

## The Role of Racial Equity in SNAP-Ed Part 1: Bringing Racial Equity into the Conversation

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### **1. Please provide an example of an evidence-based curriculum that demonstrates health equity.**

There is no one intervention that addresses equity. It's more about how a curriculum is tailored, implemented, and evaluated that demonstrates health equity (the intervention reduces a racial health disparity or addresses a root cause of the disparity). The intervention should be based on the findings of a needs assessment. One way to do this is to use a human-centered design process to develop a program that is tailored to the end user. Learn more about human-centered design and SNAP-Ed here: <https://snapedtoolkit.org/training/programs/using-human-centered-design-to-test-and-implement-food-retail-interventions-to-promote-healthy-food-choices-among-caregivers-of-young-children/>.

### **2. Thanks for sending out answers to questions - and this has been really inspiring. One issue I am particularly interested in as an evaluator is how SNAP-Ed programs capture demographic data on race, ethnicity, and gender, and how we might use better questions and talk about differences in ways that are more equitable and justice focused.**

Below are some resources that address this question:

- Who Counts? Racial Misclassification and American Indians/Alaska Natives: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CqGrzqY\\_kiZ7o5J1RZFu-5VHWMhYnhCQ](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CqGrzqY_kiZ7o5J1RZFu-5VHWMhYnhCQ) (need to get the actual link)
- [Addressing Racial Misclassification – Urban Indian Health Institute \(uihi.org\)](#) 2021
- Urban Indian Health Institute. Best Practices for American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection.; 2020.
- Bertolli J, Lee LM, Sullivan PS. Racial Misidentification of American Indians/Alaska Natives in the HIV/AIDS Reporting Systems of Five States and One Urban Health Jurisdiction, U.S., 1984–2002. Public Health Rep. 2007;122(3):382-392
- Ready, Set Go: A guide to collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CqGrzqY\\_kiZ7o5J1RZFu-5VHWMhYnhCQ](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CqGrzqY_kiZ7o5J1RZFu-5VHWMhYnhCQ) (again, get actual link)
- Workshop Series: Addressing Health Equity through Data Disaggregation <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eidciy2r74c9bc20&llr=6yxgr6cab>

### **3. Research shows older age and disability are even bigger barriers to access and equity. How can these two key factors in food insecurity going to be intersected with racial equity in SNAP-Ed?**

The principles to address racial equity can be applied to addressing inequities in access to SNAP-Ed services for people who live with a disability and older adults. They include but are not limited to:

- Centering people who are most disadvantaged with the power to make decisions about the solutions, democratizing decision making

- Shift power (ability to make decisions about the recruitment, implementation, evaluation, and data sharing from SNAP-Ed Program) to marginalized communities
- Tailor hiring practices to increase staff from marginalized communities including hiring, retaining, and promoting staff from marginalized communities.

**4. Considering the limits of its current form as a grant program, what are strategies to ensure SNAP-Ed services are allocated equitably?**

In addressing equity, IF we work from a baseline of limits or obstacles, we will quickly become frustrated and/or paralyzed. If we take an asset-based approach, we will assess our locus of control (in what part of delivering equity-based programming do I have influence and control), work with others to assess assets and envision what an equitable program might look like from this vantage point; and begin to make meaningful changes.

Also, consider working through the Aware-Acknowledge-Act process with your team. Most often, the answer is not “out there” but in your own program spaces and within the people who do this work every day. Ask yourselves the specific question you asked this panel: what are strategies that can lead to more equitable services in our SNAP-Ed program where we have influence?

Some specific strategies we have utilized with success in Minnesota SNAP-Ed Program include:

- Growing together small grant program: grants that local staff and community partners can submit on a rolling basis to learn together or try out innovative activities.
- Participatory Grant Making: community members can get small start-up funds to explore health promotion work in their neighborhoods/communities by going through a shared gifting process.
- Train the trainer grant program: BIPOC and other agency staff wanting to explore nutrition and other educational activities are offered funds to hire staff or buy out BIPOC staff time and get additional resources to work closely with SNAP-Ed, learn about specific curricula and educational pedagogy, then adapt and implement the education in ways that work for their diverse clients. The agencies deliver the course minimum of two times for continuous learning. All these agencies share their practices and promising ideas with SNAP-Ed and other agencies participating in the train the trainer program.
- Program equity mapping: we map our state’s poverty, chronic disease, racial demographics status, etc. against our program delivery and staffing to explore if we are working within communities with the greatest needs. We make hiring and programming decisions, in part, based on the results of this continuous mapping.

Solutions to racial inequity are local. Prioritize funding local community-based organizations that are managed by historically marginalized staff members and incorporate participatory budgeting strategies.

**5. Apologies for the long-winded, rambling questions ahead, but this topic interests me deeply! Where does the racial component of BMI fit into addressing racial equity in SNAP-Ed?** A significant amount of SNAP-Ed's foundation is based in the foundation of "obesity prevention" or attempting to address the "obesity epidemic." Social scientists and health scientists have begun making the connection between the racial origins of fat phobia and the creation of the "obesity epidemic." At the same time, we are starting to learn that many of the conditions we think of being associated with being fat may be brought on by medical discrimination, among other things, rather than body size status as the most significant factor. Moreover, perhaps the health consequences stemming from weight stigma may be more destructive than what we traditionally believe as

being a result of fatness. Although there have been strides in gradually moving SNAP-Education-approved curricula towards a health-focused lens vs. a weight-focused lens, even a trauma-informed lens, there is still more to be said and done in the public health nutrition field. How can we authentically and systematically redesign and engage in SNAP-Education activities when its foundation is intimately tied to the pathologizing of fat bodies?

