

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Steps to Health's Nuts and Bolts of a Healthy Food Pantry

North Carolina State University, SNAP-Ed Steps to Health

Overview

The Nuts and Bolts of a Health Food Pantry Toolkit is a direct education and PSE change intervention that is designed to support pantries in improving the food environment so their clients can choose healthy food and beverage items. The components of the Toolkit include a resource guide, baseline and follow-up assessments to explore opportunities for PSE, training modules for food pantry staff and volunteers, action planning tools for sustaining PSE changes, and promotional materials, such as signage and “nudge” cards to influence healthy choices. The Toolkit equips partners to share best practices when collaborating with food pantries. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Food Insecurity/Food Assistance **Intervention Type:** Direct Education, PSE Change

Intervention Reach and Adoption

The Toolkit provides resources to food pantry staff and volunteers to implement low-cost/no-cost PSE changes in the pantry environment. It has also been used by food pantries and other organizations interested in starting on-site food pantries during the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020-2021, over 15 sites completed the intervention reaching over 950,000 food pantry clients in Brunswick, Jones, Wake, Rutherford, and Lee counties in North Carolina. As a result, client choice models were modified, partnerships were developed to increase produce donations, and promotional materials were designed to encourage healthy choices. **Setting:** Community, Faith-based, Food pantries, School, Worksite, Other: sites with pantries **Target Audience:** Preschool (<5 years), Elementary School, Middle School, High School, Pregnant/Breastfeeding Women, Parents/Mothers/Fathers, Adults, Older Adults, Homeless/Food Pantry Clients **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

The Toolkit is designed to encourage food pantries to think critically about which foods they offer, how food is distributed, and how they can support clients in making healthy choices. Objectives include: (1) participants learn how to improve the food pantry environment to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for food pantry clients and (2) participants identify strategies to effectively distribute food to people in need, improving their clients' health in the process. The Toolkit includes six steps to successfully facilitate PSE in food pantries. The steps are designed to be implemented in chronological order, however the process may vary for each community. Core components of the Toolkit include the resource guide, baseline, and follow-up assessments, trainings for food pantry staff and volunteers, action planning tools, and promotional materials. The intervention components help partners assess challenges in their pantry environment and identify clear steps to outline a timeline for reaching goals. The trainings and promotional materials may be modified to meet partner needs. Coordination among community partners including the food pantry is integral for success.

Intervention Materials

Toolkit materials include:

- Baseline and follow-up assessments
- Resource guide
- Training for pantry staff and volunteers
- Action planning template
- Promotional materials.

Intervention Costs

The Toolkit is available at no cost. Those interested can email sth-administration@ncsu.edu.

Evidence Summary

Literature reviews, case studies focused on pilot sites, and interviews with partners regarding topics covered in the Toolkit were used to inform its development. Pre- and post-surveys were used in testing, evaluating, and assessing the effectiveness of the Toolkit. Baseline and follow-up assessments were used to determine interest and need for PSE supports for pantry environments. Feedback from partners and clients was used to make the Toolkit more concise for easier implementation and share resources. The staff and volunteer training sessions were shortened based on feedback so they could be delivered in 30 minutes. Additionally, the Toolkit was updated to reflect COVID-19 precautions, including the addition of best practices for food distribution during COVID-19. Lastly, Cooperative Extension professionals completed surveys that assessed relevancy, content, design, and outcomes as a result of using the guide. In particular, feedback was collected from Cooperative Extension professionals partnering with MANNA Food Bank and The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina to address gaps in the Toolkit. **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				
Environmental Settings		<u>MT5</u>	<u>LT5, LT9, LT10</u>	
Sectors of Influence	<u>ST8</u>			

- ST8: Increased partnerships and enhanced level of engagement in implementing and sustaining PSE
- MT5: Increased in fresh/local produce
- LT5: Multi-level interventions including direct education, community involvement, and policy implementation
- LT9: Leveraged resources and funding from partners and stakeholders to implement PSE
- LT10: Developed sustainability assessments with action planning tools

Evaluation Materials

The Steps to Health’s Nuts and Bolts of a Healthy Food Pantry website, <https://ncstepstohealth.org/>, includes additional resources such as recipes based on season and ingredients. Additionally, another website was created to share resources and information, with the aim of providing as much choice for clients based on organizational capacity: <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/localfood-community-development/healthy-food-pantry-toolkit/>.

Additional Information

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