

Statement on the Impact of the Environment on Eating Behaviours

The start of 2017 saw serious questions raised about Dr. Brian Wansink's research. We have been following the story since March and are disappointed that the concerns have continued over the course of the year. Dozens of his papers are now under review and/or have been retracted.

After reviewing these concerns and consulting with colleagues, we decided that it is not appropriate to continue to recommend Dr. Wansink's book or reference his research. We are currently updating our Facilitator's Manual, client workbook, certification exams and downloadable client worksheets to reflect these changes.

While Dr. Wansink is likely the most well-known, many other researchers have been studying the impact of environmental factors on eating habits for years. Examples include the Penn State Lab for the Study of Human Ingestive Behavior and the Mann Lab at the University of Minnesota. We have conducted an updated review of the literature and believe meaningful results still abound. We firmly believe that a discussion of environmental influences on eating behaviours is still a very valuable and credible component of the Craving Change™ program. Some of the many articles included in our review are listed below.

If your Facilitator's Manual was printed before 2018, please refer to the Manual Edits documents for 'Influence of Our Environment' and 'Renovate Your Environment' and make the recommended edits to your manual. The pdf's are available on the What's New page of the website and in the online Certified Facilitator Resource Library.

Cohen, DA & Farley, TA (2008). Eating as an automatic behavior. Preventing Chronic Disease, 5(1), A23.

Maas, J, de Ridder, DT, de Vet, E, & de Wit, JB (2012). Do distant foods decrease intake? The effect of food accessibility on consumption. Psychology and Health, 27(Sup 2), 59-73.

Mann, T, de Ridder, D, & Fujita, K (2013). Social psychological approaches to self-regulation: Processes of goal setting and goal striving. Health Psychology, 32, 487-498.

Meengs, JS, Roe, LS, Rolls, BJ (2012) Vegetable variety: An effective strategy to increase vegetable intake in adults. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 112(8), 1211-1215.

Papies, EK & Hamstra, P (2010). Goal priming and eating behavior: Enhancing self-regulation by environmental cues. Health Psychology, 29(4), 384-388.

Privitera, GJ & Zuraikat, FM (2014). Proximity of foods in a competitive food environment influences consumption of a low calorie and a high calorie food. Appetite, 76, 175-179.

Wagner, H S, Howland, M, & Mann, T (2015). Effects of subtle and explicit health messages on food choice. Health Psychology, 34(1), 79-82.

Young, LR & Nestle, M (2002). The Contribution of Expanding Portion Sizes to the US Obesity Epidemic. American Journal of Public Health, 92(2), 246-249.

Influence of our Environment

Edits to Facilitator's Manual - 2017

Please make the following edits to your manual if it was printed before 2018. We recommend that you cut out the revised content and paste it into your manual.



Page 21 – Eating Under the Influence of our Environment

Replace Page 21 with the updated page titled "Page 21 edits".



Page 24 – Delete the sentence referring to Ppt slides #7 & #8 presenting the statistics from Dr. Wansink's studies.

Page 27 – We think big - Replace the text in the shaded box with:



The results from several scientific studies have provided evidence for this connection. When we eat from large packages or are served large portions, we eat more compared to small packages or portions. This makes sense, right? It's the law of human nature, 'the more we buy, the more we consume'. And, it's probably true for most things whether it's popcorn, cookies, cereal, spaghetti or shampoo.

Page 28 – Too many choices - Replace text in shaded box with:



Imagine that your friend takes you out for your birthday. A dessert buffet is included with your meal. The buffet is a beautiful display of every dessert you can think of from an assortment of fruit pies, dipped strawberries, creamy puddings and an amazing triple layer chocolate mousse cake. How many servings of dessert do you think you would choose and put on your plate? Now, imagine that you and your friend are at the same restaurant but this time when you go to the dessert buffet, all they have is the triple layer chocolate mousse cake. There are several of them on display and they still look amazing, but they're all the same. In this case, how many servings of dessert would you choose?

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Influence of our Environment

Edits to Facilitator's Manual 2017 - Page 2

Page 29 – Food is always within reach - Add the new content below at the end of this section. As with everything in the Environment section, use the information in the shaded boxes at your discretion.



How about doing your own study? Test how your eating behaviour, and maybe that of your family, is influenced by the accessibility and convenience of food. Here are the instructions:

Week One

Leave an assortment of fresh fruit in the crisper drawer in the refrigerator.

Week Two

Put the same assortment of fruit on the kitchen counter in a bowl or basket.

Week Three

Peel and cut up the same assortment of fruit and arrange it on a plate with several forks.

Take the plate out of the refrigerator and put it out on the kitchen counter each morning.

