Northwest (Region 10)

ROTAC

Rural Opioid
Technical Assistanc
Collaborative

Funding Acknowledgement

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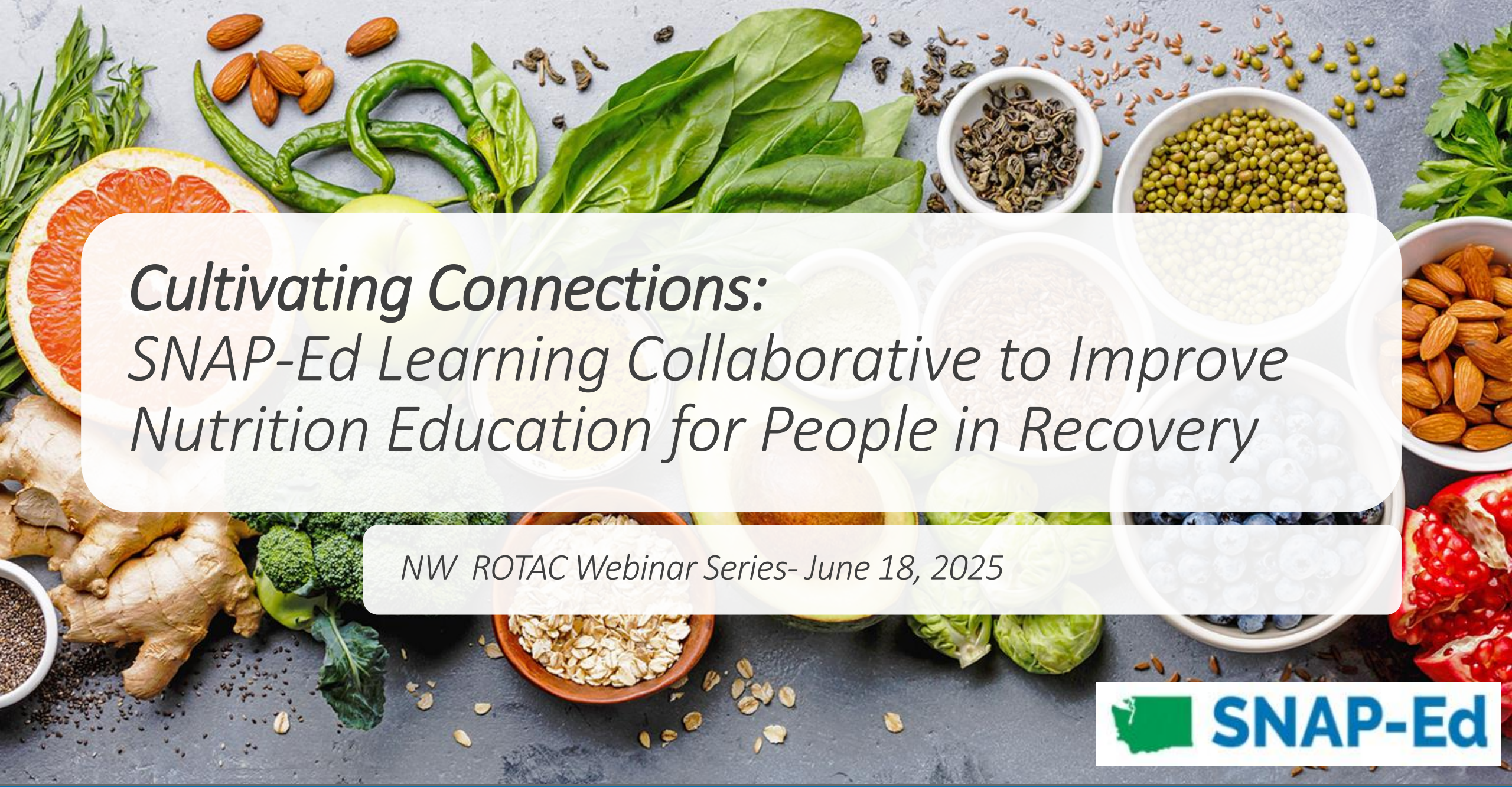

Cultivating Connections:
SNAP-Ed Learning Collaborative to Improve Nutrition Education for People in Recovery

NW ROTAC Webinar Series- June 18, 2025

SNAP-Ed

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1. **mail:**
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Esta institución ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

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Pacific Southwest Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Regional Center

Dr. Annie Lindsey, UNLV

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are:

- Learn about the SNAP-Ed program and consider opportunities for partnerships

- Gain a greater understanding of the unique nutrition education needs of people experiencing and recovering from substance use disorder and the role SNAP-Ed can play in providing responsive care

- Discover how Learning Collaborative model is useful in strengthening staff skills and knowledge

SNAP-Ed

SNAP-Ed

What is SNAP-Ed?

