Beyond Knowledge: Strategies to Encourage Actual Behavior Change

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Our Mission

- To conduct food safety research that meets the needs of Food and Nutrition Service’s nutrition assistance programs and disseminate results to a variety of targeted audiences including school food service directors, child nutrition program operators, scientists, policy makers, educators, and practitioners.
Partnerships

USDA

Institute of Child Nutrition
Center of Excellence Leadership Team

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Food-Safe Schools Action Guide

- Connections between behavior-based food safety programs and a food safety culture:
  - Strong leadership
  - Founded on people
  - Relies on strong partnerships
  - Focuses on the why
  - Effective communication
### Handwashing - Traditional vs. Behavioral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I’m watching</td>
<td>- We agree, together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed</td>
<td>Customer focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 20 seconds</td>
<td>- The right thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job specific</td>
<td>Communicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Only when…</td>
<td>- Consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t have time</td>
<td>Marketed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Others know why</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings - Handwashing

• 31 school managers trained on personal hygiene and proper cleaning and sanitizing.
• 29 schools documented a Standard Operating Procedure for handwashing.
• Nearly all (36) hand washing facilities were conveniently located and accessible for employees
• However…
## Key Findings - Handwashing

### Employee Handwashing Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Activity</th>
<th>Total Observations</th>
<th>Employee observed washing hands properly and when required</th>
<th>Employee observed washing hands improperly</th>
<th>Employee observed failing to wash hands when required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediately before engaging in food prep</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>51 (37.2)</td>
<td>30 (21.9)</td>
<td>56 (40.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before donning new gloves or changing gloves</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>39 (27.1)</td>
<td>31 (21.5)</td>
<td>74 (51.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After soiling hands during food preparation or service activities</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>18 (17.3)</td>
<td>20 (19.2)</td>
<td>66 (63.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After handling soiled equipment, dishes or utensils</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>7 (7.2)</td>
<td>17 (17.5)</td>
<td>73 (75.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After touching body parts, coughing/sneezing; blowing nose; eating or drinking</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3 (3.8)</td>
<td>12 (15.2)</td>
<td>64 (81.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switching between handling raw animal foods and ready-to-eat foods</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 (66.7)</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>8 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Observations</strong></td>
<td>575</td>
<td>122 (21.2)</td>
<td>111 (19.3)</td>
<td>342 (59.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings – Consumers

- About half washed hands before food preparation
- Over half either did not wash or rinse hands after handling meat packaging and throwing away trash
- Most hand washing did not follow guidelines—warm water, soap, 20 seconds
- Cloth towels used often, paper towels sometimes used more than once
- 90 of 123 participants used a food thermometer, and 26 of them did so incorrectly
Key Findings – Consumers

• Food safety messages were not conveyed in a clear manner, humor may have lessened importance.

• Participants want a specific message

• Ads Council messages would not impact behavior
Strategies for Changing Behaviors

• Food safety training improves knowledge, but training alone does not improve most behaviors

• Workplace infrastructure
  - Clear communication of expectations and consequences when not followed

• Simple interventions such as persuasive signs and contests can help to improve behavior
Strategies for Changing Behaviors

- Attitudes
- Subjective Norms (Environment)
- Perceived Behavioral Controls

Behavioral Intention
Creating a Positive Habit
Creating a Positive Habit
Behavior Change: Storytelling

- Behavior change through stories
  - Persuasive
    - Emotion and conflict
  - Stimulate cognitive curiosity
  - Motivate employees to probe further
  - Develop mental solutions
Behavior Change: Storytelling

Advancing Food Safety Through Behavior Change; 2017 Consumer Food Safety Education Conference
“Champions don’t do extraordinary things. They do ordinary things, but they do them without thinking, too fast for the other team to react. They just follow the habits they’ve learned.”

- Tony Dungy
Strategies for Changing Behaviors

• Customize your food safety programs and training.
  - Generational
  - Gender
  - Literacy

• Focus on what employees can do – not what only you as managers control.
Questions and Comments?