Virginia Cooperative Extension Health Educators’ Motivation for Teaching a Novel Farmers Market Orientation Lesson

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12/1/14
Outline

- Background
  - The Virginia Cooperative Extension Family Nutrition Program
  - Farmers Market Orientation Lesson
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion & Conclusions
- Next Steps
The Family Nutrition Program

Offered through Virginia Cooperative Extension. We offer the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) in Virginia.
The mission of FNP is to teach limited-resource families and youth to make healthier food choices and become better managers of available food resources for optimal health and growth.
The Food Security Project

- Designed to ensure all of our participants have equal access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food

- We do this through focusing on eliminating food deserts through supporting farmers markets’ outreach to SNAP families and teaching container gardening to youth
The Food Security Project

- We also educate families about their ability to use SNAP at farmers markets and the benefits of doing so
Research-based Farmers Market Orientation Lesson

- Connects three of the areas of Extension
  - Family and consumer sciences
  - Community viability
  - Agriculture and natural resources
- Focus group
- Market tour
- Educator survey
Keeping local food affordable:

Using your SNAP benefits at a farmers market
Lesson Addendum

- What is local food?
- Benefits of shopping at a farmers market
- How to navigate a farmers market
- How to use EBT card at a market
- Budgeting for a market
- Tips for adding in fresh vegetables to meals
- Differences between shopping at a farmers market and a supermarket- seasonality and place-based, physical layout, outdoor market, schedule and price
- SNAP benefits can be used to buy seedlings and starts
- Finding a farmers market through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website
Research Rationale

- Educator perception
  - Program effectiveness
  - Behavior change

- Para-professionals (PAs) represent the target population

(Dickin, Dollahite & Habicht, 2005; Harris, Wheeler & Kacmar, 2009; Dickin, Dollahite & Habicht, 2010).

(Warrix, 1998)
Research Purpose

1. Explore EFNEP and SNAP-Ed PAs’ perception of barriers and benefits for shopping at farmers markets
   a. Educators
   b. Their clients (SNAP eligible participants)

2. Strengths and challenges of connecting EFNEP and SNAP-Ed to farmers markets

3. Guide development of trainings and future curricular materials
Online Questionnaire

- An online SSL survey was administered to all EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Adult paraprofessionals in Virginia (n=54)
  - All responses were confidential
  - Implied, informed, voluntary consent was obtained from each participant
  - 52 Educators completed surveys (96.3%)
Online Questionnaire

- The questionnaire asked a total of 49 questions, requiring ~15-30 minutes
- The themes covered included:
  - Perceived Benefits
  - Perceived Barriers
    - Rated on a scale from 1-10 for themselves and clients
  - Relationship to health
  - Alternative agricultural practices (Pelletier et al., 2012)
- Face validity through reviews by expert researchers and practitioners
We will first be asking you questions about how you personally view farmers markets, then we will ask you about participants from your classes.

Farmers Markets Near Where You Work

How many farmers markets do you have in the town or city where your office is located (VCE unit office)?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

If at least one, how many accept EBT?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3
- All
- Don't know
PA Characteristics

- Female
- Mean age of the participants was 48.8 ± 11.9 years
- 7.6 ± 6.5 mean years' experience as PA
- A total of 57% of participants had at least some college education
PA Characteristics

- Mean daily servings
  - Fruits: 3.0
  - Vegetables: 3.4
- Reported health rating:
  - 36% good health
  - 58% very good to excellent health
  - 4% fair health
  - 2% poor health

- Meal preparation at home
  - 36% 3-4 d/wk
  - 63% 5-7 d/wk
- Cooking skills
  - Good (27%)
  - Very good (46%)
  - Excellent (23%)
What are the barriers that prevent YOU from shopping at a farmers market?

What are the barriers that prevent YOUR CLIENTS from shopping at a farmers market?
### Results: Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator</th>
<th>EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Client</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price of food</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>0.0010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of food choice or variety</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.0252*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People there</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.0029*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable atmosphere</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0.0023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of market</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>0.0358*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/convenience</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.0673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not liking to shop outside</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.0010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of food</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.1239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Food</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.1088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 52
What are the benefits for **YOU** for shopping at a farmers market?

What are the benefits for **YOUR CLIENTS** for shopping at a farmers market?
### Results: Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator</th>
<th>EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Client</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding specific foods or a special diet (gluten-free options for example)</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.1705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of food</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>0.7015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of food</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>0.0625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of food</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>0.8227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food choice</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>0.7434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wider variety of produce available</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>0.7397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the local economy</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing who grows your food</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>0.9999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social experience</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.8332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh air</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>0.9648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of unique foods</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.9919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 52
• Correlation between attitudes toward alternative agricultural practices and health-related factors?
  ◦ Daily servings of fruits and vegetables
  ◦ Self-perceived cooking skills
  ◦ Frequency of meal preparation at home
  ◦ Shopping at farmers markets
  ◦ Self-perceived health status
Discussion & Conclusion

- Benefits to shopping at farmers markets are perceived as similar for EFNEP and SNAP-Ed PAs and their clients
- Barriers to shopping at farmers markets are perceived as significantly higher for clients
Implications for Practice

- How are programs presented to PAs?
  - Way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption
  - Opportunity to support the local economy
- Educators must be given simple, feasible strategies to help their clientele overcome these barriers
- Identify other strategies for accessing local, fresh produce
Implications for Practice: How Can We Help our Educators?

• Educator training should provide information on:
  o Programs to supplement the costs of local markets
  o Forming relationships with market managers
  o Helping their clients overcome real and perceived barriers: convenience, transportation and cost
Strengths & Limitations

- **Strengths**
  - Perceptions across a state, both urban and rural
  - First known study

- **Limitations**
  - Information on clients is based on the perception and beliefs of the PAs
Next Steps

Market Manager Toolkit

- www.vfmma.org
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1. Dickin K, Dollahite J and Habicht J. Nutrition behavior change among EFNEP participants is higher at sites that are well managed and whose front-line nutrition educators value the program. J Nutr. 2005; 135(9)2199-2205.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material is funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP which provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your county or city Department of Social Services or to locate your county office call toll-free: 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays). By calling your local DSS office, you can get other useful information about services.

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