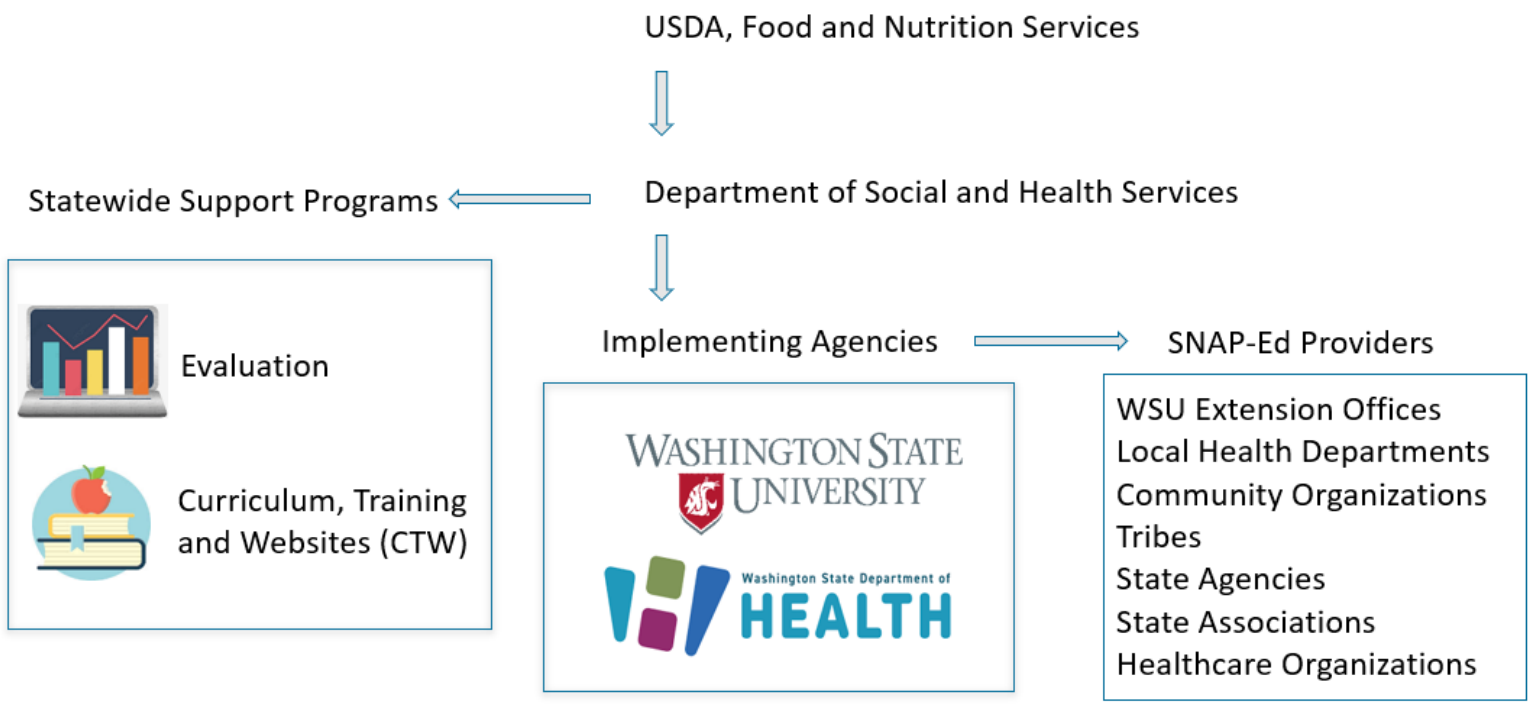
SNAP-Ed focuses on good nutrition, stretching food dollars, living physically active lifestyles, and engaging partners to build healthier communities. This helps to improve access to healthier lives where people live, work, shop, play, eat, and learn.

SNAP-Ed supports its mission through:

- Nutrition education
- Policy, systems, and environmental strategies
- Social marketing

