Looking Back and Moving Forward: SNEB Commitment to Embracing Racial Equity and Social Justice

As 2020 closes, Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) members will remember a year unlike any other. Friends, relatives, or colleagues may be

included in the sobering statistics of more than 219,000 lives lost to COVID-19.¹ We have faced significant disruptions in our personal, political, economic, social, and professional ways of thinking and being. From food justice, COVID-19 justice, racial justice, climate justice, to policing justice, this year has amplified inequities routinely experienced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

Nutrition professionals are well aware of food, health, and wealth disparities that affect our clients and communities. We know BIPOC have higher rates of food insecurity than non-Hispanic White people.^{2,3} Emergent COVID-19 data indicates food insecurity⁴ and morbidity and mortality are likewise disproportionately affecting BIPOC populations.^{5,6}

At this moment in history, nutrition professionals are uniquely poised to work towards racially equitable and just food systems by strategically reimagining a new normal.⁷ We know that the answers lie not only in addressing the immediate issue of household hunger and diet-related disease. Systemically addressing poverty through establishing living wages for all, and eliminating opportunity, health, and wealth disparities between genders and between non-Hispanic White people and BIPOC would structurally advance equity practices.^{8,9}

How will we leverage current momentum to explicitly address race and racism in our work? The SNEB leadership has recognized its role.¹⁰

In response to police injustice experienced by the BIPOC community, the SNEB Board issued a statement to end racism and challenge nutrition organizations and professionals to be part of the solution.¹⁰ “SNEB can play a critical role in exposing and addressing food injustices and racial disparities in the food system” by promoting empowering communities to change their local food systems, demand routine access to healthy food for all, and dismantle food-related discrimination in our institutions, at the local, state, tribal, and national level.¹¹

The SNEB board members committed to participate in a racial equity training series, modeled after the Food Solutions New England 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge.¹² Each spring, this Challenge provides open access to readings and resources that deeply examine racism and also identify strategies for dismantling racism in our food system. Individuals and organizations from across sectors and the country commit to “Learn, Reflect and Act” as they build skill and will for food system transformation. The Food Systems Educators Community of Practice (CoP), sponsored by Columbia University, Institute of Human Nutrition, is another option for food system educators to train ourselves and those we teach to address racism. A subgroup of the CoP recently published a paper calling for equity, especially racial equity, to be a standard competency in food system program content and practice.¹³

Racism and the related economic and health disparities are human-made conditions. The solutions are within our reach given the political will to structurally and systemically address them. As educators and practitioners, we shape present and future generations. This is the time; this is our charge.

“Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done.”
— Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

Joanne D. Burke, PhD, RD, LD
SNEB Steering Committee Member,
Division of Sustainable Food Systems;
Clinical Professor, Emerita, University of
New Hampshire, Durham, NH

REFERENCES

1. Johns Hopkins University & Medicine. Coronavirus resource center. 2020. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>. Accessed October 18, 2020.
2. Odoms-Young A, Bruce MA. Examining the impact of structural racism on food insecurity: implications for addressing racial/ethnic disparities. *Fam Community Health*. 2018;41(suppl 2):S3–S6.
3. Coleman-Jensen A, Rabbitt MP, Gregory CA, Singh A. *Household Food Security in the United States in 2019*. ERR-275. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service; 2020 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=99281>. Accessed October 16, 2020.
4. Bauer L, Broady K, Edelberg W, O'Donnell J. *Ten Facts about COVID-19 and the U.S. Economy*. The Hamilton Project. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution; 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-facts-about-covid-19-and-the-u-s-economy/>. Accessed September 17, 2020.
5. American Public Media (APM) Research Lab Staff. The color of coronavirus: COVID-19 deaths by race and ethnicity in the US. 2020. <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>. Accessed October 16, 2020.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategies for reducing health disparities. 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/>

- minorityhealth/strategies2016/index.html. Accessed October 15, 2020.
7. Common Ground Committee. The time is now: we stand in solidarity with the urgent work of healing racism. <https://commongroundcommittee.org/black-lives-matter/>. Accessed October 18, 2020.
 8. Williams D, Lawrence J, Davis B. Racism and Health: evidence and needed research. *Annu Rev Public Health*. 2019; 40:105–125.
 9. Hardy B, Logan T. *Racial Economic Inequality Amid the COVID-19 Crisis*. The Hamilton Project. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution; 2020. https://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/EA_HardyLogan_LO_8.12.pdf. Accessed October 14, 2020.
 10. Koch P. Forging the future of food and nutrition education. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2020;52:755–756.
 11. Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior. The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB): Statement on addressing racial injustice. 2020. <https://www.sneb.org/blog/2020/06/17/general/the-society-for-nutrition-education-and-behavior-sneb-statement-on-addressing-racial-injustice/>. Accessed October 18, 2020.
 12. Food Solutions New England. 21-day racial equity habit building challenge. 2020. <https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>. Accessed October 18, 2020.
 13. Valley W, Anderson M, Tichenor-Blackstone N, et al. Towards an equity competency model for sustainable food systems education program. *Elem Sci Anth*. 2020;8:33.

Call for Papers for JNEB's Social Determinants of Health Themed Issue

Submissions due by April 15, 2021

As JNEB content reflects the diverse interests in nutrition and physical activity related to public health, among other topics, this upcoming themed issue will address the social determinants of health (SDH) in relation to nutrition and physical activity. According to the World Health Organization, the SDH include economic concerns and issues, education, social and community contexts, health care, and the built environment. With this call for papers for a themed issue related to the SDH, manuscripts may be considered as Research Articles, Research Briefs, Reports, Perspectives, Systematic Reviews, Research Methods, and GEMs. Research articles may include an intervention or be cross-sectional. Examples of papers that would fall with this topic include

Determinants of Diet Quality in Pregnancy: Sociodemographic, Pregnancy-specific, and Food Environment Influences. Danielle M. Nash, Jason A. Gilliland, Susan E. Evers, Piotr Wilk, M. Karen Campbell. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2013;45:627–634.

Location of Food Stores Near Schools Does Not Predict the Weight Status of Maine High School Students. David E. Harris, Janet Whatley Blum, Matthew Bampton, Liam M. O'Brien, Christina M. Beaudoin, Michele Polacsek, Karen A. O'Rourke. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2011;43:274–278.

Reported Influences on Restaurant-Type Food Selection Decision Making in a Grocery Store Chain. Jessica Lynne Bachman, Danielle Arigo. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2018;50:555–563.

Chinese American Family Food Systems: Impact of Western Influences. Nan Lv, J. Lynne Brown. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2010;42:106–114.

Psychosocial Determinants of Food Purchasing and Preparation in American Indian Households. Joel Gittelsohn, Jean A. Anliker, Sangita Sharma, Amy E. Vastine, Benjamin Caballero, Becky Ethelbah. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2006;38:163–168.