Use of the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework and Expertise of EFNEP Personnel Nationwide to Expand Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Resources for Community Nutrition Education Programs

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January 9, 2020

Background
Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change is a relatively new concept for Community Nutrition Education programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed), the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and for agencies that implement these programs. Recognizing that a PSE approach integrated with direct education can foster more sustainable change in communities than direct education alone and that existing resources were limited in their application across nutrition education programs, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension used the SNAP-Ed evaluation framework and reached out to EFNEP personnel nationwide to develop a variety of resources that could be used to help with SNAP-Ed and EFNEP initiatives across 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions and by other implementing agencies. This work focused especially on EFNEP personnel and programming, since their needs and expertise had not yet been tapped in support of PSE work for the broader nutrition education community. MSU used a complementary approach drawing from both SNAP-Ed and EFNEP to facilitate increased understanding and application of PSE approaches.

This report briefly highlights resources that were developed and are now available. An EFNEP PSE survey was created to establish a foundation for developing materials to benefit community nutrition programs. Examples and resources for PSE efforts in nutrition programs are provided through the EFNEP PSE website and through a list of examples correlating with the SNAP-Ed evaluation framework and the US Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020.

Brief description of process and illustrations of resources developed

EFNEP PSE Survey: A national survey was conducted with EFNEP PSE implementing agencies to assess needs for EFNEP PSE and identify materials to develop which can assist with EFNEP and additional community nutrition programs.

EFNEP PSE Guidelines: Results of the EFNEP PSE survey led to the development of specific guidelines for conducting PSE efforts in EFNEP. These were shared with the National EFNEP office at USDA/NIFA.

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1This project was funded by the Land-Grant University SNAP-Ed Program Development Team, National Office at South Dakota State University, between August 2018 and October 2019. For questions, please contact the author (galdamez@msu.edu or feighn21@msu.edu).
EFNEP PSE Webpage (https://efneppse.org/): The Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Change website (https://psechange.org) website was expanded to include examples of PSE work among EFNEP programs in a variety of settings. These examples complement those on the SNAP-Ed webpage (https://snapedpse.org/) of the PSE change website (https://psechange.org). The EFNEP home page contains an overview of applying the socioecological model to PSE along with five examples that have occurred in EFNEP across different settings. The reporting page includes an overview of reporting for EFNEP. The resources page contains a variety of useful links for PSE efforts including examples, case studies, journal articles, and resource kits which can be applied to a variety of community nutrition programs.

PSE Examples: Examples which can be applied to many community nutrition PSE programs were identified. The EFNEP PSE Webpage (https://efneppse.org/) houses a variety of recent examples of programs that have occurred across the country. A list of examples that aligned with the SNAP-Ed evaluation indicators were developed in a PowerPoint format that can be found on the EFNEP PSE Webpage. A variety of settings were used to inspire states to think about different settings where PSE can be conducted.

The following pages contain snapshots of resources that were developed.
EFNEP PSE National Survey Highlights

A survey with EFNEP universities was conducted in January 2019. The EFNEP Policy, Systems, and Environmental change (PSE) committee measured institutions knowledge and experience with PSE. This information was used to develop resources and equip states to conduct and report PSE efforts.

Step 1: Development of Qualtrics Survey
Step 2: Survey vetted through EFNEP PSE Committee and NIFA
Step 3: Identified EFNEP coordinators and state leaders through directory
Step 4: Survey distributed via email in January 2019

Response Rate
54% responded partially (n=41)
43% provided complete responses (n=33)
51% were currently conducting PSE (n=21)

Key Results: Needs for EFNEP PSE

Resources and Training
- EFNEP PSE Toolkit including examples, coalition building resources, best practices
- Training materials for EFNEP

Reporting
- Improve WebNEERS PSE reporting allowing for flexibility and reporting across years
- Guidance and examples for reporting and defining terms in WebNEERS
- Reporting form templates

As a Result, the Following are in Development

Reporting Improvements
- New WebNEERS PSE
- Guide and definitions for PSE terminology
- Reporting templates

EFNEP PSE Website
- Examples from the field
- Coalition resources
- Availability of PSE resources at www.efneppse.org

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2 WebNEERS is the web-based nutrition education evaluation and reporting system developed for EFNEP, which is also used by some SNAP-Ed implementing institutions within the land-grant university system.
EFNEP PSE Guidelines

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
Integrating Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Efforts

December 2019

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) applies a social-ecological framework for improving the nutritional health and well-being of program participants and their families. Implemented through Cooperative Extension, EFNEP provides direct education and establishes community partnerships to facilitate personal, family, and community change. Coordination, collaboration, and coalition work with community partners is integral to the effectiveness of Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change efforts. Identifying and reporting the effects of PSE change efforts in addition to those of direct education is essential to reflecting the influence of EFNEP in communities and states/territories. EFNEP reporting of PSE change efforts continues to evolve. Currently, such efforts are reported in terms of environmental settings, sectors of influence, and community impacts. PSE setting and sector level efforts may increase EFNEP’s reach and facilitate sustained change by program participants.