SNAP-Ed

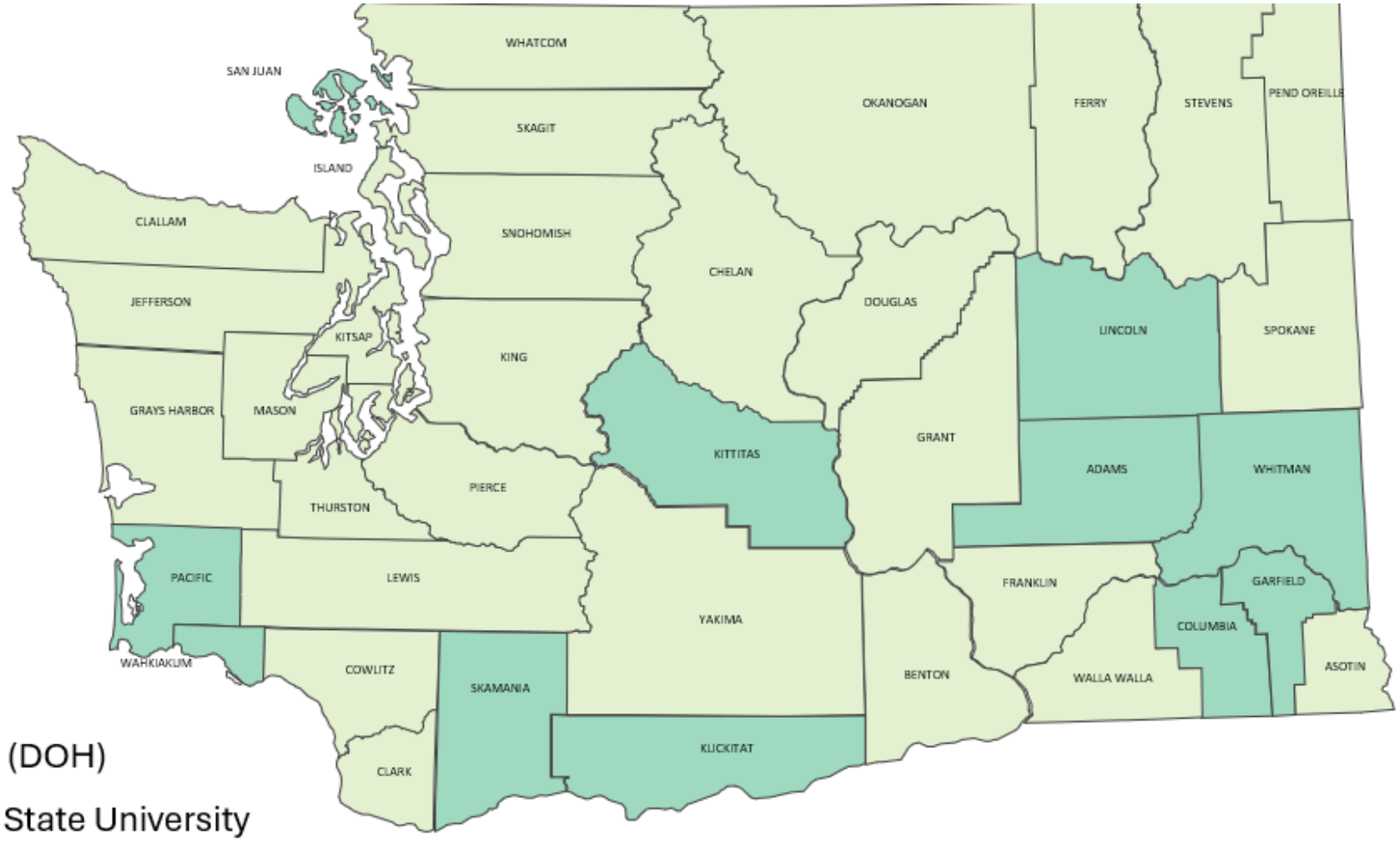
SNAP-Ed Program Structure



SNAP-Ed

SNAP-Ed Location and Composition

- Around 60 Providers
- Reach over 1.5 million people



Department of Health (DOH)

DOH and Washington State University

SNAP-Ed Eligibility

Individual:

SNAP (Basic Food) Participants

Qualifying for SNAP, Medicaid, WIC or other means-tested programs

Community:

50% or greater meet eligibility requirements

- Free-Reduced Price Lunch
- Census Track
- Food Banks/Pantries

Social Ecological Framework

National, state, and local policies, built environment design (crosswalks, bike lanes, accessible grocers)

Norms and policies within places we work, shop, eat, play etc.

Community norms and activities around eating and movement

Relationships, cultures, socioeconomic status

Personal knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, finances

SNAP-Ed

Nutrition and Physical Activity Education

Direct Education includes class series using approved curricula.

