SNAP-Ed Evaluation In California: where we’ve been, where we are now, and where we are heading

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Opportunity for strengthening
Evaluation of SNAP-Ed

- PSEs and PA
- WRO Evaluation Framework
- EARS revision
- State strategic planning process
California SNAP-Ed Evaluation Subgroup
Goal: Evaluate SNAP-Ed to optimize program impact and inform future efforts

- Reach the right audiences
- With findings that:
  - Address audience needs
  - Are convincing & timely
Definitions

• Process evaluation
  – What were the interventions that actually happened

• Outcome/Impact
  – What changes in target population behaviors were made as a result of what happened

• Strength (or fidelity)
  – Type of strategy and how well implemented

• Reach
  – Who and how many participated or were exposed
Abbreviations

• Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs)

• State Implementing Agencies (SIAs)
Current Evaluation Methods

- Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS)
- Direct Education pre/post surveys
- Policy Systems and Environmental Change (PSE)
- Comprehensive evaluation (state-wide survey)
- Other SIA specific
Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS)

Answers these questions:

– Who and how many people did we reach?

– How did we reach them?

– How much did we spend?
Direct education pre/post surveys

Answers the question:

– To what extent did participants in nutrition education change behaviors such as
  • intake of targeted foods and beverages
  • physical activity
  • food resource management
Direct education, cont’d

Challenges:

– Wide variety of curricula used
– Wide variety of instruments used
– Short term impact
– Not linked to PSEs
– Control groups
PSE reporting form (CDPH)

Questions addressed:

– What are LIAs doing with regard to PSEs?
  • Which sites
  • Which PSEs
  • Assessments conducted

– Who and how many people are being reached
  • Challenging
PSEs, cont’d

Structured pre/post environmental assessments

– Assessment of environment and practices
– Formative purposes and as a measure of change
– Measure strength

Examples:

– Smarter lunchrooms self-assessment scorecard (UC CalFresh)
– CX3 (CDPH)
Comprehensive Evaluation (CDPH)

- Survey of SNAP-Ed eligible adults and children in select counties

- *Answers the question:*
  - Is higher SNAP-Ed reach associated with improvements in target behaviors in select CA counties?
Other current methods

- Focus groups with participants (Catholic Charities)
- Interviews, monthly calls, site visits with LIA staff (Catholic Charities)
- In-depth interviews with LIAs (CDPH)
- Media survey (CDPH)
- Local evaluations (by LIAs and local evaluators)
Some current gaps in CA SNAP-Ed evaluation

- Strength
- Cumulative *reach* over time
- Impact (attribution, long-term, PSEs)
- Cumulative *impact* over time
- What works, what doesn’t, what combinations work best
- Sustainability
- Generalizability of findings
- Aggregation of findings
What audiences do we need to reach?

What information do they need that evaluation can provide?
Small group activity

• What would you like to know? (Evaluation questions you want answered)

• What would you want others (USDA, CA, the public, researchers, other partners, etc.) to know about your work and SNAP-Ed across the state?

• Limit to info that evaluation could provide

• Can cover evaluation questions regarding:
  – effectiveness,
  – approaches that work,
  – what is being done,
  – needs and barriers,
  – etc.
Charge of the state-wide evaluation workgroup

- Develop state-wide objectives
- Indicators that tie into these objectives
- Evaluation methods and instruments
  - State-level
  - Menu of options for LIAs
- Create an integrated state-wide data collection system
Theory of change

- Essential first step in identifying evaluation questions and indicators of progress
Process

- Theory of change
- Objectives
- Indicators
- Methods
Theory of change (logic model)

• Illustrates the logic that links interventions to desired outcomes

• Based on research and logic

• Links can be tested
SNAP-Ed in California

What is our ultimate goal?

Ultimate Outcomes

Quality of Life

Healthcare Costs

Health Outcomes

Obesity & Other Chronic Diseases

Food Security

CDSS
California Department of Social Services

CDPH
California Department of Public Health

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
CalFresh Nutrition Education

Catholic Charities of California, Inc.
SNAP-Ed in California

What has to happen for chronic disease and food security to be reduced?

Behavioral Outcomes

- Fruit & Vegetable Consumption
- Added Sugar Consumption
- Dietary quality of meals & snacks
- Food Resource Management
- Physical Activity
What has to happened to get the desired behavior changes?

