

Title of Intervention: Peer education through groups in the worksite setting

Intervention Strategies: Supportive Relationships, Campaigns and Promotions

Purpose of the Intervention: To increase fruit and vegetable intake among lower socioeconomic, multicultural employees

Population: Labor and trades blue-collar employees, multicultural, lower socioeconomic status

Setting: Public employers in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona (county governments, city governments, public universities, community colleges and public school districts); worksite-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Supportive Relationships:** An employee in each intervention group was recruited to be a peer educator. These employees were highly central within the group in terms of communication ties and flow. Peer educators were expected to spend about two hours per week discussing eating fruits and vegetables with co-workers. Peer educators learned five persuasive communication strategies (foot-in-the-door, fear appeal, benefits, peer pressure and questioning). They also learned ways to initiate informal conversations about fruits and vegetables in one-on-one interactions, small group discussions or presentations at safety or staff meetings. Some examples of these techniques include noticing what a co-worker brought for lunch, using a media story to start a conversation and hosting contests, potluck meals and group discussions.
- **Campaigns and Promotions:** The Five a Day Guidebook contained nine themed booklets. The peer educators handed out one booklet each month. They contained culturally and regionally appropriate nutrition information to influence knowledge, attitudes, stages of change, skills and barriers. Peer educators also provided one item each month to help co-workers practice dietary skills. Items included a water bottle, recipe book, sample produce and vegetable seeds.

Theory: Transtheoretical Model, Social Cognitive Theory, Communication strategies

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Peer educators
- **Training:** 16-hour training program over an 8-week period for peer leaders included presentations, group discussions and role playing to cover a range of topics: a) the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables; b) cultural trends in dietary practices; c) methods of incorporating the topic of fruits and vegetables in informal communication at work, gaining compliance and motivating behavior change; and d) peer educator's role and responsibilities as peer educators in the study
- **Technology:** Not mentioned
- **Space:** Not mentioned
- **Budget:** \$1800 per peer educator
- **Intervention:** Promotional items (water bottles, recipes, seeds), Five a Day materials
- **Evaluation:** Food frequency questionnaires and intake records, daily activity logs

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Group randomized trial
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Fruit and vegetable intake was measured with 24-hour intake recall and food frequency questions
 - Peer educator daily logs were used to record interactions and activities

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** Not measured
- **Long Term Impact:** Members of peer education groups significantly increased fruit and vegetable intake by the completion of the program and continued the behavior six months later.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: Not mentioned

Citation(s):

Buller, D. B., C. Morrill, et al. (1999). "Randomized trial testing the effect of peer education at increasing fruit and vegetable intake." *J Natl Cancer Inst* 91(17): 1491-500.