

Food Insecurity & the Feminine Struggles of Feeding a Family

Joelle M. Schaefer

Doctoral Candidate

Department of Community Health & Epidemiology

College of Medicine

University of Saskatchewan

Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- **Presenters: Joelle Schaefer**
- **Relationships with commercial interests:**
 - None

Disclosure of Commercial Support

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- **Potential for conflict(s) of interest:**
 - No conflicts of interest

Mitigating Potential Bias

- Does not apply

Goal of the Presentation

To explore how the evaluations we conduct on program and service effectiveness can be improved when we attempt to understand the context in which people live.

Healthy Mother Healthy Baby

The program:

- In existence since 1983
- Harm reduction approach
- Outreach that is accessible and acceptable to community
- Support to women who live in conditions of risk to have the healthiest pregnancies and babies possible
- Self-referral, as well as referrals from community organizations and family doctors
- Support ~ 350 women per year

Food Insecurity among HMHB Clients

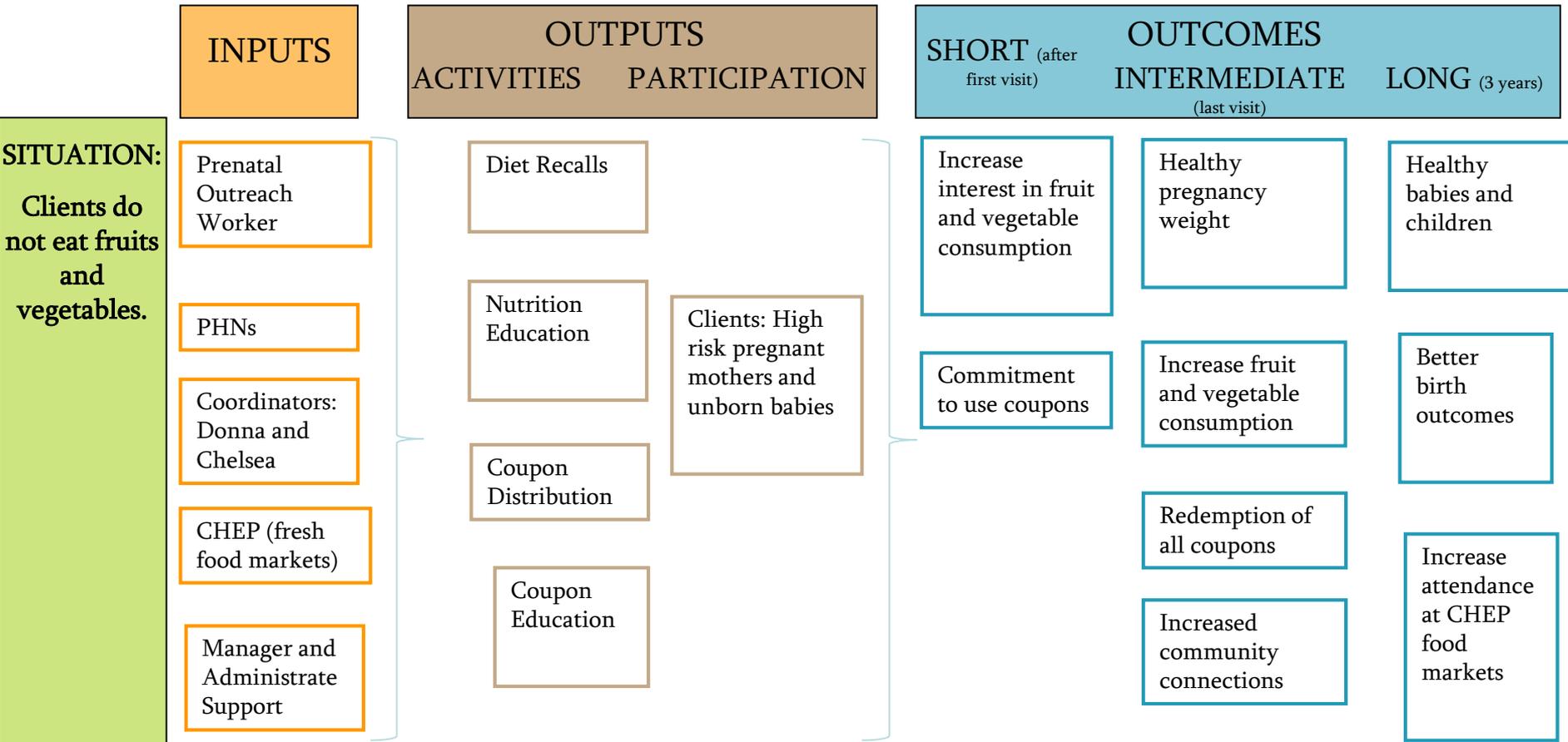
- Food insecurity is known to be one of the barriers women in the HMHB program face in achieving a healthy pregnancy (Bowen, 2004)
 - 82% of women accessing HMHB were food insecure from September, 2014 – September, 2016
- Among females in Canada, food insecurity has been found to be associated with a diet of lower nutritional quality, including a lower consumption of fruits and vegetables (Health Canada, 2012; V. Tarasuk, 2001; Tarasuk, Fitzpatrick, & Ward, 2010)
- Consistent with this research, the HMHB program staff observed low vegetable and fruit consumption among their clients

