Improving and maintaining social connection and cooking confidence through community cooking classes

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Background

• Community cooking programs
  – Improve both food literacy and social connectedness
  – Reach vulnerable and disadvantaged populations
  – Increase practical skills and build participant resilience
  – Valuable health promotion and community development strategies

Refs:
2. Iacovou et al, Public Health Nutr 2012

Cook Chill Chat (CCC)

• Community based cooking program
  – Primary objectives:
    • Reduce social isolation
    • Strengthen community links
    • Enhance mental, physical and emotional wellbeing
  – Partnered with community services to facilitate a 6-week cooking program
  – Informal cooking groups created following formal program

Evaluation Study

• Aim:
  – To assess the effectiveness of CCC on improving social connectedness and cooking confidence six months after completing the 6-week cooking program.

CCC Evaluation

• Methods
  – Participants completed questionnaires at 3 time points
  – Food based confidence questions based on Likert scale (not confident, fairly confident, confident, extremely confident)
  – Three social connection questions
  – Analysis using SPSS (Mcnemar’s test or Friedman Test)
  – Ethical approval for evaluation granted by the University of Wollongong Social Science HREC (HE16/377)
Descriptive Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>56 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female 80 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIEFA</td>
<td>Low 32 (16) Medium 50 (25) High 18 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>4.2 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non English Speaking Background</td>
<td>26 (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean (Standard Error)

Results: Confidence in food based activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>6 weeks</th>
<th>6 months</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking from basic ingredients</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following a basic recipe</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasting foods not eaten before</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking a recipe not tried before</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning meals</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for food</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storing food safely</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading a food labels</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing food waste</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions and future

- Community cooking programs are useful vehicles for developing social connectedness
- Creating an informal follow-on program assists maintenance of cooking confidence
- Further evaluation of revised Cook Chill Chat