- Schools, affordable housing sites, community spaces

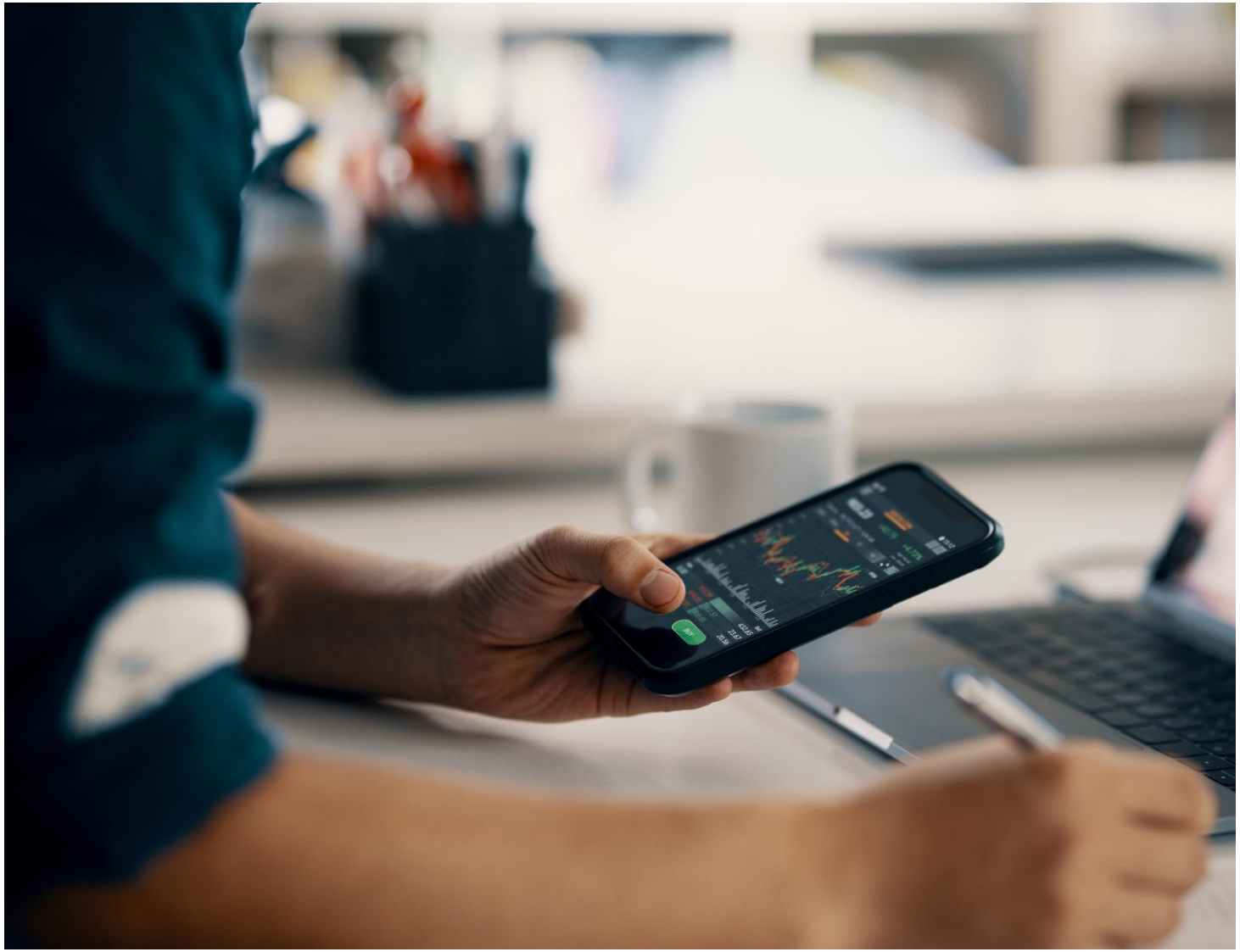
Indirect Education are activities and materials that support education.

- Food tastings and recipe demos
- Flyers and handouts
- One-time events
- Tabling

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE)

Change interventions that address socioeconomic factors making the healthy options more accessible, easier, and the default.

- Policies and staff training
- Space layout and design
- Community gardens
- Train-the trainer
- Built environment
- Increased access to and procurement of locally produced foods



Social Marketing

Combines commercial marketing methods with public health approaches to achieve significant, large-scale public benefits.

- Banners and signage
- Videos
- Social Media
- Advertisements

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Nutrition Education in Recovery Settings

- Lack of access/agency
- Limited focus on nutrition support
- Immediate needs vs. long-term disease prevention

PSEs are key – staff training, promotional materials, meal service, wrap around service integration

