SOCIAL MARKETING TO PROMOTE NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

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Overview

- Household Food Security
- Nutrition Assistance Programs
- Social Marketing/Social Marketing Process
- Application of Social Marketing Process to Nutrition Assistance Programs
  - Planning and Strategy Development
  - Developing and Pretesting Concepts, Messages, and Materials
  - Implementing the Program
  - Assessing Effectiveness and Making Refinements
- Directions for Future Research
Household Food Security

Food secure

- **High food security**: have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Food insecure

- **Low food security**: unable to acquire enough food because they have insufficient money and other resources for food.
Food Insecurity in the U.S.

- 17.2 million households with low food security in 2010
- Higher rates among households:
  - near or below the Federal poverty line
  - with single parents
  - identifying as black or Hispanic
  - in large cities

Note: Food-insecure households include those with low food security and very low food security.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

The USDA administers 15 nutrition assistance programs serving approximately one in four Americans each year.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
Use of Nutrition Assistance Programs

- Underutilization of resources.
  - 1 in 3 people who are eligible for SNAP do not receive the benefit.
  - Nearly half of the children who are eligible for free and reduced price breakfast do not participate.

- Efforts are needed to:
  - Improve access
  - Increase awareness and participation
  - Build capacity
Social Marketing

- Social marketing: application of commercial marketing strategies to develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion programs

- Social marketing offers a promising technique for enhancing public awareness and use of nutrition assistance programs

- Social marketing represents a powerful tool for engaging both the recipients and advocates of social or political change
Examples of Social Marketing

- CDC VERB Campaign
  - Improve adolescents’ knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about physical activity; increase opportunities and support for physical activity.

- Fruits and Veggies: More Matters (formally 5-A-Day)
  - Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
Social Marketing Process

Distribute/promote programs; evaluate exposure, processes, and outcomes

Assessing Effectiveness and Making Refinements
Evaluate program impact; refine program.

Planning and Strategy Development
Identify target audiences; develop communication plans and objectives; needs assessment; develop evaluation plans.

Developing & Pre-testing Concepts, Messages, and Materials
Develop/evaluate messages; pre-testing of marketing strategies.

Implementing the Program
Application of Social Marketing to Nutrition Assistance Programs

- **Planning & Strategy Development:** develop partnerships, specify priorities, outputs and outcomes
- **Assessing Effectiveness & Making Refinements:** track trends in food security and the food environment
- **Developing & Pre-testing Concepts & Materials:** consumer research to assess aspects of the food environment
- **Implementing the Program:** foster community awareness and involvement and increase access to food assistance
Planning and Strategy Development

Implement consumer research with hunger advocates and food insecure populations; discern areas of need to inform program objectives.

Establish key partnerships; build interdisciplinary teams; involve stakeholders from multiple sectors; engage multiple perspectives to inform program objectives.

Develop communication and evaluation plans consistent with the community needs and the organizational processes of stakeholders.
Developing and Pretesting Materials

- Qualitative research with target audiences
- Formative evaluation of program messages and distribution channels
Implementing the Program

Promote nutrition assistance programs

Evaluate program exposure, processes, and outputs

Identify and evaluate physical, social, and economic factors
Assessing Effectiveness and Making Refinements

1. Evaluate program impact
2. Compare program objectives with outcomes
3. Evaluate program processes and impacts serve to guide corresponding program refinements
Priorities for Future Research

Descriptive Research
- Characterize experiences and coping strategies of food insecure populations; examine barriers to participation; examine individual, community, social factors, and food system factors related to food insecurity; assess challenges to and resources for reaching at risk populations.

Intervention Research
- Implement and evaluate campaigns to raise awareness of nutrition assistance programs; assess creative solutions to improve program uptake; assess policy level interventions on school and individual participation in nutrition assistance.

Methodological Research
- Improve measures of food insecurity and participation in nutrition assistance programs; conduct longitudinal studies of food insecurity and participation in nutrition assistance programs; assess short- and long-term impact of participation in food assistance programs on food insecurity and health outcomes.
Conclusions

- Despite recent economic hardship in the U.S., nutrition assistance programs remain underutilized.

- Efforts are needed to improve access, bolster program capacity, raise awareness and increase participation in nutrition assistance programs.

- Social marketing can potentially be an effective means to plan and evaluate public health efforts to raise awareness of and participation in nutrition assistance programs.
Questions?

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