MICHIGAN FITNESS FOUNDATION

MFF Statewide Physical Activity Assessment Handbook:

A guide for assessing physical activity among SNAP-Ed participants

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I. Purpose of Handbook

This handbook serves as a reference to guidelines and procedures that have been developed to assess physical activity (PA) among SNAP-Ed participants throughout the state of Michigan. All partners are now asked to take part in PA assessment by administering *PA screeners,* as they will be referred to throughout this handbook, to eligible SNAP-Ed participants.

Please review the handbook in its entirety to ensure that you are prepared to administer the PA screeners. (Even if you helped pilot the assessment tools in previous years, it is recommended that you review the handbook as a refresher.)

At the end of the handbook is a checklist (Appendix A) to assist you as you prepare to administer the screeners in your SNAP-Ed classes. Please print the checklist and keep it handy for easy reference.

As you administer the screeners, if you encounter any problems or come up with helpful suggestions that might be useful to others, please share these with your MFF project manager. Your input will help us improve the evaluation process in future years.

Questions may be directed to:

Maran Subramain, MFF Evaluation Specialist, (517) 908-3841
MSubramain@michiganfitness.org

Michelle LaFleche, MFF Data Specialist, (517) 908-3864
MLafleche@michiganfitness.org

II. Planning & Preparation

A. Assessment Tools

Two PA screeners have been selected to assess the effect of SNAP-Ed programming on the PA behaviors of SNAP-Ed participants: one for youth and one for adults.

These tools were selected after an extensive literature search and review of almost 90 different assessment instruments by MFF and its Evaluation Consultation Group (ECG) in 2014. The process resulted in the selection of assessment tools on the basis of practicality, reliability and validity of the instruments. They were pilot tested by a sub-group of MFF partners over two years.

The PA screeners assess recent PA (past 7 days) and have been tested in a wide range of populations. They each take about 5-8 minutes to complete.

B. Audience

The target audience for PA assessment will be individuals participating in a SNAP-Ed intervention that has a PA component. The screeners are not intended for interventions with only a nutrition education component.

The age categories for the screeners are:

- Youth:
    - Grades 4-12
    - Or, ages 9-18 years
- Adults:
    - 18 years or older

There is some overlap among 18 year olds, depending on the context of your intervention. If you are working with youth—for example, in a school setting—the 18 year olds should be considered youth. Alternatively, if you're working with an adult audience, the 18 year olds should be considered adults. Note that pregnant teens will be classified as adults regardless of their age in most instances.

C. Timing of Implementation

1. Timing of PA-screener administration

Partners can start administering PA screeners at the start of the new fiscal year (FY); however, the exact timing will depend on the timing of your intervention. Similar to the Fruit & Vegetable Screener, there is a pre-screener and a post-screener with an emphasis on getting matched pairs whenever possible (see more on matched pairs on page 3).

The actual start date for administering the screeners will depend on your specific intervention: the pre-screener should be administered on the first day of the PA intervention (before it begins); the post-screener should be administered after the PA component is complete.

When working in the school setting, there is no need to wait until the end of the school year to administer post-screeners to students. Post-screeners should always be administered at the completion of your core programming.

Remember to build in time to the first and last class to administer the pre- and post-screeners (approximately 15 minutes for providing instructions, and distributing, completing and collecting screeners).

Screeners are titled and color-coded to indicate which versions should be administered pre- and post-intervention.

2. Sampling

For some partners, it may be appropriate to sample all eligible individuals within the target audience to achieve evaluation goals (i.e. smaller programs); whereas other partners may
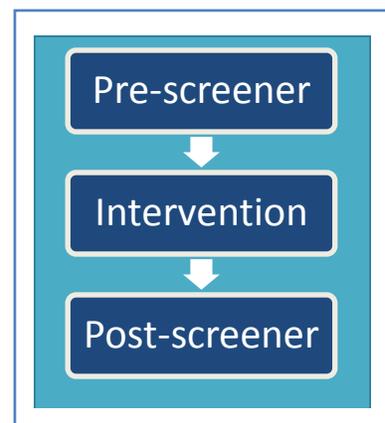
select a representative sample (i.e. survey every second or third class). Oversampling may be necessary in order to achieve minimum evaluation goals.

Your sampling plan will generally follow what was set forth in your approved proposal. Your MFF project manager will work you one-on-one to determine the best sampling plan for your program.

3. Reducing bias in your sample:

Bias is a problem that skews data results. It can occur if the data collected from sampled participants is not representative of the overall group. To reduce bias, make sure your sampling method does not favor certain types of classes (for example, big groups or classes that take place at certain times of day). It could be that people who participate in smaller groups during the day (seniors, for example) are different from people who participate in larger groups during the evening (such as working adults).

