

Development of Nutrition Curriculum for Adults with I/DD: Part of a Mentoring Program to Improve Nutrition Knowledge and Self-Efficacy

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Over the course of the last 30 years, much research has been conducted related to nutrition education and its impact on health and disease management. However, education, advocacy and prevention curriculum developed has not taken into consideration specially abled adults. Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have reported a higher prevalence of obesity and inactivity than in the general population. This health disparity may be due to individual and community factors including physical challenges, cognitive limitations, lack of accessible to adaptive fitness facilities and developmentally appropriate community programs as well as segregation from the community. This research study focuses on developing a culturally aware approach to nutrition education to improve nutrition knowledge and promote self-efficacy. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions with Arc program coordinators to identify areas of need/interest for nutrition education. Nutritional themes have emerged, to help us develop the program curriculum. The focal areas that emerged for nutrition education included: label reading, grocery shopping, food safety, my plate, meal planning and healthy recipes. Additionally, those with I/DD are at a higher risk for chronic diseases that could be improved with a change in nutritional knowledge and dietary behaviors. Project outcomes include those related to the development of the mentoring program, as well as those resulting from the delivery of the program. The program will improve the student mentors' and adults' with I/DD knowledge of nutrition and self-efficacy to allow them to enact positive changes in their lives. Participants may improve their nutritional habits, knowledge and self-efficacy.

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