

# Evaluating the Effectiveness of Coaching Skills Training to Improve SNAP-Ed Program Delivery

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## SUMMARY

Equipping SNAP-Ed nutrition educators and managers with coaching skills can help them shift the way they communicate with and motivate people. By adding coaching skills to their existing knowledge and expertise, SNAP-Ed staff can move from focusing on problems to supporting, defining and achieving goals. In this training-focused program, it was expected that trainees would develop 10 basic coaching skills and begin applying them to their SNAP-Ed work.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation developed this pilot project and worked with Leadership That Works to implement the Coaching for Community Transformation training with SNAP-Ed staff.

## OBJECTIVE

In its first year, this pilot project was evaluated on these guiding questions:

- \* How effective was the training model?
- \* What impact did the training have on trainees?
  1. Knowledge of 10 key coaching skills?
  2. Confidence to use skills?
  3. Application of skills?
- \* What impact/benefits resulted?



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Using the principles of adult learning combined with experiential practice, thirty-seven SNAP-Ed nutrition educators and project managers from seven different organizations throughout Michigan participated in a hands on, lively and rigorous program. A thread of cultural awareness was integrated throughout.

The program components included:

- \* **Training 1:** During an initial three-day training, participants were introduced to the concept of coaching and ten basic coaching skills. There were lectures, small and large group discussions, and a significant amount of practice time. They also began exploring how to incorporate coaching skills into their work.
- \* **Training 2:** The two-day training focused on reinforcing the coaching skills, practicing the skills, and integrating the skills into group settings.
- \* **Peer Learning Circles:** To anchor the skills and to help trainees troubleshoot real-life application, these 60-minute teleclasses were held six times—once a month between and after Trainings 1 and 2.
- \* **Mentor Coaches:** Each trainee was matched with an experienced, certified coach for three phone sessions. This allowed participants to experience coaching and be supported during the program.

## EVALUATION METHODS & RESULTS

Mixed-method evaluation activities aimed to assess the participants understanding, confidence and application of the 10 key coaching skills coaching skills.

### DATA COLLECTION

Methods and timing of data collection:

- \* Online survey immediately following training 1
- \* Online surveys after peer learning calls (2x)
- \* Online survey immediately following face-to-face training 2
- \* Mid-year reflection completed as a take home activity between days 1 and 2 of training 2
- \* Focus groups completed during training 2
- \* Online survey after each peer learning call (4x)
- \* Final online survey at the end of the program

### DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores) were used to complete item level analysis and assess changes over time. These survey data were triangulated with qualitative data from open-ended comments on surveys, focus groups, and mid-year reflections.

As the quantitative data were considered the primary data source, triangulation was used to 1) confirm or disconfirm the findings; 2) add insight and context that might aid in the interpretation of the findings; 3) meaningfully integrate participant voice into the presentation of the final results.

### RESULTS

Overall, participants were positive about other potential benefits of the coaching training/skills they learned in the project. In the final evaluation (N=24), the following percent agreed or strongly agreed they...

- \* were more effective in helping their SNAP-Ed participants change their behavior (85%)
- \* found the coaching project beneficial to them personally, i.e. beyond work (100%)
- \* felt the coaching project had fostered a community of learners in their place of work (95.2%)
- \* felt the coaching project had improved the organizational culture/climate at their place of work (76.2%)
- \* felt the coaching project had brought about concrete changes in their place of work related to daily practice (66.7%)
- \* felt the coaching project had brought about concrete changes in their place of work related to the way staff are trained and/or evaluated (57.1%)

### UNDERSTANDING OF KEY COACHING SKILLS

Table 1. Percent of participants rating confidence as High or Very High from the end of the first training session to the final evaluation report.

Coaching Skill	After First Training (N=24)	Final Evaluation (N=23)	Change Over Time
Empowering questions	83.3	95.7	+12.4
Coaching stand	83.3	91.3	+8
Making requests	58.3	82.6	+24.3
Challenges	70.8	82.6	+11.8
Acknowledging	100	100	0
Accountability	87.5	82.6	-4.9
Moving into action	62.5	73.9	+11.4
Self-managing	70.8	95.7	+24.9
Vision	70.8	82.6	+11.8
Values	83.3	90.3	+7

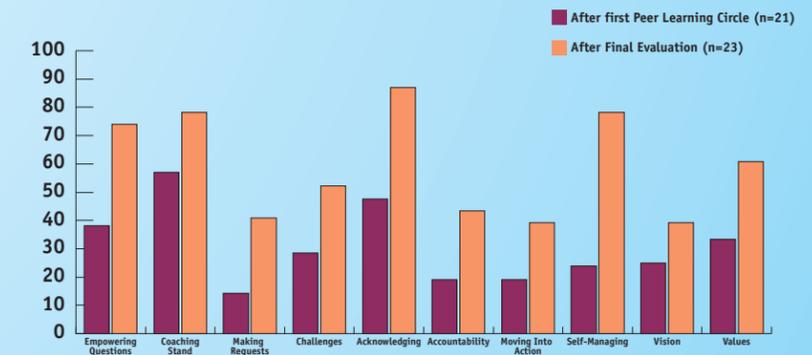
### CONFIDENCE TO IMPLEMENT KEY COACHING SKILLS

Table 2. Percent of participants rating confidence as High or Very High from the end of the first training session to the final evaluation report.

Coaching Skill	After First Training (N=24)	Final Evaluation (N=23)	Change Over Time
Empowering questions	75	91.3	+16.3
Coaching stand	62.5	82.6	+20.1
Making requests	37.5	78.3	+40.8
Challenges	50	65.2	+15.2
Acknowledging	87	91.3	+4.3
Accountability	66.7	65.2	-1.5
Moving into action	66.7	56.5	-10.2
Self-managing	41.7	82.6	+40.9
Vision	50	65.2	+15.2
Values	70.8	78.3	+7.5

### APPLICATION OF THE KEY COACHING SKILLS

Figure 1. Percent of participants reporting High or Very High use after the first Peer Learning Circle and after the Final Evaluation.



## IMPACT ON COACHING PRACTICE

This program presents an effective model demonstrating a coach training program to individuals who want to use basic coaching skills primarily in classroom/group settings rather than in traditional one-on-one situations. In addition, other coach training organizations could use the evaluation tools and methods utilized in this project to evaluate their training models for effectiveness.



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