Your Role in Food Insecurity Training

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Institution: St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
Group Leader: Tang Her
Group Member: Shawn Anderson and Mai Xiong

Learning objectives

- Gain a better understanding of what food insecurity is, its prevalence and how college students are impacted nationally and on our campus
- Provide resources and skills/tips for faculty and staff to be prepared with engaging in supportive and empathic conversations with students around food insecurity

Overview of Training

This training is part of the YOUR ROLE IN… 5 part series of trainings: Diversity and inclusion, housing insecurity, FOOD INSECURITY, student academic success and mental health

- Length: 2 Hours, break after part 1
- Part 1
  - What is food insecurity?
  - How can you support students?
- Part 2
  - Campus Programs

At the completion of this training, you will receive a FOOD INSECURITY SAFE SPACE certificate to place in your office

Part 1: What is Food Insecurity?

At a Glance

- Food insecurity is "limited or uncertain access to nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways due to limited financial resources" (Payne-Syurges, D. C., Tjaden, A., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., & Arria, A. M., 2018).
- 11.1% (national average) of U.S. households experienced food insecurity in 2018 (USDA, 2019)
- Households with children that have income near or below the poverty line, single parent households, households in principal cities, Black and Hispanic households and men and women living alone experience food insecurity above the national average (USDA, 2019)

Why is there food insecurity?

Financial

- In 1990, 78% of the total cost of education per student was state-funded compared with 39% in 2011-2012
- Pell Grants used to covered the majority of the cost of attendance for students but now only covers about one-third of tuition fees and room and board
- College students today face higher-than-ever cost of attendance (tuition and fees, room, and board, books, etc.)
- College students who face food insecurity also face housing insecurity
- Increase in nontraditional students, those who "fit one of six criteria: they attend college part-time, are employed full-time, are financially independent, must provide for dependents, are single parent, or do not have a high school diploma" (Cady et al., 2016)

(AAC&U News, 2017/2018; Martinez, S. M., Frongillo, E. A., Leung, C., & Ritchie, L., 2018)

Who are at risk for food insecurity?

- Hispanic and Black students are at increased risk
- Students from low-income backgrounds and with history of food insecurity were at increased risk
- Students who live off-campus are more likely to experience food insecurity
- Students who receive financial aid are more likely to experience food insecurity
- Students who are first-generation are more likely to experience food insecurity
- Students who have an on-campus meal plan are still at risk due to cost of and limited meals in meal packages
- Nontraditional students
- Students who live on or near the poverty line

(Cady et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2018)

What are the impact of food insecurity on students?

- Mental health
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Lonely, hopeless, and overwhelmed
- Academic performance
  - Lower grade on exam, course grade, course completion, attendance problems, enrollment, etc.
- Personal Health
  - Diabetes
  - Obesity
  - Hypertension
  - Poor sleeping
  - Lower self-rated health
- Prone to housing insecurity
- Working multiple jobs or long hours

(Cady et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2018; Payne-Syurges, D. C., Tjaden, A., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., & Arria, A. M., 2018).

What does food insecurity mean for our campus?

Our campus is not immune to this problem. Based on these data, some of our students potentially face food insecurity.

Fontville College Demographics

- 4-year institution
- Student Population: 14,000 students
- Location: Metropolitan Area
- Students of color: 30%
- First-Generation: 59% freshmen class (2018)
- Retention: 53%
- 75% of enrolled students receive some form of financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships, work-study)

Why should we care?

- As an institution we promote student success and it is important to ensure we are meeting our mission and responsibility by providing assistance and resources to address student needs in order for students to be successful
- Students facing food insecurity are an invisible population on campus and food insecurity is a growing issues across campuses all over the nation and also impacts our students
- There is a lack of knowledge about the problem on campuses and lack of resource for students, therefore we need more awareness and support for these students
- Nutritious food is basic and tied to health
  - Most serious deaths can be significantly tied to healthy eating choices and lifestyle

(Cady et al., 2016)

How can you support students?

How to start/have conversation with students?

- Step 1: Acknowledge the situation
- Step 2: Guide the conversation
- Step 3: Provide assistance
- Step 4: Follow-Up

Step 1: Acknowledge the situation

Students usually have a hard time reaching out to others when they are dealing with issues. If a student confides information about their food insecurity make sure you do the following:

- Provide a comfortable place to have conversation
- Listen. Pay attention to details of the issue
- Be patient. Don't rush them to express their emotions

Step 2: Guide the conversation

Make sure that the conversation is focused on the student. Avoid disclosing too much information about yourself.

- Affirm how they may be feeling at the moment is okay
- Let them tell you what they want. Don't ask too many questions and if you do decide to ask questions, ask open-ended questions.
- Incorporate summarising/phrasing skills to make sure you understand the issue at hand

Step 3: Provide Assistance

Make sure when providing assistance that nothing is being forced onto the student. Every resource or problem given should be only recommendations to give students choices/options how they want to deal with their issue.

