Let’s ignite a culture of food dignity to end hunger in the United States

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IGNITE a Culture of Food Dignity

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#FoodDignity
Recovering Food Elitist
Al Beech West
Side Food Pantry

President & Nutrition Coordinator
My professional mission turned *right-side up* during Community Voices Project.
Food as a Human Right

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care”


“The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement, without discrimination of any kind.”

-International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Food Inequity Problems

- Food Insecurity
- Inequitable Food Access
- Inexpensive Calories
- Unhealthy Food Marketing
- Poor Health and Related Outcomes
The lens of food insecurity in US

- **Food insecurity (FI)** “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods......”

- **Hunger** “The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food”

- **Food Secure** “Access by all people, at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life.”
Related, but not Equal

58% of people struggling with FI have incomes 100% above the federal poverty level.

61% of people living in poor households are food-secure.

Household Food Security in the United States in 2016 (USDA ERS)
Realistic View of Poverty

34.5% Situational

2.7% Chronic

https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf
Situational Poverty

• Loss of job
• Working hours cut back
• Medical expenses
• Affordable childcare
• Affordable housing
• Natural disasters (Katrina, Harvey, Irma, Maria, Florence)
• Death of family member
• College student
• Difficult choices!

The face of hunger is constantly changing in U.S.
Hunger in the United States is an invisible epidemic.

The real face of hunger in the US often presents with a normal BMI.

Understanding the Connections: Food Insecurity and Obesity. October 2015
Food Assistance Participation

59% of food-insecure households participated in at least one of the three major federal food assistance programs.

- SNAP (food stamps)
- School Feeding Programs
- WIC (Women Infant & Children)

Food insecurity, social capital and perceived personal disparity in predominantly rural region of Texas: an individual-level analysis. 2011

WHY?

• Stigma
• Treatment by staff
• Office/work hours
• Lack of knowledge
• Transportation
Meet Anna

• 34 year old single mother of 2
• Driving a Lexus
• Wearing designer clothing
• Manicured nails
• She asks for food and diapers
• Older child is on an iPhone
Educators Role in the Fight Against Hunger

Research
- Survey clients
- Collect list of local resource community resources

Advocate
- Promote
- Collaborate
- Eliminate barriers
- Communicate
- Action alerts

Educate
- Client
- Family
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Students

Practice
- Screen for FI
- Food Access
- Behavior Change
- (based on Mental Models)
- MI

Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Food Insecurity in the United States. 2017
Food dignity is a cultural collaborative that supports and honors everyone’s right to nourishing food at all times.
A culture of #FoodDignity starts with all of US.
You are in a powerful position to influence the people you work with every day!
Levels of Collaboration =

Individual  Institutional  Community

Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy is the capacity to make the changes necessary to better health and healthcare.
Individual Collaboration
You don’t have to look outside your organization to fight hunger.

Find the crack and become the glue!
Food: Did you eat?
Time: decisions based on survival
Education: not a reality

Food: Did you like it?
Time: future is important
Education: to climb the ladder

Food: Presentation?
Time: decisions made on tradition
Education: necessary for connections

Start where your participants are……
Tips to address hidden rules

• Accept that decisions will be made against other ways of thinking than your own
• Know the need for survival trumps everything
• Survival is a reactive skill - not a planning skill
• Make a realistic plan for their situation
Money gets you past survival, but it does not change your thinking.

How can you help your client’s feel safe (confident) around food?
Do we determine the solution to a problem based on our own assumptions and perceptions?
Understanding the **WHY** behind a client’s food choice provides the direction for effective nutrition education & collaboration.
Crucial Conversations
A crucial conversation moves us from power over others to power with others.

Connecting with clients through inspirational stories bridges the gap on how the situation is viewed.
Crucial Conversations

- Screen all participants at all visits
- Inspirational stories connects people and makes facts memorable
To help your patients/clients lessen food insecurity, take these three steps:

1. Read each statement* and ask your client if the statement is often true, sometimes true, rarely true, or never true.
   - Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.  □ Often True □ Sometimes True □ Rarely True □ Never True
   - Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.  □ Often True □ Sometimes True □ Rarely True □ Never True

2. If your client responds “often true” or “sometimes true” to either statement, they likely have food insecurity. Help them get more food by filling out the list of resources (see next page) and giving it to them.

   You can also fill out the list, make copies, and leave them in waiting rooms and other areas for community members to pick up.

3. Advocate for nourishing foods in your community. Take steps to increase the availability of nutritious, affordable food.


http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/2_Item_Screen.pdf
3 Types of Stories

• Your own success stories

• Success stories of clients (identifying information unnecessary)

• Stories of frustration or shame
Institutional/Community Collaboration
Know the **WHY!**

Know potential collaborator’s mission

What is important to a potential partner and how can you connect your outcomes to their mission?
What keeps them up at night?

What are their biggest pain points?

What frustrates them?

How can you help?
The United Nations calls “collaboration critical… if we are to create a more inclusive, just, and sustainable world.”
Organizations must find creative ways to tackle issues that lie beyond the scope of a single organization.
Acknowledge the gap between aspirations and reality.

Aim to narrow the gap in order to make progress.
Effective collaboration

• Be a connector of resources
• Support existing resources
• Don’t start something new, strengthen another program by adding your expertise
Inspire a collective purpose

Collaboration depends on the trust others have in you or in the processes you propose for making progress.
Build Trust

- Consistency
- Understand the **WHY** behind mission/values/personal choices
- Learn to see the problem from other points of view
- Dive into the trenches
Effective collaboration

• Be a connector of resources
• Support existing resources
• Don’t start something new, strengthen another program by adding your expertise
Challenge!

How can you *ignite* collaborations to promote & improve access to nourishing food?

(Feeding America Food Banks)
Feeding America Network

- National program
- Non-profit status to apply as agency member
- Easy application
- Rescued 3.3 billion lbs of food last year
- Biggest challenge- getting the food to the people who need it the most
Find Your Local Food Bank

http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank/
What you can do now?

• Listen & understand about the *WHY* behind stories

• Don’t assume you understand someone’s *WHY*

• Share your story (if you have one)
What you can do now?

• Brainstorm/identify 3 people/organizations you want to influence.
  • Write them down and pick ONE!

• What is their biggest problem?

• What story can you use to relate to them?
My wish......

for all of us to connect without assumptions and always seek to understand the **WHY!**
3 Ways to I.G.N.I.T.E. a Culture of Food Dignity with the People You Serve
"Each one of us can make a difference. Together we make change."

- Barbara Mikulski

#FoodDignity & #NWANBF18

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