A Taste of African Heritage
Using Culture to Guide Better Diabetes Outcomes

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Disclosure to Participants

- Notice of Requirements For Successful Completion
  - Please refer to learning goals and objectives
  - Learners must attend the full activity and complete the evaluation in order to claim continuing education credit/hours

- Conflict of Interest (COI) and Financial Relationship Disclosures:
  - Presenter: Constance Brown-Riggs, MSEd, RD, CDE, CDN – Nutrition Consultant, Oldways
  - Presenter: Danessa Bolling, Clinical Liaison – No COI/Financial Relationship to disclose

- Non-Endorsement of Products:
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- Off-Label Use:
  - Participants will be notified by speakers if any product used for a purpose other than that for which it was approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Objectives

- Understand the scientific evidence suggesting the benefits of traditional diets like the African Heritage Diet
- Identify how the African Heritage Diet Pyramid can be used to inspire positive health outcomes.
Objectives

• Reframe nutrition education programming in a way that is culturally relevant to participants.

The Need for a New Approach to Diet

• African Americans Living Longer
  – Death rate declined 25% in 1999 and 2015
  – 65 years and older
• AA 20s, 30s and 40s
  – Living/dying from diabetes, high blood pressure and stroke

The Need for a New Approach to Diet

• AA 18 – 49 years
  – Die from heart disease 2x more than whites
• AA 35 – 64 years
  – 50% more have high blood pressure compared to whites
The Need for a New Approach to Diet

• Diabetes
  – 3 million African Americans diagnosed
  – ¼ of African American women >55
  – 12% of African American women > 20
  – Kidney failure 4x more than whites
  – Blindness 2x more than whites

African Americans

• Black racial groups of Africa
• In US for generations
• Recent immigrants
  – Africa, Caribbean, West Indies
• Southeast and mid-Atlantic
  – Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Maryland

Barriers to Achieving Better Health

• Mistrust
  – Tuskegee
  – 1997 eight survivors
• Low priority
  – AIDS, crime, education
Barriers to Achieving Better Health

- Susceptibility
  - Low income
- Spirituality
  - Fatalistic view
- Provider Bias
  - Explicit and implicit

Proverbial Soul Food Diet

Foods of African Heritage
Shifts From Traditional Eating to Industrialized Meal Patterns

Health Outcomes:
- Metabolic syndrome and obesity increases in Botswana
- New rates of hypertension in West Africa
- Urbanization linked to poor dietary quality and greater risk for chronic disease

Fat, fibre and cancer risk in African Americans and rural Africans

TWO WEEK FOOD EXCHANGES

AA fed African-style diet
- 55g high-fiber
- 16% fat

Rural Africans fed Western-style diet
- 12g low-fiber
- 52% fat
Southern Diet

In a 2018 study in the October issue of *JAMA* researchers found that among all mediating factors for the high prevalence of hypertension among the US African American population the largest mediator was eating a typical “Southern diet” of fried food, processed meats, added fats, and sugar-sweetened beverages, accounting for more than 50% of the excess risk of high blood pressure in African American men and 29% of the excess risk among African American women.

Eating Messages that Resonate

- Dairy “if tolerated”
- Inspires AA to reclaim their healthful heritage
Helping AA Reclaim Their Cultural Heritage
Tips for Diabetes Educators

Healthy Messages That Resonate
- Free from abstraction or elitism
  - “White People Food” Huffingtonpost 2018
- Focus on affordability, availability and ownership
- Emphasize community fellowship, celebration, identity, and meaningful memories connected to food.

Introduction to A Taste of African Heritage (ATOAH)
- A six-week nutrition and cooking curriculum.
- To help people eat and live more healthfully through a traditional diet and to prepare more home-cooked healthy meals per week.
Culinary History, Traditional Foods and Nutrition

Danessa’s Journey Through ATOAH
Teacher to Ambassador

ATOAH Cooking Curriculum
• Class components
  – Introduction
  – Historical and nutritional discussion
  – Cooking lesson
  – A time to eat together and reflect.
• Tracking success
  – Confidential lifestyle and physical health evaluations
ATOAH Cooking Curriculum

- Lesson 1: Traditional Herbs and Spices
- Lesson 2: Greens
- Lesson 3: Whole Grains
- Lesson 4: Beans and Rice
- Lesson 5: Tubers and Stews
- Lesson 6: Fruits and Vegetables

Effectiveness of A Cultural Approach

Lifestyle Changes 2017
- 25% Increased home cooking
- 34% Increased consumption of leafy greens and vegetables
- 33% Increased consumption of whole grains
- 29% Increased fruit consumption
Effectiveness of A Cultural Approach

- Lifestyle Changes 2017
  - 29% increased exercise
  - 33% increased vegetarian based meals
- Measurable Health Changes 2017
  - 60% lost weight
  - 33% reduced blood pressure by one stage
  - 52% lost inches from their waists

ATOAH Outreach Metrics

- 6,493 community members reached since inception in 2012
- 1,998 reach by ATOAH classes 2017
- 326 classes taught since inception
- 132% growth of members in FB group since 2016

Demographics & Reach
Bring ATOAH to Your Program

• License the curriculum on an annual basis
  – Single license $300
  – Multi site license
• Purchasing the Curriculum
  – Photocopying the printed curriculum is a violation of the copyright
• Student handbook, teachers manual, trifold brochure, entrance/exit surveys

Be inquisitive and identify cultural and environmental barriers
• Take the African Heritage Diet CPE course
• Use educational materials representative of the client’s ethnicity
• Teach an African Heritage cooking class

In Summary

Adopting a westernized diet increases susceptibility to health problems.
ATOAH cooking curriculum inspires positive health outcomes.
Reframing nutrition education programming can play a key role in bridging the health-equity gap in African Americans
Presentations are communication tools that can be used as lectures.