

Title of Intervention: "Food for Thought"

Intervention Strategies: Campaigns and Promotions

Purpose of the Intervention: To encourage employees to select lower-caloric food during lunch

Population: Employees at the National Institute of Health

Setting: An employee cafeteria; worksite-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- Campaigns and Promotions: The "Food for Thought" intervention was a media-based, nutritional game designed to influence food choices in cafeteria settings. Large, attractive posters were hung at the entrance to the cafeteria serving line to inform employees how to play the game, what prizes were available and when the game began. Prizes were also displayed in the dining room. The "Food for Thought" game was designed primarily to impart specific nutritional information, such as calories, about the foods normally served for lunch in the cafeteria. It consisted of fifty two cards, complete with the requisite numbers and suits. Each card contained a specific nutritional message regarding either a particular food item or a nutritional comparison of alternative food choices. Overall, the messages emphasized a lower calorie, nutritionally well balanced meal. The messages were presented in a humorous style, with each card attractively decorated by a professional artist. The messages and format were developed for adults. To play the game, employees took one card each day from a conveniently located dispenser as they moved through the serving line. To encourage them to participate and save the cards, incentives were offered. Using the playing card motif, at the end of four weeks, a small poster was available to employees who had collected (or traded with other employees) "two pairs" or "three of a kind." At the end of six weeks, employees could win a large composite poster of all fifty-two cards if they had a "full house." A complete deck of cards was the prize at the end of eight weeks for employees who had collected "four of a kind"

Theory: Consumer Information Processing Model

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Artist to design cards, food service staff
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Inventory control cash register system
- Space: Card display
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Posters, flyers, intervention cards, prizes
- Evaluation: Sales records

Evaluation:

- Design: Cohort
- Methods and Measures:
 - Food item sales recorded by an inventory control cash register system
 - Caloric content of food items calculated

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: On the average, customers purchased significantly fewer calories.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: A program to encourage choice of healthy food items is best conducted where food selections will occur, rather than in a classroom or a clinic.

Citation(s):

Zifferblatt, S. M., C. S. Wilbur, et al. (1980). "A new direction for public health care: changing cafeteria eating habits." *J Am Diet Assoc* 76(1): 15-20.