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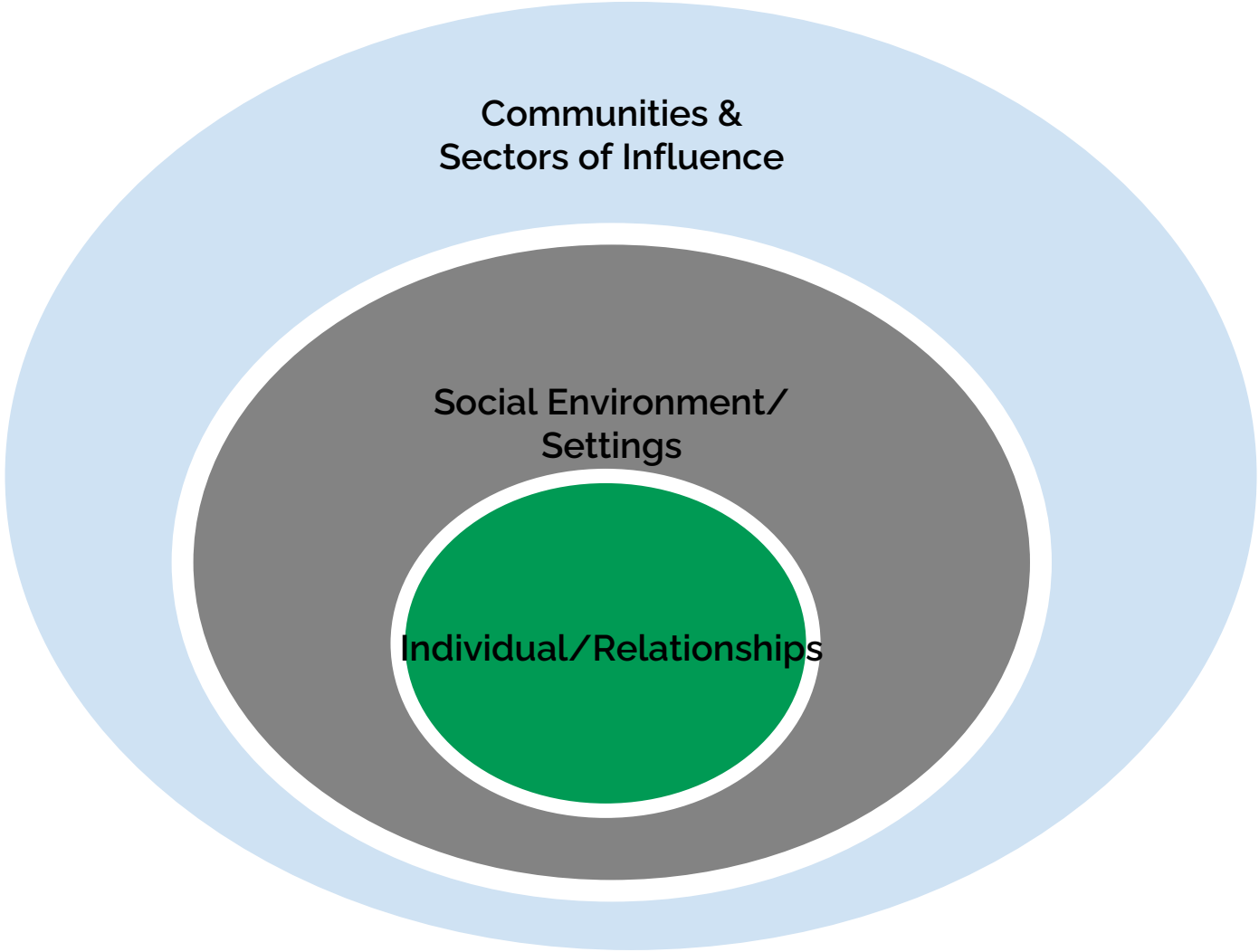
Critical Information

Why a trauma-informed approach is critical



Goals of Project

- Bridge silos and advance connection
- Amplify community voices
- Co-develop curricula, tools, and resources

Formative Research

Literature review

Key informant interviews

Focus groups and testing

Learning Collaborative

Mutual capacity building: Evidence-base and data gathering

Interviews, focus groups, and testing with site staff and clients

Curriculum recommendations and review

Learning Collaborative Structure

Learning Collaborative Model included CTW team and 10 SNAP-Ed providers from across the state with experience and interest in this topic

- 10 members had previously participated in Leah's Pantry training
- 7 had received training to facilitate the Food Smarts curriculum
- 5 had professional experience working with individuals experiencing substance use disorder and in recovery settings
- 4 had lived personal or familial experiences with substance use and recovery

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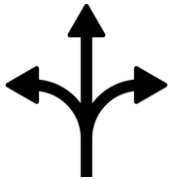
Food Smarts Adapted for Recovery

