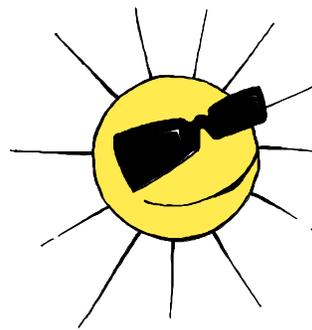




Choose and use printed materials wisely.

In the ideal nutrition education situation, you, the nutrition educator, are able to reach for a printed material that beautifully backs up the point you just made. The printed material is attractive and engaging. You can encourage the participant to put the printed material up on the refrigerator when she gets home so that she can be reminded of what you talked about.



scenario if your parking lot and a waiting room are always littered with nutrition materials people have left behind. You are probably saying, "Let's get real!" if you have too many materials that look like they are left from the 1950s or 1960s. But wouldn't it be wonderful to have compelling tools like that to back up your counseling? Perhaps you are working on that. Perhaps you, who knows best what you

need, are participating in the process of developing excellent nutrition materials. Keep it up! You *deserve* excellent tools and you should be a part of the process of developing them.

Maybe you are stuck, however, with some materials that do not really fit the way you counsel or do not really back up the main points you want to make

You deserve excellent tools and you should be a part of the process of developing them.

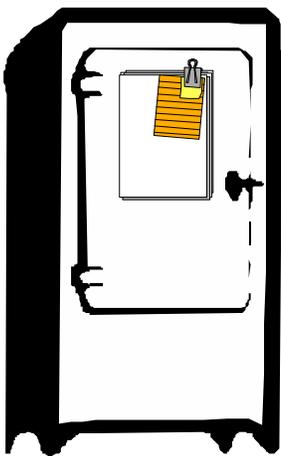
The participant does just that. Everybody else in the family reads it too. In fact, the sister-in-law, who is not on WIC, looks at it and decides she would like to learn more about her child's eating too; so she calls for an appointment!

You are probably saying, "Yeah, right!" to that

with a participant. What can you do, besides create new ones? Make the best of what you've got, of course! Here are some ideas on how to do that:

- **Don't overload a participant with pamphlets!**

If there's one rule on giving out written materials, this is it! A handful of things to take home and read can turn into an easily avoided task. It's more effective to give something a participant can read on a short bus ride or standing in line at the next place they go. Ideally, whatever you give the participant should be able to go on the refrigerator so that they are reminded of what you talked about.



We often get pulled two ways. We want to be sure the participant has all the information we can provide (like on breastfeeding) and at the same time we know that too much is overwhelming. As a general rule one or two printed pieces at a visit are plenty, unless someone asks for more materials.

- **Avoid making the material itself the focus of the session.** Sometimes an inexperienced nutrition educator will make the materials themselves the focus of the session. Avoid this! The participant and your exchange are the focus! The materials back up what you are saying. However, when a participant is highly uncomfortable being the focus, you might want to help take the pressure off them by focusing on a piece of written material. This is the exception however! Don't explain written materials instead of doing effective client-centered nutrition education!

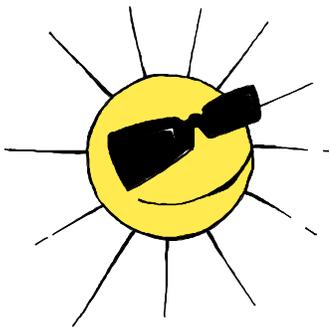
- **Pull out the parts of written materials that back up what you talked about.** Seeing is believing, remember? It is very reinforcing for the participant to see what you have just discussed in black and white! This lends credibility to what you covered. It makes people feel reinforced if they have to go home and explain something to someone else. It also helps set the ideas down more firmly in their

brain because they can now connect to the ideas visually. Backing your main points in writing is an effective educational technique. If you don't have suitable materials, pull out a notepad and write a quick reminder for the participant to take home. That notepad is also good for writing out a goal for a participant if you don't have a suitable pamphlet to write the goal on.

- **Personalize the material, if possible.** We all like things that are just for us. We like information that pertains directly to *our* pregnancy, *our* baby, *our* picky eater. Make the material something that is important to the participant and something she can take home and show her partner. Use a marker on pamphlets

to personalize them. Write in the date you expect the child to start using a cup or the earliest date to eat solid foods. When you are speaking with a parent with several children on WIC, put each child's name on the top of the material that applies to them. If you do there's a much better chance the mom will look at them later.

- **Ask the participant if she wants the material!** Has she gotten the material before? If you have any doubts, ask and make sure she hasn't. Then after you mark it up with all kinds of personal comments relating to her or her child, don't just give it to her! Ask her if she would like to take it home. "Yes!" is a good sign. This is affirming for



*Let's remember that printed nutrition materials
are your tools. You are not a slave to your tools!*

*They do not direct your nutrition education session. Use
them to back you up.*

you. A reluctant "I guess so" is not such a good sign. How can you make nutrition more pertinent and more interesting for this person?

