Abstract Title

Simulation-based training and role playing to increase nutrition facilitators' knowledge and perceived self-efficacy to promote vegetable consumption among 3 to 5 year-old children.

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Abstract

Background: Much is known about interventions that promote child intake of vegetables. However, nutrition training for facilitators to deliver interventions in child cares comes with many challenges. Simulation-based training assists facilitators in transferring knowledge to real-world situations yet use in dietetic training is limited.

Objective: Use simulation-based and role playing approaches for training facilitators to implement a Food Literacy Intervention Program to promote consumption of vegetables to preschoolers in child cares.

Methods: Dietetic and health sciences students were recruited as nutrition facilitators. The development of three 90-minute training sessions was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory and Adult Learning. Facilitators were paired in teams (dietetic - health sciences dyad). Facilitators were given problem-based scenarios and ask to role play the intervention (i.e., introduce the vegetable, read the story interactively, build a relationship with children, set group rules, and demonstrate how they would handle a problematic situation and why (e.g., children refusing to eat, crying or ignoring the facilitator)). A group debrief was conducted at the end of each session. Facilitators provided feedback through surveys and field notes (post-intervention).

Results: Eleven facilitators were trained (8 from dietetics). All facilitators agreed training was relevant, clear, well-organized, easy to understand, and added new knowledge and skills. Facilitators reported self-efficacy to implement the vegetable intervention. Qualitative comments highlighted the positive aspects of training, opportunity to practice their roles and learn from their peers. Field notes showed that strategies presented, as well as new ones learned, were applied across child cares.

Conclusion: Using simulation-based and role playing approaches for training allowed students with limited real-life experiences to incorporate useful knowledge and enhance self-efficacy and provided opportunities to collaborate and learn from peers.

Significance to the field of dietetics: The results support use of simulation-based training and inform RD interested in developing training resources for dietetic students.