Mind, Exercise, Nutrition…Do It! (MEND)

Healthy Weight Partnership

Overview

Mind, Exercise, Nutrition…Do It! (MEND) is a family-based direct education intervention designed to manage overweight and obesity in 7–13-year-olds and their families by improving health, fitness and self-esteem. The MEND program combines active living (physical activity), healthy eating, and behavior change to facilitate safe, effective weight management and lasting changes in lifestyle. The program is attended by the child and at least one parent or primary caregiver, and runs for 10 weeks, typically for two hours twice a week. MEND helps families in the following areas:

- Mind – improving children’s self-esteem and supporting families to change their behaviors around eating and activity
- Exercise – engaging in regular physical activity that is fun
- Nutrition – learning about good nutrition and healthy eating
- Do it! – taking action to make healthy lifestyle changes

Healthy Weight Partnership and MEND Foundation provide third parties with the training, resources, support and technical assistance required to deliver MEND programs effectively. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity **Intervention Type:** Direct Education

Intervention Reach and Adoption

MEND targets children ages 7–13 who are overweight or obese and their parents at locations throughout the community, such as YMCAs and other community-based organizations. MEND was originally developed in the United Kingdom and has been adapted for use in North America since 2007. **Setting:** Community, Faith-based Community, Health Care, School **Target Audience:** Elementary School, Middle School, Parents/Mothers/Fathers **Race/Ethnicity:** All
Intervention Components

MEND runs for 10 weeks and consists of 48 curriculum hours, including 18 hours of physical activity. Maintenance support is provided for up to two years. The activity curriculum has been developed in partnership with SPARK and CATCH to minimize costs and maximize local relevance. Families also participate in stimulating hands-on activities, including a local supermarket tour to gain practical and achievable skills in label reading and choosing healthier foods. At the end of the program, families receive a directory of helpful community resources and access to a website for MEND graduates, which support them in building on the healthy changes they made during the program. The program consists of:

- One hour families’ sessions on nutrition and behavioral topics such as building a healthy meal, fats and sugars, label reading, and eating out
- One hour parents’ sessions on topics such as setting goals and rewards, role modeling healthy behaviors, and being an active family
- One hour children’s exercise at the same time as the parents’ sessions, including a variety of fun activities.

The staff who deliver MEND are trained by nutrition and exercise professionals with experience in pediatric weight management.

Intervention Materials

The MEND curriculum includes materials for leaders to help deliver the program, for children and parents to help apply the knowledge gained during MEND, and for program managers to coordinate planning and operations of local program delivery. Leaders and program managers have access to resources on OMMS, MEND’s Online Management and Monitoring System. This secure web-based system enables those delivering MEND programs to manage them effectively, store personal data and produce comprehensive easy-to-read family reports, and obtain clear and real-time management information. MEND materials include:

For Leaders
- Two-day training and materials including pre-workshop reading
- Program manuals for leaders
- Kit bag (posters, activity and game pieces, learning sheets and certificates)
- Resources and leader fact sheets accessible on OMMS

For Children
- Extensive in-color program handbook for children (bilingual)
- MEND T-shirt
- MEND water bottle
- MEND detective label-reading card
- Meal Mate cup for portion guidance
- MEND graduate print materials, magazines and website

For Parents
- Extensive in-color program handbook for parents (bilingual)
- MEND graduate print materials and parent information on website

For Program Managers
Evidence Summary

MEND 7–13 is an evidence-based intervention with 17 peer-reviewed scientific publications demonstrating a wide range of positive program outcomes. A randomized controlled trial of the MEND 7–13 program found:

- At 6 months, there was a significant decrease in waist circumference and BMI z-scores, along with improvements in recovery heart rate, physical activity levels, sedentary levels and global self-esteem in the intervention compared to the control group.
- At 12 months, there was a significant decrease in waist circumference and BMI z-scores, and improvements in recovery heart rate, physical activity levels, and self-esteem were sustained.

Additional information on the evidence-based program, along with a comprehensive list of peer-reviewed publications on MEND can be found at: https://healthyweightpartnership.org/our-research/ Classification: Evidence-based

Evaluation Indicators

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Results (R)</th>
<th>Short Term (ST)</th>
<th>Medium Term (MT)</th>
<th>Long Term (LT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>ST1, ST3</td>
<td>MT1, MT3</td>
<td>LT1, LT3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectors of Influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Materials

MEND uses the secure, proprietary web-based OMMS system to collect and analyze pre- and post-program outcome data, track operational metrics such as attendance and drop-outs, and produce reports for both families and organizations. A range of physical and mental health outcomes and risk factor data are collected, including anthropometric measurements, dietary and physical activity behavioral risk factors, and psychological data such as
as quality of life and self-esteem.

Additional Information

Website: The Healthy Weight Partnership website (healthyweightpartnership.org) includes a description of the program, research on MEND, partners, media coverage, and contact information. Contact Person(s): Teresa Earle Healthy Weight Partnership, Inc. Phone: 866-559-5114 or 818-879-0493 Email: info@healthyweightpartnership.org