Nutrition and recovery science



Flexibility and responsiveness

Weight and body image

Facilitator preparedness

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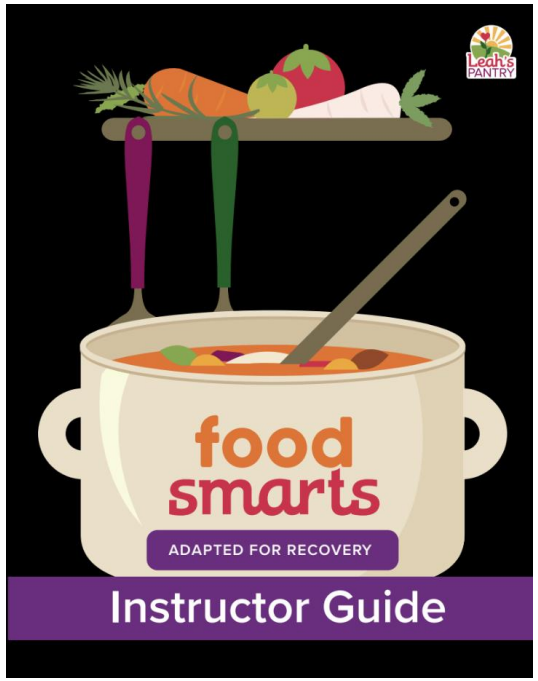
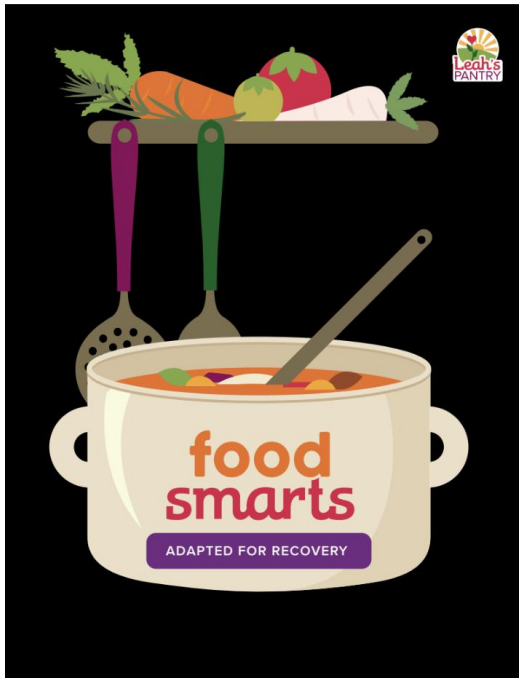
Adapted Curriculum





Food, Mood, & Energy // WEEK 3

Lesson Objectives:

» Identify ways to use food to improve mood and energy
» Identify tips for better sleep

Time	Topics	Workbook Reference
5 min.	Welcome and Taste Test	
10 min.	Check-in Question and Discussion in Pairs, Small groups, or Whole group: *Do you notice a connection between how you feel and the foods you eat?* *Describe a time you noticed that.*	
20 min.	Food, Mood, and Energy Gain an awareness of how to use food to improve mood and energy.	p. 18
10 min.	Movement or Mindfulness	
15 min.	Beyond Nutrition: Sleep Your Way to Health Identify tips for better sleep.	p. 21
25 min.	Cooking or Recipe Demonstration	
5 min.	Closing *What is something you enjoyed or learned about yourself during this workshop?*	

Lesson Sample

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Food, Mood, & Energy

» Gain an awareness of how to use food to improve mood and energy

Materials

» workbook p. 18

Desired Outcomes

» Participants will identify ways to use food to improve mood and energy.

Directions

1. Ask participants to describe the kinds of foods they crave when they are stressed, tired, or "down." Explain that many people crave sugar, caffeine, or highly processed snacks in these situations. These foods provide quick energy and pleasure, but they can also cause a crash when the energy wears off, ultimately making energy or mood even worse. Other people may skip meals when they feel anxious, tired, or in a hurry, which can also cause mood or energy crashes.
2. Ask participants if they crave specific foods or have specific eating habits related to their stage of recovery. Explain that many people who use drugs or are in drug treatment show increased preferences for sweets, in part because sugar intake causes dopamine release in the brain.
3. Explain that stress affects our mood and energy and influences how we feed ourselves, and how we feed ourselves influences our mood and energy levels. Getting help to reduce stress in our lives is important, but stress is inevitable. Food won't fix what is causing stress, but our food choices can help boost our mood and energy.
4. Review tips on Food, Mood, and Energy workbook page under "Improve your mood and energy with good food."
5. Add that when your blood sugar rises and crashes, your mood can too. Eating balanced snacks or meals regularly during the day can help keep your energy and mood more stable. Try pairing a protein or healthy fat with a carbohydrate to boost mood and energy and satisfy hunger. See "Snacking for Good Mood and Energy."
6. Review scenarios in workbook. Participants can discuss scenarios in pairs, small groups, or as a Whole group. Discuss advice you could give to the people in the scenarios.

Discussion Questions

» In what ways do your eating habits support your mood and energy?

» What are your energy and mood challenges?

» What part do your eating and drinking habits play?

» What else affects your energy and mood besides nutrition?

» Can you think of one or two simple ways you could help improve your mood and energy?

» What are some of your "go-to" snacks that keep you energized and satisfied?

Facilitation Tips

» Be aware that participants' mood and energy levels may also be affected by their stage of recovery. Depending on where they are in the recovery process, they may not have strong hunger or satiety cues and may not be able to identify the relationship between food, mood, and energy.

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Instructor Guide

SNAP-Ed

Food, Mood, and Energy

A good balanced diet is like building a fire with logs instead of sticks—your fire will burn bigger and longer.

Many people crave **sugar**, **caffeine**, or **highly processed snacks** when stressed, tired, or "down." These provide quick energy or pleasure. But they can also cause a crash when the energy wears off, ultimately making energy or mood even worse. Or people may skip meals when anxious, tired, or in a hurry. This can also cause mood or energy crashes and lead to overeating unhealthy food later.

