

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Around the Table

Leah's Pantry

Overview

Around the Table is a direct education intervention for youth that upholds principles of trauma-informed engagement and nourishment. It is designed to improve cooking skills, food safety, food resource management, and healthy eating, as well as increase awareness surrounding stress, emotional eating, health values, and feeding children. Participants enjoy hands-on cooking, facilitated conversations, and interactive activities that build healthy connections to food, self, and community. Additionally, Around the Table: *Nourishing Families* is for young adults and parents. It is a curriculum that upholds principles of trauma-informed engagement and nourishment where participants enjoy conversation, reflection, cooking, sharing a meal together, and learning holistic skills to care for their families' nutritional well-being. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating **Intervention Type:** Direct Education

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Around the Table targets both youth and adult participants. The adult curriculum was designed for any community setting, and the youth curriculum was originally designed for settings outside of the school day but expanded to include classroom settings. Around the Table was developed in response to insufficient SNAP-Ed curriculum options for this age group and an interest in the incorporation of trauma-informed principles to better address the science of trauma and resilience. Caregivers of young children who face high rates of food insecurity and other community traumas were engaged to develop this curriculum. **Setting:** Community (Live), Health care, School (Learn) **Target Audience:** High School, Pregnant/Breastfeeding Women, Parents/Mothers/Fathers, Adults **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

The intervention components, which cannot be modified or omitted, provide lesson plans, activities, participant materials, and outcome evaluations. Trauma-informed practices are embedded in the lesson plans, and the curriculum teaches skills that de-escalate stress and promote resilience around food by developing participant self-efficacy and confidence in cooking, nutrition knowledge, and food resource management. Partners must be

Around the Table Training Program to implement the series. Following this, they can implement on their own time, and Leah's Pantry will offer technical assistance to support implementation. Partners will be expected to sign a Partner Agreement and share any evaluation data collected.

Intervention Materials

Our programs and products are designed to ensure all people have access to healthy food and feel competent preparing easy, nutritious meals for themselves and their families. These materials include:

- **Around the Table Instructor Guide:**
 - This is a six-week curriculum designed for groups of 7-15 youth, between the ages of 14-21, conducted in community spaces with or without a kitchen. This guide includes lesson plans, menu planners, notes, a survey, and Table Talk Cards.
- **Around the Table: *Nourishing Families* Instructor Guide:**
 - This is a six-week curriculum designed for groups of 10-14 adults raising children. It can be conducted in community spaces with or without a kitchen. This guide includes lesson plans, notes, and a survey.
- **Around the Table Workshop Handbook:**
 - The workbook includes food and cooking skills, menu planning, and a wide variety of recipes.
- **Around the Table: *Nourishing Families* Workshop Handbook:**
 - This workbook includes various workshop activities, recipes and menu planning, and mindfulness activities.

To learn more, visit leahspantry.org.

Intervention Costs

There is a cost for training in most cases, with exceptions for California implementers. Once an agency is trained, digital access to curriculum materials is free. There is also a cost for printed materials. For cost information, please see: <https://www.leahspantry.org/product-category/around-the-table/>

Evidence Summary

Around the Table conducted five focus groups to center the curriculum around the participant's understanding of food, nutrition, and community. This was important because most curricula are centered around content, but Around the Table approached this work from a client-centered perspective. Youth were invited to participate in nutrition and group cooking activities and then provide their feedback over a group meal. A staff member took detailed notes during each session. After this preliminary work, content was created and tested in the community. An iterative curriculum development model was used, which involves incorporating feedback and making tweaks before finalizing design and layout. The biggest challenge was time. No significant unintended outcomes were recorded. The findings in the Around the Table: *Nourishing Families* evaluation report indicate that the curriculum had a statistically significant effect on caregivers' household food habits, a greater feeling of having energy to spare, eating in a way that expresses care for their body, noticing foods that affect their emotional state, and a significant decrease in the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. The findings in the Around the Table evaluation report indicate that the curriculum had a positive effect on participants' socio-

emotional resilience, valuing healthy food, and mindful eating practices, as well as to an encouraging extent on the increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, and water and a decrease in sugary beverage consumption.

Evidence-based Approach: Practice Tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

	Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)	Changes – Medium Term (MT)	Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual		MT1 , MT2		
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence				

- MT1: Healthy Eating
 - MT1h: Significant decrease in the frequency of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption in the past seven days (p=0.05)
- MT2: Food Resource Management
 - MT2b: Significant increase in reading the nutrition information on food labels (p=0.011)
 - MT2h: Significant increase in food resource management skills confidence: planning meals ahead of time (p=0.05) and planning how much food to buy (p=0.04).
 - MT2h: Significant increase in food resource management skills confidence: comparing prices before buying food (p=0.043)
 - MT2m: Significant increase in food resource management skills confidence: balancing meals based on nutrition advice of what is healthy (p=0.024)

Evaluation Materials

The Around the Table evaluation, which was developed in partnership with the CDSS and an external evaluator, measures changes in resilience, self-confidence, culinary skills, healthy food values, and nutritional intake. Pre-workshop surveys are completed during the first class and post-workshop surveys are completed during the final sixth workshop.

Additional Information

Website: Visit Leah’s Pantry website (www.leahspantry.org) for more on Around the Table and other programs and products offered.

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