One common mistake is to sample participants who are perceived as being easy to survey. This introduces another form of bias because easy-to-survey participants may be vastly different from more challenging participants.

 ➢ Bottom line: Make your best effort to systematically and fairly sample all eligible individuals so that your sampled group is representative of your true population!

D. Matching pre- and post-screeners

To the greatest extent possible, we are looking to collect matching pre- and post-screeners from your program participants. Ideally, if you have 10 people who complete the pre-screener, we would hope to get 10 post-screeners from the exact same group of people. We understand that there are a multitude of real-world reasons why this isn't always possible, but we ask that you do your best to collect matching pre- and post-screeners from the same individuals whenever possible.

As you will eventually see, demographic data is collected on both the pre- and post-screeners. Since we don't collect participants' names, we need these variables to identify which screeners belong together, so please help ensure that this information is filled out by participants, along with the questions about PA.

Why do we need matched screeners?

 ➢ Matched screeners allow us to reduce the variability in the data and make more precise comparisons with fewer subjects.[1]
 ➢ Those participants for whom we only have partial data will have to be separated out during analysis.

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[1] Dallal, G (March 19, 2007). Paired Data / Paired Analyses. Tufts University. Retrieved December 9, 2014 from http://www.tufts.edu/~gdallal/paired.htm.

E. Getting started: supplies needed

1. Obtaining the screeners from MFF

MFF will send you the appropriate number of screeners to assess PA among your eligible SNAP-Ed audience. In addition, MFF will provide you with materials and postage needed to return the completed screeners.

Once you are done administering the screeners to participants, return them to MFF right away. *Please do not wait until you complete the post-screeners or you have a larger number of screeners to send back.* Waiting slows down the analysis process and risks the possibility that the screeners will get misplaced or lost.

2. Obtaining cover sheets from MFF

Similar to the Fruit and Vegetable Screener, a scanning cover sheet will be emailed to you so you can print this form as needed. A small quantity will also be sent to you along with your survey materials.

3. Supplies

You will need to obtain a supply of no. 2 pencils that can be used by participants to complete their PA screeners.

F. Training multiple survey administrators

If you have more than one person administering the PA screener, **each individual should be trained** on appropriate and consistent survey administration. This is important for quality control! Several tips are offered in the next section on screener administration.

III. Administration of PA Screeners

To ensure the integrity of the data you are collecting, please follow these guidelines.

A. Importance of neutrality

As the administrator of the screener, it is important to remain as neutral and even-handed as possible in presenting the screener and answering questions that arise so as to avoid bias in the results gathered.

B. Setting

Interventions of just one session are not eligible for assessment because the screener questions measure PA in the past week. Therefore, **only settings where participants will receive 2 or more SNAP-Ed sessions with a PA component may be included.** While four or more sessions are preferable, two or three sessions are acceptable.

Most SNAP-Ed locations – such as a school, community center, public housing site, or place of worship – work fine for PA assessment. Settings to avoid are those where the same people are not going to return for follow up classes, like a farmers market or food pantry where the clientele may differ from week-to-week.

It is important to note that the screeners should not be sent home to parents of youth if the parents were **not part** of the intervention themselves. **This screener is meant for participants who were the direct recipients of the PA programming.**

C. Introducing the screener

You will want to have an introduction prepared prior to distributing the screeners. Figure 1 provides a sample introduction that you might consider using when you distribute the screeners, or you can create your own introduction.

Figure 1: Sample introduction

> This is a short survey about the physical activity you have done in the past week. There are no right or wrong answers so please answer all of the questions as honestly and accurately as you can.
>
> Please be sure to use a no. 2 pencil. Fill in the oval boxes completely and do not scribble or make any other marks on the survey. Please do not bend or fold the survey. Fill in only one response per question, unless noted differently. Remember to fill out both sides of the survey.
>
> Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

D. Informed consent

Similar to the Fruit and Vegetables Screeners, obtaining informed consent from program participants is **not** required when administering the PA screeners. An independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that the screeners involve no more than minimal risk to potential respondents; therefore, obtaining informed consent is unnecessary.

E. Reviewing screeners for completeness

When collecting screeners from participants, be sure to quickly scan them for missing information. Certain demographic variables, for example, are important to collect for matching pre- and post-screeners. Some respondents may forget to flip the screener over to complete the questions on the back side.

That said, it's important to remember that participants do have the right to skip questions if they so desire. No participant should be asked to complete the screener or specific questions against his or her will.