Improve your mood and energy with good food.

A diet rich in **healthy fats** and **fiber**, such as found in whole grains, nuts, and seeds, helps you stay full for hours so your energy doesn't crash. **Protein** fills you up and provides amino acids needed for steady moods.

Vitamins and **minerals** from colorful fruits and vegetables can help the body stay strong and adapt to stress. For example:

- **Vitamins A** and **C** are found in many red and orange fruits and vegetables. They protect you from illness as well as fight inflammation (irritation) so your body feels its best.
- **B vitamins** are known as "stress vitamins" because they are so important in helping your body adapt to changes. These are found in dark leafy greens, as well as nuts, seeds, whole grains, and some animal products.

There are many more vitamins and minerals found in fruits and vegetables. That's why doctors recommend: **"Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables every day!"**

If you are feeling low energy, unfocused, moody, or agitated, try getting hydrated. **Water** helps to bring nutrients to your muscles so your body can feel more energized. Also, your brain is mostly water, so drinking water can help:

- improve concentration, memory, and learning
- balance your mood and emotions

Eating balanced snacks or meals regularly during your day can keep your energy and mood from plummeting.

TRY IT! Now read about some people struggling with mood and energy, on the following page.

Participant Materials

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Food, Mood, and Energy (CONTINUED)

What advice would you give to the people below?

Jasmine is in early stages of substance use recovery. She is living on her own for the first time after leaving a residential treatment program. She is excited to be able to plan and prepare her own meals, but she's on a tight budget and worries about spending too much on food. She doesn't have time to eat breakfast before work, and she brings a sandwich for lunch. By 11 a.m., she's starving and eats her sandwich. She's usually hungry again and has low energy in the afternoon, so she buys chips or soda from the vending machines at work. She cooks dinner for herself most nights and enjoys trying new recipes.

- How do Jasmine's eating habits support her mood and energy? How do they support her financial plans? What about her recovery goals?
- What are some additional ways Jasmine can use food to improve her energy?
- Besides dietary changes, what else could she try?

Oscar is in long-term substance use recovery. He lives with his wife and kids and his elderly mother. He starts work at 11:00 a.m. so he makes himself a big breakfast of eggs and bacon after he helps his kids get ready for school. He's usually so full that he feels sluggish for a couple of hours and drinks coffee to feel better. He starts feeling hungry in the afternoon and snacks on fruit and nuts. His wife makes dinner for the family, and Oscar heats up leftovers when he gets home at 9:00 p.m. Oscar feels bad that he doesn't eat meals with his family very often.

- How do Oscar's eating habits support his mood and energy? How do they support his recovery?
- What are some additional ways Oscar can use food to improve his energy? Besides dietary changes, what else could he try?

TRY IT! Now write a few sentences about yourself in the style of the stories above.

In what ways do your eating habits support your mood and energy? What are your energy and mood challenges? What part do your eating and drinking habits play? If you can, think of one or two simple ways you could use food to help improve your mood and energy while also supporting your recovery.

Participant Materials

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Snacking for Good Mood and Energy

- A snack is like a small meal and should be just as nutritious as your meals.
  - Plan ahead and carry a healthy snack with you when you are going out for a long time.
  - Keep quick and easy snacks around such as frozen fruit, bananas, nuts, cheese sticks or slices, hummus, or whole grain crackers.
  - Make sure you drink enough water! Dehydration can also contribute to low energy.
- Mood & Energy Boosting Snacks
  - Try pairing a protein or healthy fat with a carbohydrate to boost mood and energy and satisfy hunger.

Protein and Healthy Fats:

- raw or toasted nuts
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- peanut butter or almond butter
- avocado
- cheese (slices, string cheese, etc.)
- cottage cheese
- hummus or bean dip
- greek yogurt
- hard boiled eggs
- edamame (soybeans)
- glass of milk

+

Carbohydrates:

Fruits and Vegetables:

- sliced apples, grapes, bell pepper, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, celery sticks, or any fruit and vegetable you like!

Whole Grains:

- whole grain crackers, baked tortilla chips, whole wheat tortillas, popcorn, whole grain granola bars

Quick & Easy Snack Ideas

Quick Quesadilla: Spread refried beans on a tortilla, add grated cheese. Microwave, add salsa, hot sauce, or avocado.

Snack Mix: Mix together unsweetened ready-to-eat cereal, dried fruit, and nuts in a sandwich bag for an on-the-go snack.

Hummus (Bean Dip) & Veggies: Scoop up hummus (or another bean dip) with your favorite cut veggies (e.g., carrot and celery sticks, cucumber slices, jicama)

Yogurt Fruit Parfait: Top low-fat yogurt with cut-up fruit and a little granola or dried cereal.

Baked Potato: Microwave small baking potato. Top with grated cheese and salsa.

