

Designing a Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE)- Focused Evaluation



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About Maryland FSNE

- Offers nutrition education programs to individuals and families who are eligible for, or receiving, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
 - Goals are to help participants make healthy food choices, develop food preparation skills, handle food safely, improve food shopping skills, and increase physical activity
- Education offered in person, but also via electronic methods in order to more comprehensively meet the needs of a diverse audience



Multilevel Interventions



Multilevel Interventions

- FSNE combines direct education with other strategies to encourage policy, systems and environmental changes
 - More effective at generating behavior change
 - Fresh Kids: increase in children's fruit and water consumption, decrease in sugary beverage consumption (Laurence, Peterken, & Burns, 2007)
 - In-school programming + Text2BHealthy: greater nutrition and physical activity behavioral changes



Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Interventions

- PSE interventions promote access to healthier environments through a greater availability of healthy dietary and physical activity options
 - Policy changes: written statements of organizational decisions, courses of action, etc.
 - Systems changes: unwritten, ongoing changes that result in new activities and impact a large proportion of the people served by that organization
 - Environmental changes: observable changes to the built/physical environment



PSE Interventions – FSNE Example

- FSNE multilevel interventions target individual and environmental-level changes
 - Direct youth education targets individual-level behavioral changes
 - Parent education targets the home environment through direct education, newsletters, parent engagement events, texting programs
 - Teacher trainings and resources target the school environment



FSNE Evaluation Methods

- Previous curriculum-specific evaluation tools targeted individual behavior changes
- In 2016, FSNE expanded its evaluation tools
 - Target SNAP-Ed participants with varying degrees of interaction with FSNE programming
 - Capture indicators of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE)-level changes outlined in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework



FSNE Evaluation Tools

- Pre/post surveys with educational recipients, collaborating partners, and community members assess behavioral changes and environmental changes
 - Ex. parent evaluation – assess behavior changes and changes within home environment
 - Ex. teacher evaluation – assess classroom/school environment and nutrition/physical activity policies
- FSNE developed a new tool to assess PSE changes
 - End of Year Reports assess:
 - Characteristics of FSNE interventions
 - PSE changes within sites
 - Partnerships, wellness councils, grants, or fiscal resources present at sites



Youth Outcomes

- Greater behavioral outcomes when youth programming is linked with other interventions (i.e. parent texting program)
 - Increased fruit/vegetable taste preferences
 - Increased fruit/vegetable self-efficacy
 - More new healthy foods tried



Parent Outcomes

- Parents at FSNE sites with multilevel interventions report significant improvements in:
 - Role modeling healthy eating (ex. eating fruits) and physical activity behaviors
 - Child physical activity behaviors
 - Talking about fruits/vegetables with their child



Teacher Outcomes

- Teachers at FSNE sites report significant increases in the frequency with which they:
 - Eat healthy foods/drink water in front of students
 - Talk about the importance of healthy eating and offer fruits/vegetables for snacks or tastings
 - Use healthy foods or physical activity as examples in lessons
 - Provide physical activity opportunities and use physical activity as rewards
 - Advocate for changes in the school to promote health/wellness for students



Classroom/Program Environment

- After engaging with FSNE interventions, teachers report significantly more frequent nutrition promotion within their schools, including:
 - Signs or displays in the school encouraging youth to make healthy food choices
 - Parents engaging in nutrition promotion within the school/program
 - The school using a vegetable garden for education and tastings



PSE Outcomes

- FSNE End of Year Reports completed for 216 collaborating sites
- Number of sites with new or improved changes to the nutrition/food environment:
 - N=86 sites with policy changes
 - N=132 sites with systems changes
 - N=74 sites with environmental changes
 - N=97 sites with new or increased promotional/marketing efforts for PSE changes



Discussion Questions

- Are there any ways to strengthen our parent evaluation approach?
- Do you have any suggestions for how to report the individual interventions that parents have received?
 - Challenges related to self-report and recall
- Are there any other tools that assess policy or environmental changes, besides self-report?



Questions?



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