

Notes from NYCNEN 11/7/2014 Meeting on Social ecological model

Meeting started at 9:15 and ended at 11:45. Attendance was exceptional with standing room only capacity at Grace Dodge Hall in Teachers College, Columbia

Meeting began with a word from the former president of NYCNEN and an announcement that the next meeting of NYCNEN will be on Dec. 5th focusing on Worksite Wellness.

The first speaker was Dr. Isobel Contento, Mary Swartz Rose Professor of Nutrition and Education Teachers College, Columbia University who provided an overview of the Social Ecological Model, compared it to theory and presented a couple of programs that used the model to develop content.

Dr. Contento presented a 10,000 feet overview, then came down to the 100 feet level. The components of the model together act as a bridge to behavior. The model provides an overarching perspective to use design nutrition education programs. It is not a theory – it is a loose framework. In a theory, it is possible to calculate relationships between variables.

According to Contento, there are several sectors of influence within the model – intrapersonal (individual) level, interpersonal (social/cultural) level, environmental settings (institutional/community) It involves developing partnerships and collaboration at the last level.

Dr. Contento walked the audience through an overview of the logic model of community nutrition education.

Tisa Fontaine-Hill, Extension Associate from Cornell University, presented applications of the model with lessons learned from CHANCE and the Adopting Healthy Habits Programs. It is view from the ground targeted at expanding community nutrition education to influence environmental change. Ms. Hill presented two studies – one studying providers' attitudes towards obesity prevention and the second on how nutrition managers are contributing to environment change in obesity prevention in communities. Key conclusions from these studies were that social ecological model was key to obesity prevention and networking and collaboration were essential in affecting environmental change to bring about behavior change.

She then talked about the collaboration for health, activity and nutrition in children's environments. (CHANCE). The program had several intervention points with respect to networking, coordination, collaboration and site-specific environmental change. The CHANCE program highlighted the importance of worksite wellness and paraprofessional resources who would be frontline staff that could operate in different roles.

Several ongoing challenges such as gaining long-term commitment, the time it takes to communicate and get buy-in, moving from direct education to impacting environmental change, prioritizing important versus urgent needs, skill building, feasible, productive evaluation methods. Support needs include additional resources in terms of time, evaluation work, and organizations such as the USDA redefining strategies, strengthening grant opportunities, modifying existing EFNEP and SNAP-

Ed policies and monitoring systems. Organizations should support each other to provide education, provide training, expand position descriptions, promote organization wellness and provide practitioner level support.

Zahrine Bajwa, Regional Program Director for SNAP Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention and Nutrition Health and Wellness for Suffolk County Cornell cooperative Extension of Suffolk County presented on a local experience with using the social ecological model She presented on a project to increase use of SNAP in homeless shelters where success is based on clear objectives and paying attention to process.

Lastly the audience was led through a workshop on a community mapping exercise for developing partnerships to influence behavior change with nutrition education. Each table worked on a particular nutrition education issue and one presented to the rest of the class.

The meeting adjourned with participants filling out evaluation forms and a reminder from the organizers of the next NYCEN meeting on December 5th.