Physical & Social Environment Outcomes

- Access to Fruits & Vegetables
- Access to sugar sweetened foods & beverages
- Access to healthy meals & snacks
- Access to physical activity
- Skills & Attitudes Re: Healthy Eating, PA, Resource Management
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Approaches

- Direct & Indirect Education
- Policy, Systems & Environment Change
- Mass Media & Communications
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Settings

SHOP
LEARN
EAT
LIVE
WORK
PLAY
Impact factors: essential qualities of an effective intervention

Impact Factors

- Quality
- Scalability
- Reach
- Sustainability
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Support conditions/activities

Partnerships
Training
Community Environment & Engagement
Local Champions
Funding
Theory of Change Model: implications for program planning

- Ultimate Outcomes
  - Quality of Life
  - Healthcare Costs
- Health Outcomes
  - Obesity & Other Chronic Diseases
  - Food Security
- Behavioral Outcomes
  - Fruit & Vegetable Consumption
  - Added Sugar Consumption
  - Dietary quality of meals & snacks
  - Food Resource Management
  - Physical Activity
- Social Norms Change
  - Access to Fruits & Vegetables
  - Access to sugar sweetened foods & beverages
  - Access to healthy meals & snacks
  - Access to physical activity
  - Skills & Attitudes Re: Healthy Eating, PA, Resource Management
- Physical & Social Environment Outcomes
- Impact Factors
  - Quality
  - Scalability
  - Reach
  - Sustainability
- Synergy
  - SHOP
  - LEARN
  - EAT
  - LIVE
  - WORK
  - PLAY
- Approaches
  - Direct & Indirect Education
  - Policy, Systems & Environment Change
  - Mass Media & Communications
- Support Conditions/Activities
  - Partnerships
  - Training
  - Community Environment & Engagement
  - Local Champions
  - Funding
Theory of Change Model: implications for evaluation

Ultimate Outcomes
- Quality of Life
- Healthcare Costs

Health Outcomes
- Obesity & Other Chronic Diseases
- Food Security

Behavioral Outcomes
- Fruit & Vegetable Consumption
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Physical & Social Environment Outcomes
- Access to Fruits & Vegetables
- Access to sugar sweetened foods & beverages
- Access to healthy meals & snacks
- Access to physical activity
- Skills & Attitudes Re: Healthy Eating, PA, Resource Management

Impact Factors
- Quality
- Scalability
- Reach
- Sustainability

Synergy
- SHOP
- LEARN
- EAT
- LIVE
- WORK
- PLAY

Approaches
- Direct & Indirect Education
- Policy, Systems & Environment Change
- Mass Media & Communications

Support Conditions/Activities
- Partnerships
- Training
- Community Environment & Engagement
- Local Champions
- Funding
State SNAP-Ed Objectives

• Purpose
  – Clear, common focus for interventions
  – Common measures

• Based on Theory of Change Model

• Behavioral and environmental change objectives only
Behavioral Objectives

Increase Consumption of Healthy Foods and Beverages and Decrease Consumption of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages

- Annually improve the dietary quality of meals and snacks consumed by the SNAP-Ed eligible population consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Annually increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.

- Annually decrease consumption of added sugar from food and beverages among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.
Behavioral Objectives

Increase Physical Activity

- Annually increase physical activity among the SNAP-Ed eligible population consistent with the current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.
Behavioral Objectives

Improve Food Resource Management


– Annually increase food security[^2] among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.
Environmental change objectives

Increase access to and/or appeal\(^3\) of healthy dietary choices and decrease access to and/or appeal of unhealthy dietary choices where people eat, live, learn, work, play, or shop.

- Annually improve\(^4\) food environments at SNAP-Ed eligible sites.
- Annually improve the proportion of healthy to unhealthy food environments in SNAP-Ed eligible communities.
Environmental change objectives

Increase access to and/or appeal of physical activity opportunities for SNAP-Ed eligible populations.

– Annually improve environments and opportunities for physical activity at SNAP-Ed sites.

– Annually increase physical activity opportunities and improved environments community-wide in SNAP-Ed eligible communities.
What next?

Develop:

– Common state-wide indicators of progress
– Methods and instruments for data collection
– Integrated state-wide data system
State-wide integrated data system

- Establish common point of entry
- Streamline data collection and analysis
- Reflect an integrated approach
- Paint a more complete picture of SNAP-Ed in California
State-wide integrated data collection system

• SIA-specific evaluation:
  – Fill in gaps
  – Reflect variations in interventions
  – Interface as seamlessly as possible integrated system

• LIA-specific evaluation:
  – Complement state-wide strategies
  – Dive deeper
  – Respond to local interest
  – Coordinate with state level evaluators