Smarter Lunchrooms Movement: Beyond The Assessment

Presented By:
Amy Funk, MSA & Deloris Walker, MPH
University of Illinois Extension
Who has heard of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement?
What will I learn today?

Today, I will learn...

• About the *Smarter Lunchrooms Movement*
• Examples of low cost/no cost changes I can make in the lunchroom
• How to diagnose the lunchroom with fresh eyes
• About positive communication cues
• Ways to improve student/staff rapport in the lunchroom
Let’s get down to the basics

Origins

The Smarter Lunchroom Movement began in 2009 at the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs (the B.E.N. Center) by Dr. Brian Wansink & Dr. David Just

Mission

To equip school lunchrooms with evidence-based tools that improve child eating behaviors and thus improve the health of children

Core Values

- To use low cost, or no cost, solutions
- To focus on the lunchroom environment
- To promote healthful eating behaviors
- To create sustainable changes in the lunchroom that guide smarter choices

Source: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/about-us
What exactly is “behavioral economics”?

The study of how environmental cues affect how consumers choose and enjoy foods.
What exactly is a “Smarter Lunchroom”?

A Smarter Lunchroom applies research-based methods to get kids to eat better, improve the bottom line & decrease waste!

25-50% of Food Service Directors in Illinois are aware of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

http://articles.extension.org/sites/default/files/ScorecardPPT-FINAL.pdf
Smarter Lunchrooms
Makeover Process

• Evidence-Based
• Simple
• Low cost/no cost changes to the lunchroom

• Improved participation
• Improved profits
• Decreased waste
• Healthier US School Challenge

SLM concepts

- Portion size
- Taste expectations
- Smart pricing
- Suggestive selling
- Visibility
- Convenience
Manage Portion Sizes

- Keep portion size to one serving
- Use pre-portioning when feasible (e.g. ketchup, mayo, desserts, etc.)
- Use smaller serving utensils for less healthy a-la-carte items (e.g. high calorie salad dressing)
- Use squeeze bottles with smaller openings

People serve themselves almost 13% less when using smaller spoons, and almost 24% less when using smaller plates and bowls!
Taste Expectations

- Use contrasting colors
- Use appealing containers for pre-packaged foods
- Place whole fruit in colorful bowl/basket
  - Schools have seen up to a 105% increase in sales!
- Give descriptive names to foods
- Use menu boards or posters outside the cafeteria
- Ensure receptacles are away from dining students
- Keep sneeze-guard clean

NEAT, CLEAN, ATTRACTIVE & INVITING
Improve Visibility

- Display foods more visibly
- Place healthiest entrée first on service line, or in most visible location
- Rearrange drink coolers so healthy beverages are in front
- Put fruits and veggies in prominent places on service line, including point of sale

The first item in the service line has an 11% selection advantage over the items that follow it, so give healthy foods the advantage!
Convenience

- Create a Grab & Go “Healthy Food” convenience line
- Place the fruit near the register
- Pre-slice or bag healthy foods as a “grab and go” item
- Place white milk first and stacked higher so more convenient to reach
- Place treats/a la carte items behind counter so students have to ask for them

If you make healthy foods the most convenient, people are 48% more likely to take them!
YOUR TURN

DIAGNOSE THE LUNCHROOM
EXAMPLE 1: FRUIT, SNACKS, AND MILK

Study these food service areas for fruit, snacks, and milk. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
EXAMPLE 1: FRUIT, SNACKS, AND MILK

Study these food service areas for milk. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
EXAMPLE 2: SERVING LINES

Study these serving lines. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

 Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
EXAMPLE 2: SERVING LINES

Study these serving lines. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
EXAMPLE 3: ENTRANCES AND DINING

Study these entrances and dining areas. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
EXAMPLE 3: ENTRANCES AND DINING

Study these entrances and dining areas. How could they be changed to help “nudge” students to make healthier food choices?

Which Smarter Lunchrooms interventions and/or Principles would you use?
Prompting

SUGGESTIVE SELLING
Positive Communication Cues
&
Student/Staff Rapport
Perception Is Reality
Think-Pair-Share
Positive Communication Cues

• Greeting

• Serving

• Point of Sale

• “Hello! Would you like to try the Ratatouille Spaghetti today?

• “The green beans go well with the spaghetti, would you like to try that?

• “You can make that a meal with a juicy orange”
Positive Communication Cues
Positive Communication Cues

• Let’s change the perception

• We can control the situation

• Make positive differences
Positive Communication Cues

• Choose two occasions from the first column

• Take turns reading the practice cues
Student Rapport Role Play

• Remain positive
• Control the situation
• Improve the lunchroom atmosphere
Student Nutrition Action Committee

- What is SNAC?
- What are the benefits?
- What are SNAC’s responsibilities?
- How do I build a SNAC?
Additional Resources

• University of Illinois Extension
  – In-person SLM assessment, makeover & evaluation guidance
  – Additional in-person SLM training

• Smarterlunchrooms.org
  – Best practices for lunchrooms
  – Videos
  – Real school success stories
Thank you!