

# Using a Social Support Approach to Impact Food and Physical Activity Choices

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# Objectives

**At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:**

- Describe how to create a nutrition and physical activity intervention using a social support approach
- List the challenges in creating and sustaining the group and how to overcome them
- Access resources related to social support methods

# Social Support

## Four Classes of Supportive Behaviors

- Positive Interactions
- Emotional Support
- Tangible Support
- Affection and Intimacy



# The Evidence on Peer Support

- **Peer support has long been shown to have a health protective effect**
- **Social Support has proven effective in:**
  - Weight loss and maintenance of that loss
  - Positively affecting self-care and outcomes among diabetics

# Differences between a social support approach and traditional nutrition education

## **Social Support**

- Peer leader
- Participants guide topics for nutrition education
- On-going support

## **Traditional**

- Professional leader
- Professional guides topics for nutrition education
- Support often limited to session

**Eat  
Smart:**

*It's a  
healthy  
start*



# Eat Smart: It's a healthy start!

- Maine Nutrition Network Social marketing campaign
- Stages of Change as the conceptual framework
- Audience
  - Adults participating in the Food Stamp Program with children under 19 years of age in the home
  - Emphasis on adults with food shopping and preparation responsibilities



# Eat Smart Clubs – (ESC)

- Began in 1999
- Benjamin Gottlieb provided training on Social Support for MNN partners
- MNN funded 7 partner agencies
  - 3 WIC sites, 3 UMCE sites and 1 Head Start site

# Eat Smart Clubs

- Used social support to encourage and support members to make changes in nutrition behaviors
- Met regularly over a specified period of time
- Addressed knowledge and skill building, goal setting, and reinforcement of healthy eating behaviors.
- Used Eat Smart campaign materials

## Guidelines for establishing healthy eating peer support groups or programs

- Get community input in developing the peer support group or program.
- Develop co-leadership between community professional(s) and the target population.
- Determine ideal meeting location, frequency of meetings and interval between sessions
- Recruit members
- Decide on format and content of sessions

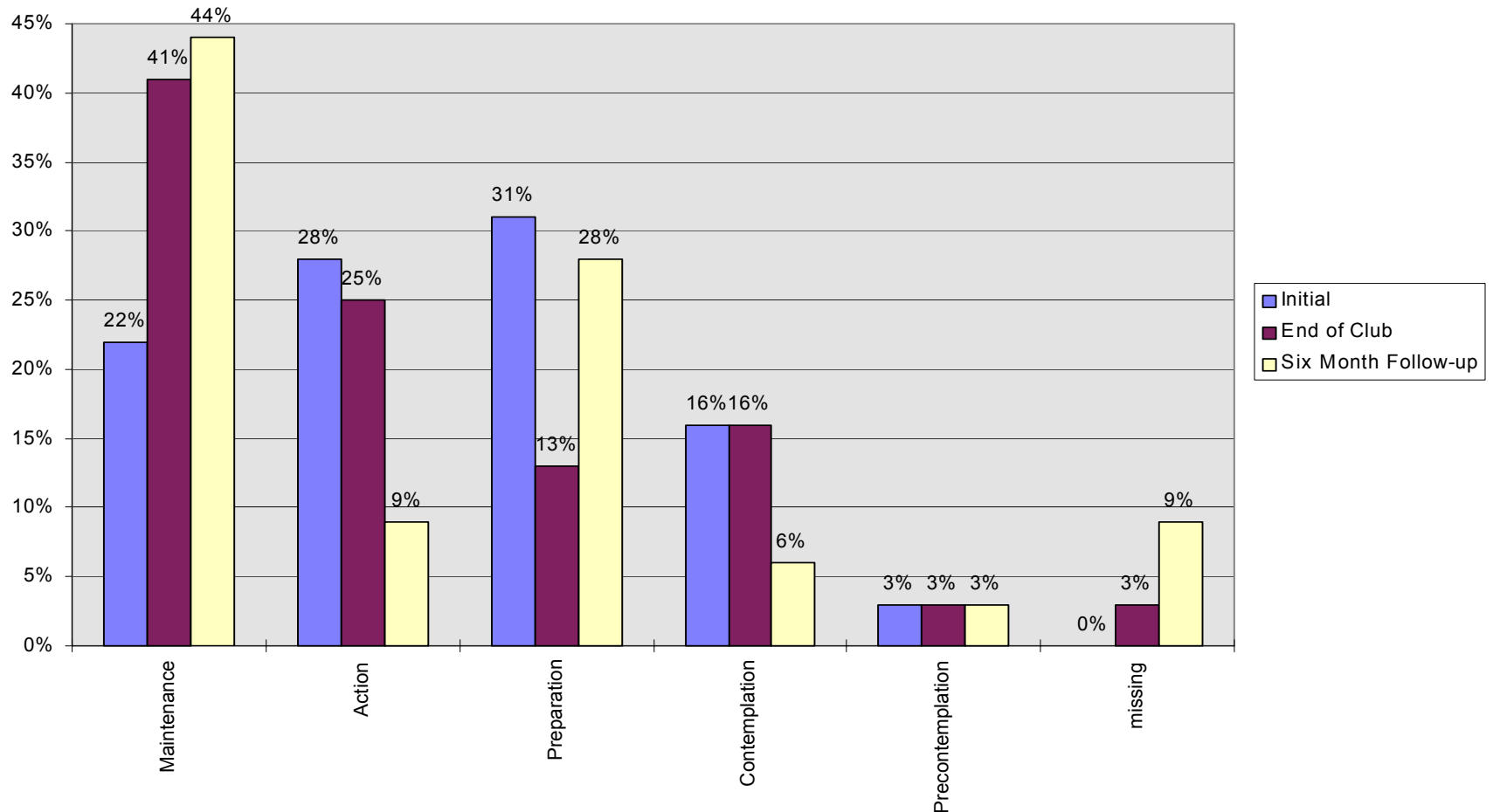
# Evaluation of Eat Smart Clubs - May 2000