Food Support

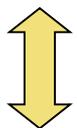
Vegetable and Fruit Vouchers

- Introduced in 2014, in partnership with CHEP Good Food Inc.
- Provided to clients every 2 weeks
- \$5 voucher
- Redeemable at Fresh Fruit Markets (*lower cost produce*)

OBJECTIVE: To increase fruit and vegetable consumption among clients and in turn better their health outcomes.



ASSUMPTIONS



1. Coupons along with education will lead to increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

EXTERNAL FACTORS



1. Coupons are only redeemable at fresh food markets and the Food Junction.

An Evaluation

What is the effect of food support on the vegetable and fruit consumption and the food security status of pregnant women in the Healthy Mother Healthy Baby Program?

- 24 hour food recall
- Fruit and vegetable consumption module
- Demographic information
- Household food security status module

What's missing?

What are things that this evaluation, a very typical evaluation of a nutrition intervention, may overlook?

How could these oversights effect the results of an evaluation?

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with past HMHB clients who participated in the evaluation (n=10)

Interviews explored experiences of food insecurity among women who live in a household with others and the role of food support in feeding women and their families

Research in the area of Feeding a Family

Feeding a family continues today to be viewed as “womanly” activities and thus remains a gendered form of labour (DeVault, 1991)

Society shapes an image of the “good mother” and foodwork is one way in which women can achieve this status

- Foodwork is capable of expressing maternal love and devotion and maintaining children’s health and purity (Cairns & Johnston, 2015)

Being a “Good Mother”

Social position, financial constraints, cultural practices and other factors can influence a woman’s capacity of achieving the “good mother” status (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Julier AP. In: Voski Avakian A, Haber B, editors)

- Some women also consciously resist these ideals (Cairns & Johnston, 2015)

What does this have to do with evaluation of a food support program?