Tuna Salad & Veggies: Mix canned tuna with a little mayonnaise, lemon juice, diced celery, and onion. Enjoy with cucumber slices or crackers. Try this with canned chicken!

Participant Materials

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Sleep Your Way to Health

Do you get enough rest?

Getting enough sleep is important for mental and physical health.
If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may be sleep deprived!

- Crave caffeine to get going in the morning, and "junk" food later in the day?
- Regularly fall asleep within five minutes of laying down?
- Unexpected weight gain?
- Have memory trouble?
- No energy to exercise?
- Get sick often?
- Want to take a nap right now?

Tips for better sleep

1. Be consistent. Stick to a schedule
2. Limit naps, if you can.
3. Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing, and at a comfortable temperature (try eye covers, blackout curtains, a noise machine, a fan, or earplugs).
4. Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smartphones, from the bedroom, cover glowing lights.
5. Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
6. Get some exercise.
7. Try a weighted blanket.
8. Place your hand on abdomen and take slow deep breaths through your nose.

TRY IT! Now think about the following questions:

- What do you do to try to get good sleep?
- How could the way you eat be affecting your sleep?
- Are there any tips on this list that you would like to try?

Participant Materials

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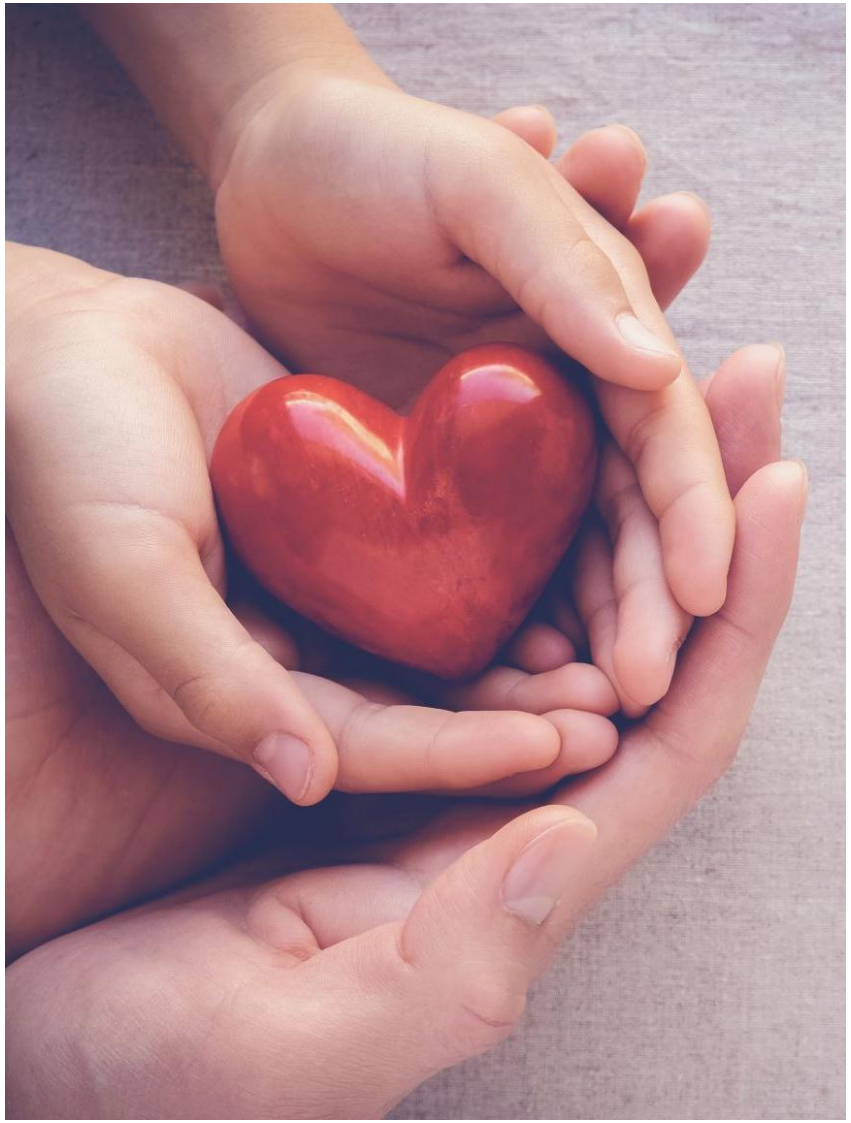

Key Project Takeaways:

- SNAP-Ed is uniquely positioned to offer impactful, compassionate, trauma-informed nutrition education with this audience.
- The Learning Collaborative model offers increased comfort and engagement among nutrition educators.
- The Learning Collaborative model provides opportunities for engagement across sectors to update curriculum materials.
- Curriculum that is adapted specifically for people in recovery increases engagement, relevancy, and supportive relationships.

Thank you so much for your time!

Contact:
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