- The most common changes made were increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (34%) and eating smaller portions (20%)
- 76% of members felt the ESC helped them make changes



# Comparison of Stage of Change for Fruits & Vegetables

1999, n=32



# Common elements in successful ESC

- Members were recruited by personal face-to-face invitation
- Incentives at meetings
- Providing child care and transportation
- Games/social activities used early on as a way for members to get acquainted
- Food preparation and sampling as part of the meeting

# Evaluation of Eat Smart Clubs - six month follow-up

- 78% of members felt they had continued to make healthy changes in their eating habits since the end of their ESC
- 69% of members still keep in touch with other members

# Recommendations from ESC facilitators

## Need for more training on:

- Social support networks
- Recruiting and retention of members
- Stages of change
- Group facilitation



# Challenges

- Potential replication of services
- Evaluation – rigorous yet reasonable
- Staffing



# Next Phase of ESC

- MNN funded 2 partner agencies to continue development of the ECS model
  - Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (HBMI)
  - PROP – for a teen ESC
- Provided training in 2000
  - Facilitated group discussion
  - Stages of Change
  - Ben Gottlieb provided technical expertise to clubs

# Eat Smart Club in Houlton

- Established Eat Smart Club at the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (HBMI) in 2000
- Club has continued every year since then



# HBMI Eat Smart Club in Houlton 1<sup>st</sup> Year

- Phase I (March 1 – September 30, 2000)
- Planning, Orientation & Training
- ESC Committee – Advisory Role
- ESC Coordinator – Betty Joseph
- Recruiting – Annual Health Fair
- No meetings



# HBMI Eat Smart Club in Houlton 2<sup>nd</sup> Year



- Phase II (Oct. 1, 2000 – Sept. 30, 2001)
- New Coordinator – Justin Kobylarz
- 12 Meetings held May – June
- Met two times each week
- Used the UMaine Cooperative Extension “10 Steps to Good Nutrition” Course

# 2001 HBMI Eat Smart Club



# HBMI Eat Smart Club in Houlton

## 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Year

- 10 Meetings
- Meetings 2X /month (Jan. – May 2002)
- Club Becomes Established/Ownership
- Location, Time, Format
- Incentives!
- Program Similar in Year 4



# HBMI Eat Smart Club in Houlton Year 5



- New Coordinator – Christina Desiderio
- Delayed Start – June with break for summer
- Limited time  
11:00 am – noon
- Large turnout

# Evaluation 2002-2005

## **Focused on process evaluation. Looked at:**

- Meetings, attendance and participation
  - Sessions & activities conducted
  - What worked well?
  - What didn't work well
  - Suggestions for improving sessions
  - What support did you see?
- What undermining did you see?
  - What did members learn?
  - How did facilitators determine what members learned?
    - Usually by asking for feedback during or after the session or by observing behavior at the session.

