

P145 (continued)

Objective: This program was designed to develop cooking skills among youth living in a rural food desert.

Use of Theory: Research suggests that obesity prevention programs based on Social Cognitive Theory may be effective to promote healthy weight status in school-age youth. SCT was integrated into a nutrition curriculum using improvised kitchen space to provide opportunities for observational learning and development of behavioral skills and self-efficacy.

Target Audience: This program was designed for high school students living in rural southeastern North Carolina. Teachers at the school were interviewed to identify greatest needs for their students, and a curriculum was planned for the entire 9th grade class.

Program Description: The curriculum was implemented in 4 sessions. Session 1 targeted food groups and nutrients, with practice opportunities to analyze food labels. Students used laptops in session 2 to find recipes for favorite meals, analyze the nutrition content using an online application, and modify recipes to meet nutrition requirements. In session 3, student teams traveled to a supermarket where each team had \$10 to purchase ingredients, and session 4 was devoted to preparing and tasting the modified recipes in an improvised kitchen.

Evaluation Methods: With IRB approval, the teaching team administered an anonymous follow-up survey to participants (n = 40). Each item (Likert scales) addressed a program objective. Each item began with the stem, "After participating in the nutrition sessions, I feel more confident to:" followed by 12 target behaviors, like "analyze nutrition information for any recipe."

Results: Of 40 participants, 78% reported increased confidence to perform at least 75% of the target behaviors.

Conclusions: Integration of SCT in a cooking curriculum could improve self-efficacy to perform cooking related skills. Higher self-efficacy may increase frequency of a behavior (Glanz, Rimer, and Viswanath, p. 163). Improvised kitchen space provides small teams with chances for observational learning, social support, and stress-free opportunities to develop mastery of skills.

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P146 California Youth Participatory Action Research Projects Illustrates the Need for Nutrition Staff Professional Development

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Background: Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is an innovative approach to engage youth (ages 12-18) in projects that address issues in their community. When implemented as part of a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) program, YPAR aims to empower youth to achieve policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes related to community health and nutrition. SNAP-Ed programming has traditionally focused on direct nutrition education, which may require substantially different professional skills than needed to implement YPAR projects.

Objective: This qualitative research project aimed to assess the impact of professional development and learning to support the shift from traditional nutrition education delivery to an approach that engages youth in creating PSE changes.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Pre- and post-project interviews were conducted with 6 SNAP-Ed staff members who implemented or attempted to implement YPAR projects in 4 California counties during the 2018-2019 school year. Questions assessed the impact of current technical assistance, professional learning opportunities and needs, and suggestions for improving future support.

Analysis: Members of the research team each individually analyzed a subset of the interview responses and reported emerging themes. The team consolidated reports and identified key findings for 3 outcome measures related to 1) Staff capacities for YPAR work aimed at PSE changes; 2) key topics; and 3) key processes/structures for additional professional learning support.

Results: The following themes emerged related to the outcome measures: 1) the importance of comprehensive knowledge and skills related to youth engagement and positive relationship skills to build support for YPAR; 2) the need for information on the history of YPAR; training around PSE change work, evaluation and reporting; and curricula for younger youth; and 3) the need for regular support from supervisors.

Conclusions: Staff articulated the capacities they gained, key learning topics and support received, and additional professional development support needed to conduct a YPAR project. Key themes were identified that can help inform practitioners interested in conducting YPAR projects, especially under the SNAP-Ed framework.

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