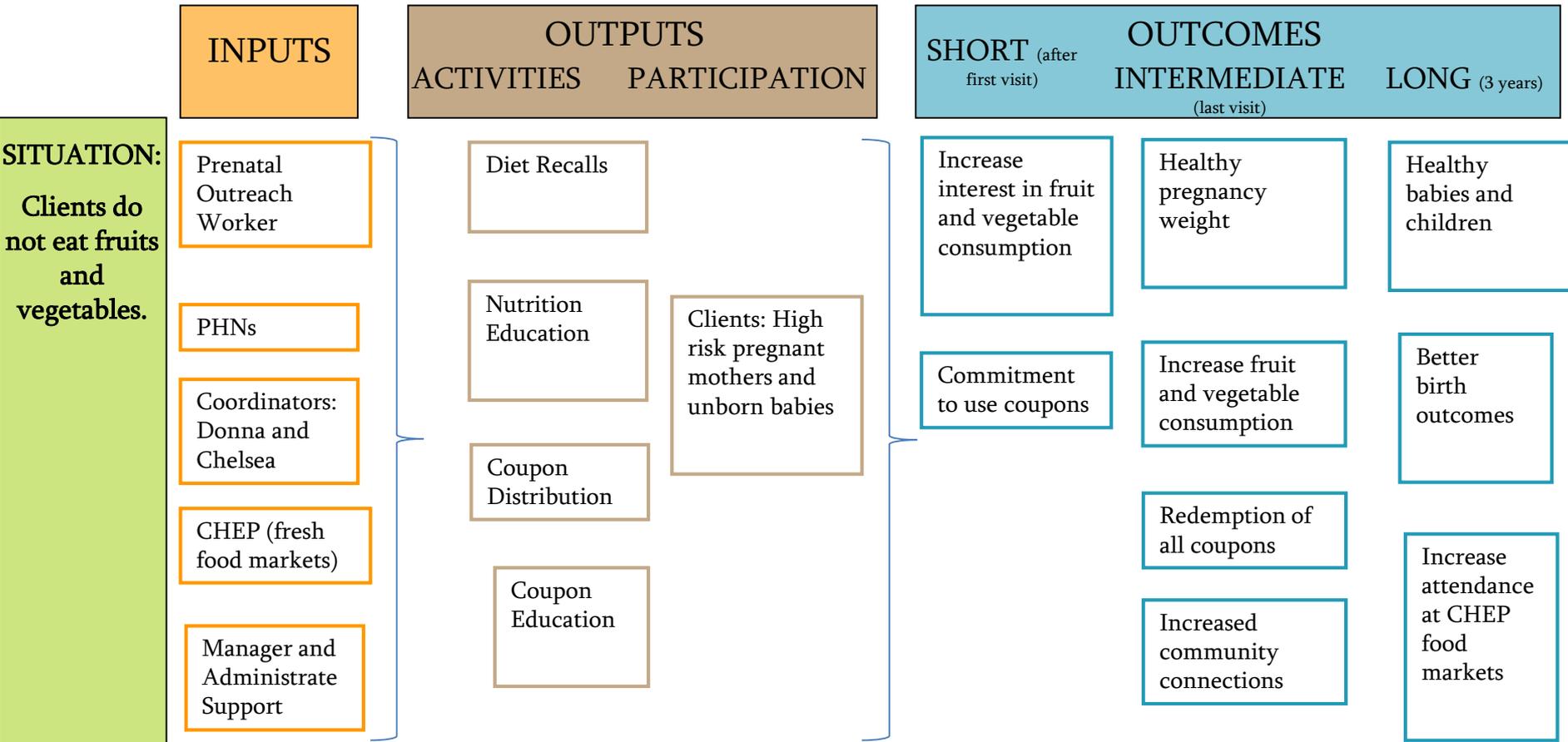
Dietary Behaviours & Choices

The outcome of interest in the logic model and evaluation was “increased fruit and vegetable consumption”

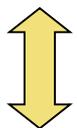
This is a behaviour that the program intends clients, who are women and mothers, to adopt

- What are barriers to adopting this behaviour?

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The Context in Which We Live

The social, economic, political and cultural contexts in which people live are not always properly considered in research and associated interventions focused on behaviour change

Specific to research on the dietary behaviours of individuals, the gendered way in which food is acquired, prepared, shared and consumed is often overlooked

Results from Interviews with HMHB Participants

Pending

Reflections for Evaluations in Your Work

What is your job?

What is the mandate of your job?

What types of questions do you ask when evaluating the services you provide at your job?

Who is a typical client or user of the services you provide at your job?

Do you know about the broader context that they live in, outside of the specific service you provide?

What do you know?

What do you assume?

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