



Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

July 24, 2024

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Welcome

Work Group Co-Chairs

Work Group Co-Chairs welcomed all attendees.

Nutrition Presentation

Brooke Tresch, Dietitian and Master of Public Health Candidate

Brooke discussed how to deliver basic nutrition education with cultural considerations and how to promote a healthy relationship with food. Some key points of her presentation were:

- People eat, not just for nutrition, but for satisfaction. Cultural foods help to satisfy us. Without satisfaction, people may be more inclined to overeat in search of that satisfaction.
- The My Plate model shows foods separated from one another, but most cultural foods mix different food groups in one item (e.g., empanadas, curry stews). Therefore, the My Plate model should be tailored to be culturally relevant.



- Try to move away from food hierarchies. For example, if a client is from Southeast Asia, the Mediterranean diet, though it may be touted as the healthiest diet in the world, is not a good fit for this client because it is not culturally appropriate.
- An example of how to adapt the My Plate model to be culturally appropriate:

- If white rice is a client’s grain preference, do not replace it with brown rice just because that is a healthier option; just add other foods to compensate for the missing nutrients. So, if white rice is not high in fiber, add other high-fiber foods to the meal instead, like legumes or avocado.



- Though nutrition labels are complicated, they are used so widely—from Trader Joe's and Whole Foods to Mercados and mom-and-pop shops—that if we can teach people how to read them, they can be empowered to make healthier choices everywhere they go.
- When morality is assigned to foods, food can become a reflection of who we are. For example, if salad is labeled “good” and cake is labeled “bad”, someone may reflect on the food choices they made that day and think “I was good today. I only ate a salad”, yet the person is still hungry. We must change how we think and communicate about food. Using neutral language is best.
- So, what can we do as nutrition educators?

Promoting a Healthy Relationship with Food for our clients as Nutrition Educators⁷

Improving Food Access & the Quality of Foods Provided

Watching our language around food & others’ bodies

Hunger & Fullness Cues*; Emotional Eating

Encourage regulating social media feeds/reduced screen time

Encourage regular meals & snacks

Understand Restriction; All Foods Fit

Encouraging Self-Compassion & Activities that Build Self-Esteem

Refer to a professional

[View Brooke's presentation here.](#) If you are interested in inviting Brooke to speak to your organization, reach out to her at btresch@gmu.edu.

American Heart Association: Priorities, Resources, and Initiatives

Lucía Zegarra, Community Impact Director

Lucía discussed the American Heart Association's (AHA) priorities which are:

- Improving blood pressure
- **Increasing nutrition security**
- Preventing and controlling tobacco & E-Cigarette use
- Community Response (as it relates to Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, Basic Life Support, and First Aid)

With regard to increasing nutrition security, the AHA's goals are as follows:



Increasing Nutrition Security

- Support community-based organizations and clinics.
- Increase access and awareness of food assistance programs and providers.
- Help families receive nutritious and healthy foods.
- Provide resources and information to implement systems and programs to support under-resourced organizations and communities.

Lucía also highlighted some of the AHA's current initiatives:



Community and Clinical Initiatives

- Implement food security screening and referral
- Increase capacity to provide fresh or frozen produce at food assistance facility
- Establish EBT payment at farmer's markets, mobile markets, or other healthy food outlets.
- Establish new comprehensive healthy food outlet



Policy Initiatives

- Establishment of Nutrition Policy
- Donation and Catering Guidelines

Lastly, Lucía reminded the group of the importance of considering employees and staff in policy changes because they, too, are affected by organizational choices.

[View Lucía's slides here](#). If you'd like to learn more about the AHA's work, email lucia.zegarra@heart.org.

FFC Food Access & Literacy Work Group Members' Announcements

- Gillian Kimura, a Co-Chair of this Food Access & Literacy Work Group, shared a newsletter about addressing food access via cold storage. [The newsletter is attached](#).

The Food Access & Literacy Work Group will not meet in August 2024.

Next Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting: September 25, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.