Food Literacy Attributes and Mental Health
NRC Fall Forum
November 9, 2017
The views expressed in this project update are those of the Locally Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP) team and do not necessarily reflect those of Public Health Ontario.
Learning objectives

To help you:

1. Understand the origin of the comprehensive food literacy framework.

2. Know the new food literacy definition and food literacy attributes and understand their relationship with mental health.

3. Understand how the attributes can be applied as a comprehensive food literacy framework for program planning.
Setting the context

• Large-scale food retail stores, fast food outlets and modernization of the global food system

• Changed the food supply
• Changed the food environment
• Less time preparing food (‘deskilling’)

Changes to food environment, eating behaviours, and deskilling:
- Poor diet quality
- Decreased health and well-being
- Increased risk of chronic disease

Changing eating behaviours
Food literacy emerges

- 2013 LDCP explored the meaning of food skills with high risk youth, pregnant women, and young parents
  - Mental health and environmental factors impact healthy eating and food skills
- Need for comprehensive definition and measurement tool to:
  - Assess scope of problem
  - Tailor and target programming
  - Allocate limited resources effectively
  - Determine impact of food literacy programs
  - Identify gaps in current programming
  - Engage in effective advocacy efforts

Cullen, 2015; Vaitkeviciute et al., 2014; Vidgen, 2014
LCDP project objectives

Year 1 Funding (completed June, 2017):

• Identify and summarize the attributes* of food literacy including food skills, in the literature. – Scoping Review – Published

• Determine which attributes of food literacy including food skills, are priorities for measurement and tool development. – Delphi Process

Year 2 and 3 Funding – Dec 2017 – May 2019 pending approval

• To develop and evaluate a food literacy measurement tool for use with high risk youth and young parents and pregnant women.

* Attributes = The quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something
# Food literacy attribute progression

**Delphi Process**

- **Validate language** used to describe attributes
- **Confirm relevance & importance** in the public health context
- **Determine priority attributes** to be measured for program planning and policy work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Literacy Categories</th>
<th>15 Attributes x 3 Rounds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy &amp; Confidence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ecologic (beyond self)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food Decisions</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>11 Attributes - Final</th>
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<td>1. Food Knowledge</td>
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<td>2. Nutrition Knowledge</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Food and Nutrition Language</strong></td>
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<td>4. Food Skills</td>
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<td>5. Nutrition Literacy</td>
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<td>6. <strong>Food and Nutrition Self-Efficacy</strong></td>
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<td>7. Cooking Self-Efficacy</td>
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<td>8. Food Attitude</td>
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<td>9. Food and Other Systems</td>
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<td>10. Social Determinants of Health</td>
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<td>11. Dietary behaviour</td>
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A set of interconnected attributes organized into the categories of food and nutrition knowledge; skills; self-efficacy/confidence; food decisions; and ecologic (external) factors such as income security and the food system.
Mental health and food literacy attributes

**Self-Efficacy & Confidence**

**Nutrition Literacy**
To be able to distinguish between credible and false nutrition information. Knowing how to find reliable nutrition information and how to make sense of it (e.g., reading a food label).

**Food and Nutrition Self-Efficacy**
To believe in one’s ability to apply food and nutrition-related knowledge to make healthy choices in a complex food environment.

**Cooking Self-Efficacy**
To have confidence in one’s ability to use cooking equipment and prepare tasty meals with available food.

**Food Attitude**
To understand one’s attitude towards food and trying new foods. Having the desire to choose and prepare healthy and safe food to enjoy at all times.
Call to action: 5 recommendations

1. Support and adopt research findings – food skills → food literacy.

2. Use comprehensive framework to review programs, services, or policy when planning, implementing & evaluating healthy eating public health initiatives.

3. Use the comprehensive food literacy framework to implement healthy eating programs in schools.

4. Support the development and testing of a tool for measuring food literacy.

5. Rebrand and promote community-based food programs as food literacy programs rather than those that address household food insecurity or food security.
Applying the food literacy framework to practice

- Evaluated food literacy program
- Fruits and vegetables promotion
- Students learn:
  - basic cooking skills
  - safe food handling skills
  - how to make healthy eating choices
- One 1.5-2 hour session/week for 4-5 weeks
- Uses train-the-trainer model
- Students in grades 5-8
11 Food literacy attributes

- Food and Other Systems
- Cooking Self-Efficacy
- Food Knowledge
- Dietary Behaviour
- Social Determinants of Health
- Food Attitude
- Food Skills
- Nutrition and Food Self-Efficacy
- Nutrition Literacy
- Nutrition Knowledge
- Food and Nutrition Language
YTC Cook-off

Extends YTC messages and expands on the food literacy attribute – *Food and Other Systems* by:

- Environmental Services Good Food Campaign & YRFN
- Highlighting local produce in a fun & experiential way
- Increasing awareness about the abundance of affordable local food that can be easily accessed
- Emphasizing the importance for food literacy for school age children and cooking more with fresh local ingredients
You’re the Chef

• Reviewing content in YTC Leader’s Manual to address 11 attributes

• YTC evaluation (2017/18 school year) – **Goals:**
  • Determine how the YTC program is being implemented by Leaders
  • Identify facilitators and barriers to implementing the YTC program
  • Determine the impact of the YTC program (whether students are achieving the intended outcomes)

• Surveying program leaders and parents of children attending YTC programs
• Survey questions to reflect 11 attributes
Next steps

- **Call to Action** for Public Health
- Briefing Note for decision makers from government/non-government
- **Food Literacy Framework (Pictogram)**
- Video (in progress)
- Scoping review article published in *J of Public Health Nutrition*
- Delphi manuscript submission (in progress)
- **Foodliteracy.ca**
- Social media (ongoing) follow us:
  - @FoodLiteracyCanada
  - @FoodLiteracyCAN
- Online training webinar (November 21, 2017)
- Development and evaluation of measurement tool
Acknowledgements

• The LDCP Healthy Eating team would like to thank Public Health Ontario for its support of this project.

• The team gratefully acknowledges funding received from PHO through the Locally Driven Collaborative Projects program.

• The team would also like to acknowledge our respective health units for allowing dedicated time to team members for this project.
Questions