Empowering in the kitchen: how to share food skills and promote wellbeing

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NRC Forum: ‘Food Literacy & Mental Health’
The PHNCHC

• Full circle care
  o Social work
  o Dental
  o Primary Care
  o DEC

• Diverse programming
  o Wellbeing
  o Exercise
  o Cooking/Food skills

• Target populations
  o Seniors
  o Youth at risk
  o Low socio-economic status
Food Literacy at the PHNCHC
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Food literacy in the office

- Nutritional knowledge
- Brainstorming recipes in office
- Describe cooking methods
- Educate about different/unfamiliar foods
- Resources for food in the community

- Provide access to a food cupboard?
- Tour the garden?
The kitchen is a classroom
Community Collaboration

- Brain injury clinic
- Special need teenagers
- Elementary school aged children with Autism
- Parkinson's Society
- Northumberland Hills Hospital ACT team
‘The Living Room’

- Drop in program with Northumberland Hills Hospital ACT team
- Every 2 weeks for 1.5 hrs at 1pm
- Market Hall in Cobourg
- Access to stove, sink, and a full room with tables
- No equipment at all

- Partnership to promote food skills/nutritional knowledge
Getting Started

- Establish rapport
- Gauge interest
- Offer your services
- Assess current skills/education through conversation
- Assess desired outcomes
- Cater to the needs of the group
Brainstorming Recipes

Quinoa
Fast, simple meals
Hummus/roasted chickpeas
Eggs
Microwave meals
Naan pizzas
HM Soup
Salads

Meatballs
Thai food
Chicken fingers
Lasagna
Stir Fry
Vegetarian
Baked goods
Fish
Recipe Selection

- Quick - 15 minutes or less
- Dump and add recipes
- Minimal clean up
- Mindful of food storage
- Grab and go foods
- Multi-use ingredients
- Minimal equipment
- Sweet/Savoury
- Very limited budget
Preparation

• **Basic Equipment:**
  - spoons/forks/knives
  - cutting boards
  - mixing bowls
  - measuring cups
  - Tongs
  - Spatula
  - Dishtowels
  - Cheese Grater
  - Sanitizer

- **Black Bean Quesidillas**
  - Potato Masher
  - Flat-top
  - Extension Cord

- **Microwave Quiche**
  - Ramekins
  - Microwave
  - Toaster
  - Extension Cord

- **Naan Pizza**
  - Baking Trays
  - Parchment Paper
Set up for Success

- Get organized before cooking starts
- Clearly outline how the class will run
- Stations work very well in large groups
- Review any safety concerns
- Encourage clients
- Be flexible
Set up for success
Get Cooking
Timeline

• Arrive and socialize: 10 mins
• Set up work stations: 10-15 mins
• Review recipe, directions, modifications: 10 mins
• Start Cooking! (time dependent): 5-20 mins
• Eat! (also time dependent!)
• Brainstorm ideas for next week while eating: 10 mins
• Cleanup: 10-15 minutes
Feedback

• No evaluation ‘tool’ currently being used
• Increased attendance
• Participants bringing in recipes
• Always asking “what are we making next?!?”
• Reports of making recipes from class at home
Observations

• Have patience for cooking skills to develop
• Expect a varying skill level
• Allow everyone to be heard
• Confidence growing over short period of time
• Not cooking doesn’t mean not learning
• Conversation while eating is a great evaluation tool
• Nutrition education is fluid
• Attendance varies – difficult to plan for amount of food
Final Thoughts