The Farm To Health Center Initiative Model:

**FTHI BACKGROUND**

- The Farm to Health Center Initiative (FTHI) began a new distribution model this year in an effort to make the program more sustainable.
- Three patient groups were targeted to receive the weekly vegetables:
  1. Prenatal patients participating in group sessions
  2. Pediatric patients participating in a Cooking Matters class with their parents at the Family Health Center of Worcester
  3. Diabetic patients participating in group sessions
- In an effort to engage the Diabetic Group in a participatory action research activity about their experiences following a diabetic diet using the CHP produce, we piloted Photovoice.

**PHOTOVOICE**

- Photovoice was developed by Caroline C. Wang of the University of Michigan and Mary Ann Burris of the Ford Foundation and originally named “photo novella” 1
- The approach integrates photography and discussion to look at an issue from the perspective of the “resident experts” – the people living, working, playing and praying in a targeted context 2

**METHODS**

- The English and Spanish speaking Diabetes groups were selected to participate in the Photovoice project.
- Group members were invited to participate during their pre-distribution survey meeting in late June/early July 2016.
- Members were given an overview of the goal of the Photovoice activity:
  - To foster a discussion about the successes and challenges of adhering to a diabetic diet.
  - To use them to talk about recipes, meal times, and local restaurants.
  - To draw any scenes or images that came to mind and bring their art to the group meetings.

**RESULTS**

- All 9 members of the Diabetes Groups were invited to participate (5 from the English speaking group, 4 from the Spanish speaking group)
- 1 individual elected to engage in the activity submitted 3 photos via text message or email
- At the meetings where Photovoice was discussed, the 3 submitted photos were incorporated into a collage with other photos taken by the presenters.
- An informal dialog ensued about what each photo meant, how it could relate to challenges of following a diabetic diet, and ideas for improved adherence to a diabetic diet.
- The photos involving food stimulated the most conversation. Group members used them to talk about recipes, meal times, and local restaurants.

**DISCUSSION**

- Photovoice may be a way to engage with an older adult population in a nontraditional format to promote healthy eating and lifestyles.
- Barriers to engagement include low confidence in personal photography skills, lack of access to a camera, lack of knowledge on how to use a camera, and confusion over the transfer of photos collected.
- Additional explanation of the Photovoice process and a more thorough exploration of participant’s level of comfort in participating is necessary for future community engagement activities.
- Diabetes group members were receptive to the idea of incorporating Photovoice into future programming at their meetings.

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