Welcome to Module 3, Lesson 2: Value of Family & Consumer Sciences. Family & Consumer Sciences strengthens families, farms, communities and the economy through research, education, and Cooperative Extension. In today’s society of limited resources, we need to be able to demonstrate how education related to our field benefits society. This lesson will describe the value of some Family & Consumer Sciences programs and their relevancy to solving key critical societal issues.
There are two objectives in this lesson. First, you will be able to describe at least three ways Family & Consumer Sciences benefits society. Second, you will be identify at least two major national impacts of Family & Consumer Sciences programming.
Can we put a public and monetary value on our families? Can we say how much it is worth to solve problems and productively deal with issues they face every day in society? How much is it worth to help military families cope with the deployment of a loved family member?
Or how much do families benefit by knowing and using wise financial and credit practices?
Housing education: how much is this worth? The single largest financial decision for most people is the decision to buy a home. When combined with housing energy issues and living expenses, making wise choices can greatly benefit families in the short and long-term. A safe and healthy home can improve the quality of living and save medical costs.
How do we put a value on making wise life style choices such as food and nutrition, exercise, and health care?
Family & Consumer Sciences professionals and volunteers teach essential life skills to individuals and families.
Another benefit of Family & Consumer Sciences is the unbiased research findings used to help people begin to address complex and diverse challenges.
Family & Consumer Sciences helps people learn critical thinking and problem solving skills, which empowers them to improve their quality of living. Learning critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as having the necessary subject knowledge, gives people the confidence and ability to solve their own problems.
Educating people in public policy is also another important aspect of working with today’s society. Education helps individuals and families live and work in a diverse society, and education helps individuals and families become better prepared for the future.
As mentioned in Module 1, Lesson 4, there are six core areas identified by the Division of Family & Consumer Sciences at the United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture as being critical societal issues: Rural Vitality; Financial Capability; Nutrition and Health Literacy; Home Safety and Energy Efficiency; Child and Family Resiliency; and Disaster Preparedness/Response. Extension addresses these human and societal changes through various programs. The next series of slides are examples of national impacts of these areas to demonstrate the value of Family & Consumer Sciences.
In Rural America where there may be limited access to resources, Extension plays a vital role. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Division of Family & Consumer Sciences funds support four Regional Rural Development Centers. An example of a major impact was the North Central Rural Development Center creation of 32,000 jobs. Rural community programs also contribute to farm sustainability, rural development and community resource and economic development.
The Family & Consumer Sciences Economics program fosters three dimensions of Financial Capability: 1) Financial Knowledge and Understanding, 2) Financial Skills and Competencies, and 3) Financial Responsibility. Program evaluations measure the impacts of the financial education and participation capabilities. An example of a major impact is in the “Financial Security in Later Life” Program. You can see from the data that a significant number of people reported using recommended financial strategies, developed plans to achieve retirement, and they increased their financial security. This program is an example of impacts in the core area of Financial Capability.
The America Saves program is another example of national impacts. Look at these numbers showing over 189,000 people increased their knowledge of personal savings and over 20,000 set a savings goal of a cumulative monthly total of $2.4 million.
In the core area of Nutrition and Health Literacy, the “Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program” or EFNEP is a great example of a program making a national impact. This program is operated through the 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions in every state, the District of Columbia, and in the six United States territories. The program is conducted by having peer educators work with limited-resource families and youth every year. More than eighty percent of the EFNEP families report living at or below one-hundred percent of the poverty level. The next slide demonstrates the effectiveness of EFNEP.
EFNEP

Annual data shows graduates:

- Improve their diets
  92% report more closely following MyPyramid recommendations, including an increase of about 1.4 servings of fruits and vegetables
- Improve their nutrition practices
  88% improve nutrition practices, such as making healthier food choices and reading nutrition labels
- Stretch their food dollars farther
  83% improve food resource management practices, such as planning meals and shopping with a grocery list
- Handle food more safely
  66% improve food safety practices, such as storing and thawing food properly
- Increase their physical activity rates
  40% more often do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day

For more information visit: www.nifa.usda.gov/efnep

This slide depicts some major impacts of EFNEP. Annually, EFNEP participants improve their diets, improve their nutrition practices, learn to stretch their food dollars, handle food more safely, and increase their physical activity rates.
Most people spend a significant amount of time in their homes, so it is important they understand how to create a safe and healthy home. Reducing radon in homes translates to decreased rates of radon induced lung cancer. University of Georgia’s Radon Education program reduced radon in homes and saved potential medical costs.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture is promoting programs that transform the way individuals, communities, businesses, and government use energy. The outcome expected is to accelerate the adoption of efficiency and renewable technologies and practices that achieve energy, environmental and economic benefits for targeted audiences. North Carolina educators made a difference by educating consumers through energy education and home audits.
“Operation READY” is just one example of Family & Consumer Sciences Child & Family Resiliency programs developed to work with military families. “Operation READY” was established by Texas AgriLife Extension and California Cooperative Extension to support families during deployment of a family member. It was developed because it was found that the readiness of service personnel is directly related to their family’s well being.

“Operation READY” is a training and information resource developed after the Persian Gulf War from lessons learned and has been updated during Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. The materials that were developed help families cope with the changes they face during this difficult time. Thousands of soldiers and family members worldwide are reached annually through these resources. If you want to learn more about “Operation READY” click on the link on this slide.
Cooperative Extension programs support nationwide disaster education and provide resources and expertise to effectively prepare for and respond to disasters. Inhabitants of counties with the Strengthening Community Agrosecurity Planning program are better safeguarded from the negative effects of a potential agricultural disaster. The Winter Survival Kit app, developed by North Dakota State University for smartphones, helps people stranded during winter storms with tools and information.
Back to the question asked at the beginning of this lesson. What is the value of Family & Consumer Sciences? The value of Family & Consumer Sciences is felt by society in the dollars saved by the education it delivers and the lifestyle changes it encourages. It is an even greater value to the individuals and families that make these lifestyle changes and enhance their quality of living.
In review, Family & Consumer Sciences benefits society in many ways. Family & Consumer Sciences has made major impacts with educational programs. These impacts have been felt on the local, state, and national levels. Although education itself is a benefit and provides personal growth for individuals and their families, how does this education benefit society? When people have the knowledge and skills to make wise, healthy decisions, this contributes to making healthy communities. Family & Consumer Sciences: 1) Helps make successful and sustainable communities; 2) Helps individuals and families reach full potential, and 3) Helps people have enhanced quality of living.
Master Family & Consumer Sciences
Volunteer Program

References


References

