Setting the Educational Foundation: Needs Assessment

PEPS 691 • Extension and Adoption

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Program Area: Nutrition Education for Wellness
Projects: Community Nutrition, Health Promotion, Diabetes Education, Consumer Food Safety

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Learning objectives:

The student will understand the importance of needs assessments.

The student will become familiar with various methods of gathering information for a needs assessment.
Why do needs assessments?

To know how best to serve your clients.

What is a needs assessment?

Process of gathering specific information on a specific population or community.

Helps differentiate between needs, wants, and interests.

Helps set priorities and identify program focus, which helps us develop Extension programs and outreach.
How do you do a needs assessment?

Use a variety of methods to collect data.

Takes time and effort.

Determine / define your target population.

Think about what information would help you develop your Extension program.
Methods of gathering information:

Client survey

Focus groups
  Example: Vegetable Education Project

  Attitudes
  Consumption patterns
  Shopping behaviors
  Meal planning
  Barriers to increasing consumption
  Motivators to preparing and serving more
  Preferences for education
Methods of gathering information:

- Key informants
- Advisory group
- Professional colleagues
- Leaders
- Population data
- Media topics / stories
- Combination of methods
Diabetes Detection and Prevention Project

Adults with diabetes (type 2)

Informal polling of clients
Local diabetes center board of directors
Local health professionals

Involvement in local diabetes center
Increased screening
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Helps us as Extension educators to know how best to serve our clientele.

First step in program planning.

Takes time and effort.

Uses a variety of methods to gather information.
Needs Assessment articles / references


