Empower WIC Breastfeeding Experts: Use of Interactive Training Platform to Increase Staff Knowledge and Confidence in Breastfeeding Counseling

Valery Soto, MS, RD, CLC, Pascasie Adedze, PhD, MPH, Anne Bartholomew, MS, RD
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
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Program Description
US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) new WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum, was unveiled nationally via seven regionally located in-person trainings to WIC staff. As a skills-based train the trainer approach, the trainings provided numerous opportunities for hands-on practice, application and trainer tips. Attendees accessed the interactive training platform as trainers provided orientation to the platform’s visual design, including full-screen visuals, animations, videos, and other instructional components. This training empowers WIC staff to deliver effective breastfeeding counseling and education to participants.

Objective
To increase knowledge and confidence of WIC staff in Breastfeeding counseling and education through an interactive, visual breastfeeding curriculum platform.

Target Audience
WIC State Breastfeeding/Peer Counselor Coordinator, State Nutrition Coordinator, local agency breastfeeding coordinator and other local agency staff responsible for breastfeeding training of the WIC Designated Breastfeeding Experts.

Use of Theory or Research
Self-efficacy theory is guiding the training to strengthen WIC staff confidence to train the trainer, promote and support breastfeeding WIC participants. Research suggests interactive learning opportunities provided through face-to-face learning, computer-based learning, and website design contribute to enhanced learning and retention, as well as improved relationship building. Furthermore, presenters who provide meaningful, full-screen imagery while verbally discussing content enhance their ability to engage participants.

Evaluation Methods
Training attendees completed surveys at the conclusion of the training.

Results
In spring 2019, FNS trained 358 WIC Staff for a total of 140 hours of training. All attendees completed the survey, of which 63% identified the training approaches as excellent and 25% as good. Case studies and role playing were identified as most useful. Approximately 41% rated very confident in their ability to understand and train others on content, and 39% rated confident.

Conclusions
Findings from the trainings suggest training approach is effective; there is a need for interactive, visual curriculum platforms to both increase knowledge and trainer confidence. The training strengthens WIC breastfeeding program and nutrition services delivery to participants.

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