Development and Evaluation of a Higher Education Food Security Toolkit to Provide Ideas of Initiatives for Student Wellbeing: WISH4Campus (P04-049-19)

Rebecca Hagedorn,[1] Alex Pampalone,[1] Lanae Hood,[2] Catherine Yura,[1] Deana Morrow,[1] and Melissa Olfert[1]

[1] West Virginia University; and [2] Meredith College

Objectives: Many universities are starting initiatives on campus to support food insecure students in receiving nutritious food. However, there is no comprehensive resource of these initiatives to help guide universities in starting a program on campus. The objective of this study is to describe the development and evaluation of a toolkit that can assist higher education institutions in promoting a campus environment, providing adequate resources for food insecure students.

Methods: The toolkit development was guided by the basis of the Normalization Process Theory (NPT) to evaluate factors that could facilitate or inhibit initiative success on campus. A review of literature was undertaken by two independent reviewers to gather all peer reviewed and grey literature on food insecurity programs currently available on college campuses in the United States. Findings were compiled into a toolkit that contained six initiative chapters: food pantries, campus gardens, farmers markets, dining and recovery programs, mobile applications, and policy initiatives. The toolkit was evaluated by experts from land-grant universities who work with food insecurity issues ($n = 126$). Experts completed a 27-question survey to determine demographics, perceptions of food insecurity and evaluation of specific toolkit components. Descriptive statistics and frequency analyses were performed on quantitative data and content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.

Results: Thirty experts (23.8% response rate) completed the evaluation survey. Evaluation feedback covered four main topics: layout, overall content, initiatives, and application. Eight themes emerged from the coding and categorization of responses. They were visual appeal, organization, value, provoking, comprehensive, barriers, collaboration, and efficiency. Corrections and recommendations were provided for each topic.

Conclusions: The themes derived from expert feedback encompassed the initial objective of the toolkit. This toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource that can be utilized by student leaders, clubs or organizations, campus stakeholders or administrators to begin a food security initiative on campus to promote student well-being.