- Recommend and encourage services, programs, and events where students may get emergency food assistance
- Offer your support by walking students to on-campus resources and services
- Donate to your local food pantry or food shelf and on-campus pantry to help the food insecurity crisis

Step 4: Follow-Up

Staying in touch with students after assisting them can be a challenge but without following up the student could fall back into the same tough situation you helped them out of

- Show that you care and are thinking of them by communicating via email,text, or call periodically just to check in and see how they are doing
- Focus on the positive gains student has made from other resources recommended

Resources

- Feeding America
  a. Largest domestic hunger-relief organization that has a variety of programs to help those in need of nutritional assistance.
- The Salvation Army
  a. Organization that serves families and individuals on all aspects of life: Housing, Employment, Poverty, and educate.
- Second Harvest Heartland
  a. Nationwide network of over 200 food banks to serve the hungry

Other 'local' resources

- Church community meals
- Summer food programs
- Community food pantry
- Soup kitchens

References

AAC&U News. (2017, January/February). *Facts & Figures – Food and Housing Insecurities Disproportionately Hurt Black, First-Generation, and Community College Students.* Association of American Colleges & Universities. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/aacu-news/newsletter/facts-figures/jan-feb 2017

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BREAK

Part 2: Campus Programs

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Institution: St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
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Brought to you by Fontville College Residential Life, Mental Health Resource Center, Student Activities, and Campus Dining

Overview & Learning Objective

- Part 2 will focus on campus programs we plan to implement to tackle the issue of food insecurity on our campus. Staff and faculty will be provided with opportunities to become involved in helping us make efforts toward improving food security for students through a new food pantry program and fundraisers.
  - Campus programs
    - Food Pantry
    - Food Drive Competition
    - Trick-or-Canning
    - Online Recipe Book
    - Marketing

Review of Our Campus Demographics

Fontville College Demographics

- 4-year institution
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- Students of color: 30%
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What are our plans?

Food Pantry

- Easy to establish due to flexible ways of operating and "limited need for physical infrastructure"
- Benefit of being located on campus increasing accessibility for students
- Students would feel more comfortable using due to it being campus-run and seen as an campus resource

Fundraisers: Trick-or-canning, Food drive competition

- Benefit of promoting the resource to the campus and general community
- Great wide scale ways of collecting donated goods to stock pantry

Online Recipe Book

- Easy to put together and accessible to students since it is electronic and posted on pantry's webpage
- Gives opportunities for students and staff from various cultures to contribute and share different meals outside of american style meals using ingredients from pantry

(Mathews, 2015)

Food Pantry

The purpose of the food pantry is to provide accessible and nutritious food options to students who are experiencing food insecurity in an effort to support the academic performance, health and wellness of students, without fear of judgement.

Location: 214 Cherrywood Hall, across from Student Activities center

Hours for shopping: Tuesday 11-5pm, Friday 11-5pm

Hours for pre-pack bag pick-up (pick up in food pantry office 216): Tuesday 9-11am, Thursday 1-3pm

Who will run the pantry?

A committee consisting of (5-7) liaisons from administration/faculty/staff (Fontville College Residential Life, Mental Health Resource Center, Student Activities, and Campus Dining) and student organizations who will bring a wealth of different knowledge on working with students and campus partners in various capacities

- Responsible for understanding and implementing process and procedures that adhere to campus policies
- Responsible for the logistics of how, when, and where the pantry would be run
- Responsible for the primary maintenance and stock of pantry
- Responsible for outreach and communications for/about pantry to campus community
- Responsible for organizing fundraisers
- Responsible for overseeing student volunteers
- Biweekly meetings

Student volunteers

- Students can sign up to volunteer for the pantry
- Assist with weekly cleanliness and organization of pantry
- Assist with fundraising events
- Assist with outreach and communication for/about pantry to campus community
        (Mathews, 2015)

How will the pantry be stocked?

1. Donations from the campus community
   a. Campus community are welcome to make donations at all time
   b. There will be locations in all 4 collaborating departments and main student union space to collect donations from campus community that will be picked up on a weekly basis
2. Donations through collaborations with student organization, sports teams or other departments on campus during events
   a. Collaborate during their events to collect any food donations from participants for discounts or vouchers (eg. $1 discounts or vouchers on tickets for dances, sporting events, concession stands, etc.)
3. Fundraisers
   a. Trick-or-canning
   b. Food drive competition

How will the pantry be operated?