Although none of us can speak for the USDA, I would recommend incorporating a broader approach to SNAP-Education work that incorporates principles from the Health at Every Size approach that include:

- Celebrating body diversity
- Honoring differences in size, age, race, ethnicity, gender, dis/ability, sexual orientation, religion, class, and other human attributes.
- Valuing body knowledge and lived experiences
- Finding the joy in moving one's body and being physically active.
- Eating in a flexible and attuned manner that values pleasure and honors internal cues of hunger, satiety, and appetite, while respecting the social conditions that frame eating options.

## **6. How can SNAP-Education address literacy barriers or technology barriers for underserved communities?**

In general, here are a few best practices to help SNAP-Education IAs plan virtual programming with a wide variety of access needs in mind:

- Provide opportunities for learning and technical assistance before a virtual event. For example, we recorded a short YouTube video as an orientation and provided links to other short tutorials for Zoom, Jamboards, etc.
- Provide options for engaging during the virtual session. For example, if you want participants to write something, encourage them to type it in the chat or just write it on pen and paper (especially if they are joining from a smartphone). If literacy is a concern, offer the option to share verbally or draw.
- If you are sharing your screen, make sure text and images are large enough to be seen and understood on a smartphone.

Other resources to explore and learn from:

- Tools for Online Education Delivery: <https://snapedtoolkit.org/resources/tools-for-online-education-delivery/>
- Holding Space Part 2: Co-Creating Accessibility Handout: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZAa2tyGwzW5sg4bLDhw0SLMjJHgAPuK\\_-QAGJBQEtWQ/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZAa2tyGwzW5sg4bLDhw0SLMjJHgAPuK_-QAGJBQEtWQ/edit)
- Adapting Design Thinking Methods and Best Practices to a Virtual Environment: Lessons Learned and Future Considerations: <https://bishopja.medium.com/adapting-design-thinking-methods-and-best-practices-to-a-virtual-environment-9db844ec04de>

## **7. I was told that Oldways recipes will not be approved as SNAP-Education recipes, hence grocery requests for those recipes would be denied (speaking as a university extension SNAP-Education educator).**

SNAP-Education works with agencies that work with and have the trust of BIPOC communities. As part of these collaborations and partnerships, agencies are often willing to support the program through purchasing groceries or providing other educational resources. In Minnesota, our Center sees SNAP-Education success as core to our overall

success, so we budget funds from salary savings or income dollars to support purchase of educational resources, training and professional development and experiences that may not be allowed by the grant.

## **8. Can you provide examples of Ecological Rigor? Can you provide a link to resources on Ecological Rigor?**

Related articles:

- O'Connor, Teresia M., et al. "Cultural adaptation of 'healthy dads, Healthy Kids' for Hispanic families: applying the ecological validity model." *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 17.1 (2020): 1-18.
- Marsiglia, Flavio F, and Jamie M Booth. "Cultural Adaptation of Interventions in Real Practice Settings." *Research on social work practice* vol. 25,4 (2015): 423-432. doi:10.1177/1049731514535989
- This one on decolonization may also be of interest: Chandanabhumma, P. Paul, and Subasri Narasimhan. "Towards health equity and social justice: an applied framework of decolonization in health promotion." *Health promotion international* 35.4 (2020): 831-840.

## **9. How does SNAP-ED address the racial inequalities within the tribes?**

This is a difficult question as no single entity like SNAP-Ed can adequately address centuries of oppression that created racial inequalities for indigenous communities in the U.S. and around the world. However, SNAP-Ed can employ some promising approaches utilizing an equity and social justice lens including:

- Flow of programmatic dollars to tribal nations
- Hiring, retaining, nurturing a team of indigenous SNAP-Ed leaders and educators, and providing them with maximum flexibility to do SNAP-Ed work
- Taking a community engaged, participatory approach to our SNAP-Ed work where tribal communities can determine their own solutions that can be enacted and supported with SNAP-Ed resources and partnerships
- Continuous training of SNAP-Ed leadership and staff regarding cultural healing, trauma-informed practice, indigenous health and food ways, and indigenous ways of knowing and research practices.

Here are additional resources:

- Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, M. "Introduction: Decolonizing our minds and actions." Waziyatawin & M. Yellow Bird (Eds.), *For Indigenous minds only: A decolonization handbook* (2012): 57-83.
- Research Protections article: Saunkeah, Bobby, et al. "Extending Research Protections to Tribal Communities." *The American Journal of Bioethics* (2020): 1-13.

## **10. How can we better serve everyone?**

A good place to start is to use the data about where classes are held, the population that your agency serves and compare it to publicly available data about SNAP-eligible residents. Then ask people who have been excluded from programming about how your organization may better serve them.

## **11. Just wondering if part of the work you are doing with USDA addresses milk as a school food requirement. I know this isn't explicitly tied to SNAP but wondering about the breadth of your racial equity work with USDA?**

**Or how and where you are addressing their naming and fore fronting racial equity as a priority of the agency's work--we need leverage to address our state agencies....**

Future webinars will address this question. We are planning three more webinars over the next fiscal year.

**12. I would like to know how SNAP-Ed activities can be implemented to advance racial equity by framing the issue of racial equity in SNAP-Ed, the directive from the USDA, the definition of racial equity and how our organization can work to engage communities to advance racial equity?**

Although we cannot speak to how USDA will officially incorporate racial equity into SNAP-Ed, the principles to address racial equity can be applied to SNAP-Ed. They include but are not limited to:

- Centering people who are most disadvantaged with the power to make decisions about the solutions, democratizing decision making
- Shift power (ability to make decisions about the recruitment, implementation, evaluation, and data sharing from SNAP-Ed Program) to marginalized communities
- Tailoring hiring practices to increase staff from marginalized communities including hiring, retaining, and promoting staff from marginalized communities.