Centering Equity in Direct Education Curriculum Selection

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Objective

In response to a statewide effort to incorporate principles of equity and justice throughout all programming, Washington State SNAP-Ed Curriculum, Training, and Website team (CTW), in partnership with Leah’s Pantry, developed a curriculum rubric that incorporates participant lived experience, principles of health and racial equity, and trauma-informed education practices.

Use of Theory or Research

CTW conducted the following: a literature review on incorporation of equity principles in direct education, key informant interviews with SNAP-Ed implementers, and focus groups with the SNAP-Ed eligible audience. Qualitative research identified common themes around needs and desires for nutrition education.

Target Audience

The final rubric was created for use in two ways. First, a longer, more detailed version for CTW to assess curricula needs. Second, a pared down version for SNAP-Ed to assess curricula outcomes and activities. To accomplish one defined pillar activity, “Develop criteria for direct education curricula selection process to ensure alignment with indicators by FFY 2024,” CTW collaborated with Leah’s Pantry to create a rubric to evaluate direct education curricula on principles of health and racial equity and trauma-informed education principles. Previous trainings in WA have emphasized the importance of the intersection of direct education and PSE strategies to create equitable programming. A combined use of this rubric and additional anti-racism and equity trainings will help SNAP-Ed implementers provide inclusive programming that is most appropriate for their local communities.

Program Description

In 2021, Washington State SNAP-Ed developed an Equity and Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, a five-year outline of how SNAP-Ed will approach equity and anti-racism throughout Washington that includes pillars of influence and related outcomes and activities. To accomplish one defined pillar activity, “Develop criteria for direct education curricula selection process to ensure alignment with indicators by FFY 2024,” CTW collaborated with Leah’s Pantry to create a rubric to evaluate direct education curricula on principles of health and racial equity and trauma-informed education principles. Previous trainings in WA have emphasized the importance of the intersection of direct education and PSE strategies to create equitable programming. A combined use of this rubric and additional anti-racism and equity trainings will help SNAP-Ed implementers provide inclusive programming that is most appropriate for their local communities.

Focus groups highlighted which aspects of nutrition education are important for people in the classes.

"The educator was mainly teaching how to eat on a budget and others were chipping in and telling their stories. I was learning and I wanted to try those suggestions."

"My father tried to teach me how to cook rice and he would smash the rice to try and not waste the food. Being poor in the countryside, rice is very valuable, if we didn’t have rice to make then we didn’t eat. So, when I think about food, I think about survival."

Evaluation Methods

Formative evaluation was imperative, with focus groups and key informant interviews providing insight on statewide needs. This qualitative work informed what was most important to curriculum selection, thus guiding identification of both criteria and rating scale on the rubric. CTW continues to coordinate with the WA State SNAP-Ed Evaluation team to assess effectiveness as well as applicability of curricula selection to diverse audiences.

Results

Major themes from formative evaluation informed the language and criteria for the two versions of the rubric. Previous curriculum assessment tools were limited in scope, complexity, and flexibility. The new rubric emerged with the ability to assess curricula based on content, ecological factors, instructional design, physical activity, and facilitator experience. The Implementer version encourages consideration of connections to multi-level PSE approaches and to note modifications. An Explainer Guide aids users with definitions and examples.

Conclusions

Development of tools to assess curricula from multiple perspectives increase the quality of nutrition education in Washington and help to achieve WA SNAP-Ed’s commitment to equity, anti-racism, and justice.

Acknowledgements

This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—SNAP.

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