Confidentiality & Liabilities

- All staff and volunteers will be trained and sign confidentiality forms or agreement forms that will outline their roles and responsibilities on how they should interact with pantry users within and outside of pantry
- All food items in the pantry will follow food safety procedures and be monitored for spoilage and expiration, but users should know that the quality is not always guaranteed therefore a sign with this information will be listed on our website and inside the pantry
- To encourage anonymous use, students do not need to sign up to use the pantry nor will the pantry be staffed during open hours
- However, if students choose (and they are allowed to) to self-disclose to staff members about using the pantry and participate in the pre-pack bags for pick-up, this would not be considered anonymous use

(Mathews, 2015)

How will the pantry be operated?

Shopping-style Model

- 2 methods of shopping
  - Students walk through and select what they need since this method offers more options for students
    - In order to help track how many students use the pantry during opening hours, there will be a ticket number dispenser for students to take a number as they come in
    - Students will also pick up a form to write what items they shopped for in an effort to determine which food products are most popular and sought after
  - Students can request food ahead of time by filling an online request form and staff/volunteers can pre-pack bags for pickup
    - There will be a weekly inventory list on the website for students to review upon requesting their pre-pack bags
    - Students must put in their request 1 day prior to pick up

(Mathews, 2015)

How will the pantry be operated?

Shopping-style Model cont.

- Pantry will be a first-come-first serve basis
- Open hours will be during certain days and time frames each week (possibly twice a week)
- A staff will not be inside the pantry during shopping hours to allow students to use anonymously without fear of judgement
- Students who participate in pre-pack bags will pick up their bags during a different time frame to avoid traffic with anonymous users

(Mathews, 2015)

Food Drive Competition

- The purpose of this competition is to collect food donations for the food pantry to benefit college students in need of nutritious food and promote awareness to departments as well as students organizations about food insecurity on campus.
- An email will be sent out to departments and students organization about the event with an attached sign up sheet for those who are interested in participating.
- Departments and students organizations will self-select to join the competition.
- The competition will last a month; it will start at the beginning of the month and end at the end of the month.
- The food pantry staff will retrieve all food items from each department and count them to determine the winning department or student organization

Steps for the competition

- Step 1: Creating a flyer for the competition
  - The purpose of the event
  - Start and end dates of the competition
  - Food Party (pizza, sandwiches, tacos, etc.) for the department who collects the most dry goods
- Step 2: Empty boxes will be placed in each department or student organization spaces on campus at the beginning of month
- Step 3: Collect the boxes at end of month and count food items
- Step 4: Send out an email to the department or student organization who collected the most food donations for a food party

Trick-or-Canning Fundraiser

- The purpose of this fundraiser is to continue to stock our food pantry for students that may benefit from using this food assistance service.
- Goal of "trick-or-canning" is to collect as many donated canned/non-perishable foods from families in our community that are able to help others.
- Volunteers will go from door-to-door and ask for donations
- This event will need volunteers, in order to do that we will use social media platforms such as Facebook, instagram, twitter, etc. Communication via email/text. Flyers could be posted around the school about details of event and sign up options; as we want to give all students an opportunity to increase food security on campus.
- All volunteers that signed up will meet at one destination to go over expectations and where to bring your bags of non perishables.

Steps To Trick-or-Canning

- Step 1: Post information about fundraiser
  - What the fundraiser is?
  - Who is the food going to?
  - Date, time, and location of event
  - Where to sign up?
- Step 2: Contact all confirmed volunteers the designated meeting location
- Step 3: Split up in groups and assign each group area to go door to door to collect food
- Step 4: Once groups are done collecting meet at drop off location(food will be collected by student workers/members from program that will be instructed how to bring food back to the pantry)

Online Recipe Book/Newsletter

In collaboration with all students and cultural organizations on our campus, easy and inexpensive meals will be available for those that may not know how to maintain a healthy eating habit. The recipe book post/page will have a variety of meal choices from breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Students will be able to upload step by step instructions on how to cook quick and healthy meals on a budget.

The newsletter should be used to keep daily updates on details such as: open/close times for pantry, contact information for emergency food assistance, promotional events, how to volunteer, where to donate. The idea behind the newsletter is to be able to interact with consumers and donors in person and through a web interface platform.

Marketing

Communication will be the most important factor in increasing awareness of food insecurity issues and promoting our events and services that are fighting the cause. Members of the organization will create workshops to inform students about what is food insecurity and how it looks on our campus.

Places to advertise or spread our message/events/programs:

School Newspaper   Local radio station

Dining halls   Residence halls

Counseling Centers   Student affairs offices

Computer labs   Library

Congratulations!!!!

You have completed the FOOD INSECURITY training. Your certificate will be emailed to you following this training!

We encourage you to hang this certificate in a visible area in your office. We hope that by hanging this certificate in your office students will feel encouraged and safe to form conversations around this topic with you.

References

Mathews, B. (2015, September). *Campus food pantry toolkit*. Serving the Nation's Students College & University Food Bank Alliance. Retrieved from
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