# Evaluation Results 2002-2005

- Sessions well received by members; great attendance and participation.
- Feedback and observation show that members learned about healthy eating and food preparation.
- Co-facilitators reported participation was consistently good and members very involved.
- Members thought ESC was successful as well.
- ESC has established a very positive reputation.

# HBMI Smart Club in Houlton Year 6 - Present

**Step Up to Nutrition and Health**



- Tribal initiative
- Healthy Eating Club – kept ESC name
- Added Physical Activity Component
- Goal Setting
- Re-vamp Format – Expand Topics

# Evaluation 2006

Added outcome evaluation to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB)

- **Food Quality**: Members' food habits improved.
- **Food Safety**: Although members' food safety habits were already good at beginning of ESC, slight improvements seen in hand washing and keeping raw meat separate.
- **Physical activity**: More members reported being physically active at end of ESC.

# Evaluation 2006

Added outcome evaluation to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB)

## **Goal Setting:**

- 9 out of 15 members set a nutrition behavior change goal. Most popular goal was to eat more vegetables and fruits.
  - Of 9 who set a nutrition goal, all but 1 said they met their goal.
- 7 out of 15 members set a physical activity behavior change goal. Most common goal was to walk more.
  - Of 7 who set a physical activity goal, 6 said they met their goal.

# Evaluation 2007

Added outcome to determine changes in KAB

**Progress was made in knowledge, attitudes and desired behavior change between the beginning and end of the club.**

More members reported at the end of the ESC they:

- Eat a variety of foods from the basic food groups.
- Know what a healthy body weight range is.
- Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods low in saturated fat.
- Read food labels to help in food selection.
- Are physically active.
- Strongly agree that they can eat healthy and be physically active.

# Evaluation 2007 – Goal Setting

Members were asked to be as specific as possible

## Examples of nutrition behavior change goals were:

- **Drink more water (24-36 oz./day)**  
Baseline - 16 oz and some days not even 8 oz.
- **Eat at least one vegetable 3 times/week**  
Baseline - not eating vegetables regularly
- **Eat fruit once/day**  
Baseline - don't eat fruit
- **Eat a high calcium food 2 times/wk**  
Baseline - not doing that
- **Drink only 1 Pepsi/day**  
Baseline - 2/day

# Evaluation 2007 – Goal Setting

Members were asked to be as specific as possible

## Examples of physical activity goals were:

- **Walk at least 30 minutes at least 3-4 times/wk**  
Baseline - no walking
- **Walk to Nora's once/wk**  
Baseline - walk that far sometimes
- **Walk 5 times/wk**  
Baseline - walking 3 times/wk
- **Walk 2 times/wk**  
Baseline - no walking



# Evaluation 2007

At end of ESC, members asked to rate their progress toward their nutrition behavior change goal

**Of the 20 members who completed the post-survey and set a nutrition goal:**

- 1 (5%) did not achieve their goal at all,
- 1 (5%) achieved their goal some of the time,
- 4 (20%) achieved their goal half of the time,
- 13 (65%) achieved their goal most of the time, and
- 1 (5%) achieved their goal all the time.

# Evaluation 2007

At end of ESC, members asked to rate their progress toward their physical activity behavior change goal

## **Of the 19 members who completed the post-survey and set a PA goal:**

- 2 (11%) did not achieve their goal at all,
- 3 (16%) achieved their goal some of the time,
- 3 (16%) achieved their goal half of the time,
- 8 (42%) achieved their goal most of the time, and
- 3 (16%) achieved their goal all the time.

# HBMI Eat Smart Club Learnings

- Target audience and Coordinator - Not as expected
- Coordinator is key
- Community fit is critical
- Satisfy a need



# HBMI Eat Smart Club Successes

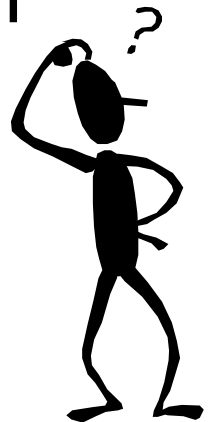
- Consistently effective
- Reach to families/community
- Members empowered - Safe environment
- Large turnout



# HBMI Eat Smart Club Challenges



- Large Turnout - Limitations
- How to Keep it Fresh?
- Where To Go From Here?



# Resources

- Guidelines for establishing healthy eating peer support groups
- Facilitated group discussion handout
- APHA Journal article: Social Support and Thriving Health

**Thank You!**

**Questions?**