This document provides guiding principles and answers key questions on PSE change efforts through EFNEP.

Guiding Principles

- PSE change efforts do not replace direct education; rather, they are used to enhance and complement direct education.
- EFNEP direct education is provided by peer educators in the community. Peer educators may also serve as a catalyst to PSE change efforts, but should not have a primary responsibility for PSE change efforts. PSE change efforts must be led and supported by EFNEP supervisors/coordinators and other professional staff with EFNEP connections.
- Coordination, collaboration, and engagement with community partners and stakeholders is essential to the success of PSE change efforts. EFNEP respects and gives attribution to those involved through mutually developed, implemented, and reported efforts.
- EFNEP’s national web-based nutrition education, evaluation, and reporting system – WebNEERS – is used to reflect PSE change efforts, including the impacts of partnerships, and other coordinated and collaborative efforts that involve EFNEP.
- As with direct education, EFNEP PSE change efforts should reflect the practical application of evidence-based and valid practices.

Key Questions

What is the goal of PSE change efforts in EFNEP?
The goal of PSE change efforts in EFNEP is to facilitate sustained change for nutritional health and well-being of low-income families with youth within EFNEP communities. These efforts expand EFNEP’s reach beyond direct education through work with community, regional, or state coalitions, committees, and initiatives.
What is the role of peer educators (paraprofessional staff) and supervisors/ coordinators (professional staff) regarding PSE change efforts?

Peer educators are responsible for teaching EFNEP participants, as per legislative intent. Professional staff lead PSE change efforts in conjunction with other partners. Peer educators may serve as a conduit for connecting with other partners and with direct education that is underway. Professional staff may use their judgement to involve peer educators in informing coalition work where appropriate, as peer educators may be able to offer additional insight to the needs of communities served to enhance PSE change efforts. Professional staff should remain the main contacts for PSE change efforts. Such efforts should not interfere with or diminish peer educators’ focus on reaching and teaching EFNEP participants.

In what settings can PSE change efforts occur?

PSE change efforts can occur at locations where participants eat, live, work, learn, and play. Such approaches should target locations where EFNEP is available with the intent to serve eligible persons. Settings involving the general population could also be considered in support of EFNEP if program leadership represent EFNEP and if actions taken for the general population, resonate with and are helpful to families and individuals eligible for EFNEP.

What are PSE change efforts as they relate to EFNEP?

PSE approaches suitable for EFNEP include those which support changes in settings or sectors (see US Dietary Guidelines - 2015-2020) related to EFNEP core areas of diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety, or food security. They should also be targeted to the EFNEP audience, or relevant and appropriate for the target audience. Such changes may encourage or reinforce behavior changes made by families and individuals that are eligible for EFNEP. PSE change may occur within a single organization (such as a school or school district), or more broadly, across organizations at local, regional, or state/territory levels.

How should PSE change efforts be reported for EFNEP?

PSE change efforts should be reported on an annual basis as part of the annual update. They may cover multiple years, and should reflect the status of the effort (adoption, implementation, and maintenance). Supervisors and coordinators are responsible for submitting PSE change efforts at the regional and institute level of WebNEERS. Up to two PSE narratives will be accepted per institution per year [Please refer to the PSE section of the WebNEERS manual]. PSE change efforts should reflect the shared contribution of multiple partners/coalitions.

Acknowledgements: Special thanks goes to the National EFNEP Policy, Systems and Environmental PSE Change Workgroup for providing the substantive content for this document.

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If you still have questions after reviewing this program policy and associated EFNEP Program Policies, please contact the National Program Office:

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[1] Cooperative Extension is the nationwide transformational education system operating through land-grant universities in partnership with federal, state, and local governments. Cooperative Extension educators or agents translate science for the public, engage the public to act, prepare people for a better life, provide rapid response in disasters, develop partnerships, and connect people online. (Source: https://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/cooperative-extension-section/index.html).

[2] Coalitions are comprised of those who lead PSE change efforts. For EFNEP, this may include EFNEP professional staff and other community or state/territory staff and volunteers that serve EFNEP communities.

[3] Settings include early care and education programs (e.g., child care, preschool, schools), worksites, recreational facilities, community centers, food retail, food service, and other establishments. These organizational settings determine what foods are offered and what opportunities for physical activity are provided. (Source: U.S. Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020).

[4] Sectors include systems (e.g., governments, education, health care, and transportation), organizations (e.g., public health, community, and advocacy), and businesses and industries (e.g., planning and development, agriculture, food and beverage, retail, entertainment, marketing, and media). These sectors all have an important role in helping individuals make healthy choices because they either influence the degree to which people have access to healthy food and/or opportunities to be physically active, or they influence social norms and values. (Source: U.S. Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020).
EFNEP PSE Webpage https://efneppse.org/

Home Page:

Reporting Page:

Resources Page:
PSE Examples

SNAP-ED Evaluation Framework Examples

ST1: Healthy Eating

ST2: Food Resource Management

ST3: Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behaviour

ST4: Food Safety

MT1: Healthy Eating

Highlights from SNAP-Ed PDT Grant
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