Impact of EFNEP on the Quality of Life of Program Participants and Paraprofessional Educators
Natalia Infante, MA, Susan S. Baker, EdD, Garry Auld, PhD, RD.
NC-2169 AES Multistate Research Project

Purpose of this Project
• To identify the impact of EFNEP on the quality of life of its paraprofessional educators and program participants.
• To develop an instrument that could measure the quality of life of EFNEP participants.
• Positive outcomes from this study could be used to help justify continued and/or increased funding for EFNEP.

Quality of Life Defined
• A number of reports about EFNEP imply that there are benefits beyond employment, improved nutrition and budgeting skills.
• Some researchers group these types of benefits under the term quality of life. It includes things such as a sense of accomplishment, self-worth, being a role model, becoming more connected in the community, or having a sense of satisfaction with one’s life.

Research Project Phases
1) Determining the impact of EFNEP on the quality of life of its paraprofessional educators and participants through a questionnaire (completed).
2) Phone interviews with EFNEP paraprofessional educators, State EFNEP coordinators and agency partners (completed).
3) Focus Groups with EFNEP program participants (in progress).
4) Development and initial validation of quality of life tool to measure quality of life of EFNEP participants (late 2014).

First Phase
A longitudinal study used a quality of life questionnaire with a convenience sample of participants and educators determined that EFNEP does have an impact on the quality of life of its paraprofessional educators and program participants. Phase I of this project helped identify what should be addressed in future interviews and focus groups.

Second Phase
• Fifty eight participants: 15 State EFNEP coordinators, 28 EFNEP paraprofessional educators and 15 EFNEP community agency partners were interviewed.
• The following states and territories were randomly selected for the interviews; Idaho, Indiana, Utah, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New Mexico, West Virginia, Guam and Maine.
• All interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analyzed using NVivo software to determine the impact of the program on quality of life.
• The questions varied slightly depending on whether the interviewee was a paraprofessional educator, State EFNEP coordinator or community agency representative.
• Questions were open-ended and related to their experiences with EFNEP, and potential impact of EFNEP on clients and paraprofessional educators.
• Data was coded based on the Quality of Life instrument from the University of Toronto\(^1\) with slight modifications for the purpose of this project.
• To ensure accurate coding, two raters read the interviews separately and coded them individually.

Third Phase
• Focus groups started in Summer 2013 and should be completed by Spring 2014.
• Focus group population are EFNEP participants, 3-8 months after EFNEP graduation.
• A training DVD was created to help train focus group moderators and note takers, to ensure consistency.
• A webinar was presented to better train moderators.
• A total of sixteen focus groups representing four different types of populations: African Americans, Whites, Spanish speaking Hispanics and English speaking Hispanics, were planned.

Participating States for Third Phase
• Arkansas
• Colorado
• Kansas
• Kentucky
• Maine
• Michigan
• New Jersey
• Ohio
• South Carolina
• Virginia

Fourth Phase
Development and initial validation of the quality of life tool.

Discussion
Data from this study supports the view that EFNEP positively impacts the quality of life of its program participants and paraprofessional educators. Hibbs and Sandmann\(^2\) attributed EFNEP’s impact on program paraprofessionals to unique training and work experiences resulting in personal growth. Qualitative impacts of EFNEP on quality of life have also been documented by Auld et al\(^3\) for both program participants and paraprofessionals.

Funding
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