F. Procedures for handling screeners

If a bar code label is used, make sure the label is placed squarely onto designated label area (i.e., not crookedly placed or wrinkled)

Please **do not**:

➢ Bend or fold screener pages
➢ Staple screeners
➢ 3-hole punch screeners
➢ Paper-clip screeners

IV. Returning Completed Screeners to MFF

A. Cover sheets

Collect the completed screeners and send them back to MFF with the All-Purpose Scanning Cover Sheet (Appendix B) as soon as possible. Please complete all fields on the cover sheet before submitting to MFF.

In addition, please use a separate cover sheet when returning Fruit/Vegetable screeners and Physical Activity screeners. Do *not* mix these screeners on the same cover sheet.

We ask that when you have administered screeners to a group of participants, that you return them to MFF right away. Do not wait until you complete the post- screeners or you have a larger number of screeners to send back.

B. Notes about special accommodations/implementation

➢ **After school/summer programming**

It is fine to use the youth screener for afterschool programming interventions; however, the questions do not lend themselves well to summer youth programming. For this reason, the youth screener should typically be administered during the regular school year.

➢ **PA screener to use when surveying pregnant adolescents**

For pregnant adolescents, use the adult screener.

➢ **Modifying or customizing delivery of screener**

If you need to modify the delivery of the screener in any way—for example, you had to read the questions to the respondents, or were late in administering the post-screener--please make note of this on the All-Purpose Scanning Cover Sheet in the designated comment box. We will follow-up with you to discuss anything that may have been difficult or challenging about administering the screeners. We want to record all of your experiences so we can improve for future years.

➢ **Reaching non-English speaking audiences**

The PA screeners being used have not been translated or validated in languages other than English and partners should not translate them at this time. If screeners need to be read to

participants with limited English, please make note of this as described under the previous bullet (*modifying or customizing delivery of screener*).

V. Communications with MFF

For any questions related to the PA assessment, you may contact the following individuals at MFF, or your project manager:

> **MFF:**
>
> Maran Subramain
> Evaluation Specialist
> (517) 908-3841
> MSubramain@michiganfitness.org
>
> Michelle LaFleche
> Data Specialist
> (517-908-3864)
> mlafleche@michiganfitness.org

Appendix A - MFF Physical Activity Assessment Checklist

This checklist is intended to provide you with a quick overview of the steps involved in administering the physical activity (PA) screeners.

Preparation:

☐ Finalize your program's Evaluation Implementation Plan with your MFF project manager.

☐ MFF will send you the appropriate number of youth and adult screeners.

☐ Prior to administering the screeners, prepare your introduction or use the sample introduction provided (Figure 1, page 5). Purchase no. 2 pencils.

Implementation:

☐ When beginning a series of classes with a PA component, determine whether or not the class will be sampled for the PA evaluation (based on your MFF approved sampling strategy).
   o For those classes being sampled, build-in 15 minutes for the screeners

☐ Bring the following items to the first and last class:
   o The appropriate youth or adult pre- or post-screeners (one for each participant plus extras).
   o No. 2 pencils (one for each participant plus extras).

☐ Introduce the screener using your prepared introduction or the sample provided.

☐ Disseminate and collect screeners from participants.

☐ Thank participants for taking part in this evaluation.

Returning Screeners to MFF:

☐ Prepare screeners to send back to MFF as soon as they are completed.

☐ Print and complete the All-Purpose Scanning Cover Sheet and attach to the batch of screeners.

☐ Mail completed screeners back to MFF:

   Michigan Fitness Foundation
   1213 Center Street
   Lansing, MI 48906
   Attn.: Michelle LaFleche

Appendix B – All-Purpose Scanning Cover Sheet

All-Purpose Scanning Cover Sheet

MNN - FY17

Instructions: Please fill in all yellow highlighted cells. Print this cover sheet and include with the surveys/logs to be scanned.

IMPORTANT: Please include a separate cover sheet for the Statewide Evaluation Fruit/Vegetable or Physical Activity screeners.

Date:	
Agency name:	
Project title:	
Contact person:	
Form #(s) included*:	

*The form number is the three-digit code located at the upper-right corner of the form.

Reminders:

- Please check to make sure there are no staples on forms.
- Do not fold surveys.
- Do not send photocopies. Photocopies will not scan.

Data to be returned to: (Please send statewide survey data requests to your MFF SNAP-Ed Project Mgr.)

Name:	
Email address:	
ccEmail address:	

Forms to be returned to: (Note: Statewide surveys are not returned.)

Agency/Name:	
Address:	
City/Zip:	
Attn:	

Additional information

MFF Office Use

Agency code:	
Project code:	
Data files:	

Notes

Scanner initials: _____

Archive info: _____