At the end of each week, estimate how many pieces of fruit you and your family ate. Then compare the amount for each week. What do you think your study results will reveal??

Page 30 – XX-large portions - Replace the text in the shaded box with:



How do you get children to eat more fruit and vegetables? What about giving them larger portions? Researchers tested this theory at an elementary school cafeteria. First, they measured the amount of fruit and vegetables that each child ate on a day where the cafeteria procedures were not changed. Then the researchers increased the portion size of three of the four fruit and vegetables by approximately 50% for two days. They measured the amount of fruit and vegetables eaten by each child who chose these foods on the test days. The result? The children ate more fruit and vegetables when they had larger portions.

Eating Under the Influence

of our environment

How our environment can cause “impaired eating”.

Goals and Guidance

- 1 To begin the workshop with an interactive discussion that is fairly impersonal, thereby creating a less-threatening atmosphere to promote the sharing of observations and experiences.
- 2 To increase participants' awareness of the challenges of healthy eating in our society.
- 3 To have participants recognize their own expertise and wisdom regarding environmental factors that influence their eating.

A number of researchers have studied the influence of the external environment on eating behaviours. Some studies focus on very specific factors such as food descriptors, packaging and portions while others look at contextual factors such as product location or food availability. The evidence suggests that the impact of these often undetectable elements can be considerable. An increased awareness of some of these environmental factors can be an important component when changing eating habits.

As this discussion does not focus on 'the individual' per se, it promotes a less-threatening, more comfortable setting for a lively, informal session. Within moments of opening up the discussion you will get input from the group – guaranteed!

It is most effective to let this discussion flow freely. Ten environmental factors that often prompt problematic eating are outlined in the Facilitator's Notes. These can be highlighted in any order in the discussion. Participants may also identify other environmental prompts that are not listed.

This session can promote group cohesion which will increase the effectiveness of future workshop activities.

The Facilitator's Notes include:

- Questions that you can ask to stimulate ideas if there is a lull in the discussion.
- Short observations and comments that you may use to expand on a point that is raised by a participant.
- Brief scenarios similar to those reported in external eating stimuli studies. Read out the scenario to the group and ask them to consider the predicted response to these environmental prompts. (Summaries are in shaded boxes of text. Note that there is more information about studies on external factors related to eating in the online Certified Facilitator Resource Library.)

Renovate Your Environment

Edits to Facilitator's Manual 2017

Please make the following edits to your manual if it was printed before 2018. We recommend that you cut out the revised content and paste it into your manual.

Page 117 – Too many choices - Replace the text in the 'paraphrase' box with the following:



Remember the example of the dessert buffet from our first session? We agreed that we would likely eat many more servings of dessert if there was a large selection to choose from compared to only the decadent chocolate cake.



Page 118 – Replace Page 118 with the updated page titled "Page 118 edits".

Page 119 – Food is always in reach, continued - The first two sentences at the top of the page are now located on page 118, therefore replace them with the following text:



Make it more difficult to eat too much. For example, eating with chopsticks takes more effort for most of us and will slow our rate of eating. We also eat fewer nuts if we have to shell them ourselves.

Use your understanding of our human nature to your advantage.

Avoid eating at buffets if you overeat.

Keep a very limited variety of less healthy snacks on hand and increase the variety of healthy snacks.

Have more than one type of vegetable, cooked or raw, at your big meal to encourage you to eat more vegetables and less of the other higher calorie foods.

We love a deal → Question the real value of a deal

Decide if you really want a particular food or portion size, or if you're tempted to purchase it only because you are getting a deal. Remember you will likely be spending more money than you had originally intended in the first place.

Food is always within reach → Remember, out of sight, out of mind

Imagine that you have a supply of your favourite treat (chocolate, candy, nuts) that you keep in the area where you do your work, at home or at the office. Let's say that for one week you keep your treat in a clear dish on your desk or table. Another week, you keep the same treat in the same clear dish but the dish is sitting six feet away from your work area. Do you think that you would eat fewer treats during the first or second week?

Based on this example, why not leave serving dishes of meat and starchy food in the kitchen, only bringing salad and vegetables to the table. Drive home by a different route to avoid easy access to fast food outlets. The more convenient and easy it is to obtain and eat food, the more we eat.

Some people think that if they put treats away and out of sight, this will increase the craving and temptation to eat them. On the other hand, others believe that "out of sight, out of mind" applies to where they stash their treats. Research suggests that generally, "out of sight, out of mind" is the more effective solution to decrease consumption. What do you think is true for you?

Keep less healthy snack foods out of sight in a cupboard; store them in the basement, garage or less convenient location.

Use opaque or non-see through containers to store food in the fridge or cupboard.