



United States Department of Agriculture

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Dear WIC Nutrition Professional:

Spring: it's a time of growing, changing, and renewing—not just for nature, but for ourselves and those we serve in our community through the WIC Program. Traditionally, nutrition education has been a forum for WIC staff to inform participants about what they need to do to live healthy lifestyles. However, the real opportunity for the WIC Program to change and improve the lives of women and children is when participants interact with WIC staff.

In order for this interaction to be successful, staff must utilize interactive counseling methods that have been proven to facilitate meaningful behavior changes among participants. There is no one counseling method or teaching strategy that fits the needs of all participants. Even so, interaction that engages the participant is one characteristic that is effective in changing behavior regardless of the counseling method or teaching strategy used. By making the participant an active partner in the nutrition education and counseling process, you can better personalize the level of care and support you provide.

Our Spring 2008 WIC Works Mailing highlights various counseling methods that engage the WIC participant as an active partner in the behavior change process. These methods have been evaluated by States for their effectiveness in the WIC Program through the WIC Special Project Grants. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) awards these grants each year, on a competitive basis, to fund innovative projects that have the potential to improve and enhance the WIC Program. The enclosures focus on three projects:

- California: *Learner-Centered Education in California WIC*
- Massachusetts: *Touching Hearts, Touching Minds: Using Emotion-Based Messages to Promote Healthy Behaviors*
- North Dakota: *Effectiveness of Motivational Interviewing in a WIC Clinic Setting*

This mailing includes summaries of each project and helpful tools that were developed as a result of the project. You may discover that you can use one or more of these tools in your clinic. Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/benefitsandservices/specialprojects.htm> to learn more about Special Project Grants awarded between 2000 and 2007. Also, visit the WIC Works Resource System “Sharing Center” (<http://nal.usda.gov/wicworks/>) to find resources from many states, as well as monthly spotlights and other new materials.

As always, if you have questions, please contact the WIC Works Resource System team by telephone at 301-504-5414, by fax at 301-504-6409, or by email at wicworks@nal.usda.gov.

We are wishing you pleasant growth, change, and renewal this spring!

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