- **Are you giving out materials on all kinds of things?** Are you giving out materials on everything under the sun--child safety, voter registration, shot records, checks, approved foods lists, and everything else? It happens. How can you call attention to the nutrition material? One way is to encourage a participant to put nutrition materials up on the refrigerator with the cute little refrigerator magnet you have had your phone number printed on! Another way is to ask the participant to explain the material to someone else in the household, like the mother or partner, who may also need to know the information. Are they comfortable with that? You have planted the idea and talked about it, so maybe something will come of it!

Let's remember that printed nutrition materials are your tools. You are not a slave to your tools! They do not direct your nutrition education session. Use them to back you up. Use parts of them. Make them work for you. Use highlighter on them. Maybe sometimes you won't use them at all. There's no rule that a person has to walk away from a session with you with a printed piece! The only rule is this: *Don't overwhelm participants with printed materials!*

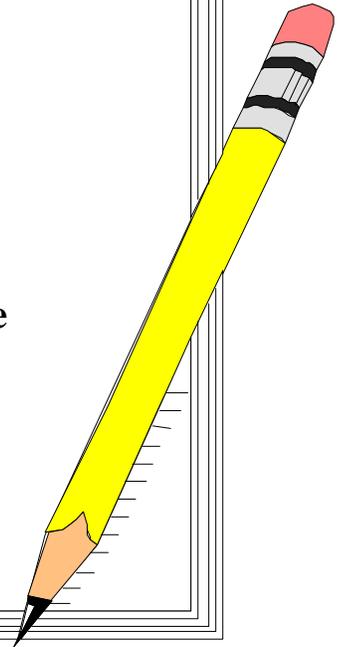


Activities to do before Discussion

Choose and use printed materials wisely

1. ***Client-centered nutrition education is effective. Materials-centered nutrition education is not very effective.*** This is mostly because the adult learner is only going to really pay attention to and use information that is personally relevant. In the period of time before the discussion group, experiment with how you use materials. Change some of the things you have always done and see what happens. Here are some things to try. Copy this list on the copy machine, cut it out, and put it where you can see it during nutrition education.

- **Ask the participant if she wants to take the material home!**
- **Personalize materials in different ways.**
- **Cover just a short section of a pamphlet.**
- **Reach for materials in a different part of your session.**
- **Try NOT reaching for any materials. Write a short note on a notepad instead.**
- **Cut way back on the number of materials you offer.**
- **Use materials to back up what you have already said, rather than to introduce ideas.**



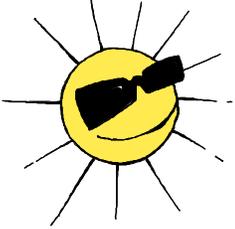
2. ***Make 2 lists:*** What materials do you wish you had? What materials that you currently have could do a better job supporting what you actually talk about in nutrition education? Bring your lists to the discussion group.
3. ***When participants leave your WIC clinic after the first appointment, how many printed materials do they have?*** Can any of those be offered on later visits instead? Think about it.
4. ***As your assignment for the discussion, write out 5 things you have gotten out of your experience with I , 5 ways it has affected how you operate, or how you think as a nutrition educator.*** Go back through the units and your notes to remind yourself, if you'd like. Have you become more conscious of certain things that you were only vaguely conscious of before? Decide if you are a better, more sensitive nutrition educator as a result of the effort you have put into this process of self-development.

Thinking about and doing these activities will prepare you for the discussion group. Complete the attached Activity Worksheet during the next month as you practice these activities.

Activity Worksheet
Bright Ideas - Unit 13

Name _____

Date _____



Choose and use printed materials wisely

1. List 3 ways you experimented with using pamphlets and printed materials:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. When do you give clients more than two pamphlets or written information sheets at a WIC appointment?

Describe any thoughts you have on how to avoid overloading the client with materials.

3. What responses do you receive from clients when you ask them if they want to take the materials home?
4. List materials you wish you had available:
5. List changes you would like to see with materials you currently use:

6. Write 5 favorite things you have gotten out of your experience with *I* and/or list 5 ways *I* has affected how you operate or think as a nutrition educator. (Review the units and your Activity Worksheets as a reminder.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Discuss these ideas with your supervisor or in a staff discussion group. These Activity Worksheets and a discussion are to be done for completion of the module.

***Thank you for your efforts to improve your education and counseling skills!
You deserve to feel good about your efforts at the end of every clinic day.
You deserve to know you've made a real contribution--because you have!
Your efforts continue to make the WIC Program one of the most successful
public health programs ever!!***

