractive, colorful signs to encourage fruit selection
- Staff uses verbal prompts - “Why not grab a fruit with your meal?”
- Staff educate students - “Fruit comes with your meal”
- Fruit on a la carte line is least expensive dessert item

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4 Basic Behavioral Economics Principles:
- Manage Portion Sizes
- Increase Consciveness
- Improve Visibility
- Enhance Taste Expectations
- Utilize Suggestive Selling
- Set Smart Pricing Strategies
# PROGRESS TRACKING

## Behavioral Economics Strategies Project Implementation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Key Steps</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Select purchase and deliver containers to schools</td>
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<td>Place new containers in line(s) additional locations</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Identify new fruit and vegetable items to purchase (pre-cut, carrots with tops, farm-to-school items, etc.) note: this will be coordinated through central kitchen/mkt admin. All schools will benefit</td>
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<td>New fruit/veg items begin appearing on menu lunch line (in a la carte line, all schools to benefit)</td>
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<td>Identify fruit of the month and promote on menus and signage (all schools) note: this will be coordinated through central kitchen/mkt adm. All schools will benefit</td>
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<td>Strategicize ways to display vegetables in more appealing ways, implement strategies</td>
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<td>Strategic creative names for vegetables and entrees begin using them on menus/materials note: this will be a project wide menu contest with all intervention schools participating</td>
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<td>Identify, purchase and deliver new equipment (including tables, coolers, slicers, oven, menu boards and stands)</td>
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<td>Develop and implement deli-style salad bar</td>
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<td>Begin to make pre-made sandwiches</td>
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<td>Configure new line layout(s)</td>
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<td>Train line staff about verbal prompt, begin prompting students</td>
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<td>Develop plan for taste tests and begin conducting them (use students as possible), include survey with taste tests note: this will be coordinated through central kitchen/mkt/adm. All schools will benefit</td>
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<td>Determine which entrees will be &quot;targeted&quot; and communicate to BDA</td>
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<td>Develop grab and go menu options, begin offering new items (a la carte, lunch line)</td>
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<td>Display white milk to fill up half of milk coolers/containers</td>
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*Notes:*
- **F**: Fruits
- **V**: Vegetables
- **M**: Milk
- **E**: Entree
- **R**: Reimbursable Meals

*Project Implementation Timeline: 11/15/2013*
SUPPORT

Peer on TA Team

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS PILOT PROJECT SHARING CALL JANUARY 16, 2014

Featuring Kent School District Foodservice Managers:

Laurie Fitzsimmons – Meeker MS
Nora Cockrill – Meridian MS
Robin Sandner – Mill Creek MS
Pam Ingentila – Kentlake HS
Terri Ruder – Kent Phoenix Academy
Teresa Allen – Kent Meridian HS

CTG Kent School District Behavioral Economics Pilot Project
Technical Assistance: MayMills Communications
Month: SEPTEMBER 2015

Date Mode of Communication School Notes
9/12 Terri Ruder E-mail Madison MS
Talking to Alien about ordering bowls and beakers. Alien is going to check on new milk container.
5/4/15 November

9/13 Nora Cockrill E-mail South Kitsap HS
She needs better milk containers, more bowls for dispensing items.

9/13 Robin Sanders E-mail Meeker MS
Talking to Tom on how we could get her more space.

9/13 Pam Ingentila E-mail Madison MS
She is working on getting them more containers.

9/13 Laurie Fitzsimmons E-mail South Kitsap HS
She is working on getting her more refrigeration space and also working on getting her more cabinets.
RECOGNITION

Superintendent!
IT PAYS OFF...

• The pilot project reached 6,158 students in the six schools. To measure the success of the program, evaluators looked at both the amount of healthy foods that students took and the amount of waste on their plates when they were done (to see what kids actually ate).
The program not only affected how the students ate. Staff reported that the pilot helped them in their job and increased enthusiasm for school meals among staff and students. District staff plan on continuing this work and expanding some of the strategies throughout the district.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS....

• “I feel it has kind of added a little excitement for all of use, because the kids are excited.”
• “I’ve been doing this for a while. It was kind of something that I think we all needed here to kind of perk us up.”
• “Helpful to get pans and equipment (new toys)!”
• “Good to hear positive comments from kids because it’s not very often that we hear anything good. That was a boost for everybody.”
• “I have totally loved it. I feel like I’ve learned a lot. I really like the idea of helping these kids get healthy and eating better. It’s their lunch program, and I think it’s very important.”
THANK YOU!

- Contact Information

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