

Family & Consumer Sciences – The Discipline

Who We Are and What We Do

Family and Human Development

- Child development
- Early childhood education
- Parent education
- Relationships and family dynamics
- Adult development and aging

Family Resource Management

- Financial literacy
- Advanced financial management

Food, Nutrition and Health

- Nutrition and food preparation
- Food safety
- Food security
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Health literacy and health insurance literacy
- Physical activity and healthy lifestyles

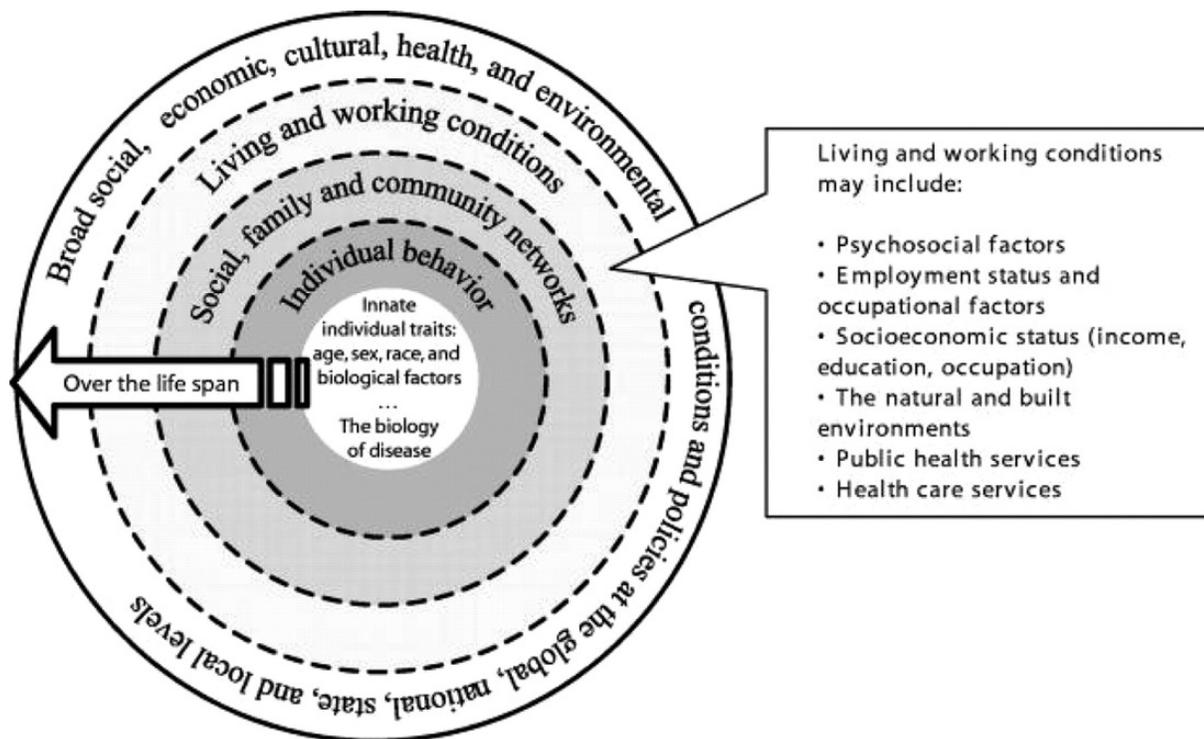
Extension FCS Education is:

- Relevant to individuals and families across the lifespan
- Based on needs of individuals and families
- An interdisciplinary area of study and multi-professional in its practice
- Offered in many settings in the community and in partnership with others
- An educational rather than a therapeutic approach
- Respectful of different family and cultural values
- Taught by qualified educators who are cognizant of the scope of FCS Extension education

The Human Eco-System Theory (Nickols, 2003; Tudge et al, 2009; USDA, 2010) forms the theoretical basis for FCS Extension Education. This theory posits that individuals develop within the contexts of family, communities, and society; and their developmental outcomes whether poor or positive are influenced as they interact with these various systems.

We view families as active participants in the human eco-system. They make decisions, exchange resources, and examine costs and benefits of alternatives given their current situation. Families also take steps to change their environment to better support their development (Nickols, 2003).

FCS Extension Education forms partnerships with families and other levels of the eco-system to improve their health and well-being across the lifespan. We test and implement effective interventions at various levels of the eco-system as depicted in Figure 1 below. In the next section, the Domains of Family Practice Model is used to further operationalize how Extension education works in communities and how we address individual and family issue with the human eco-system theory as a guide.



How We Do Our Work

The Domains Family Practice Model (Myers-Wall et al., 2011) has been adapted to illustrate how Extension Education collaborates with others across the levels of the eco-system. While this model originally targeted family life education, the concepts relate to nutrition, wellness, food safety and all other FCS Extension subject matter. The model's authors conceptualize the practice of responses to meeting the needs of families as having three domains: education (Extension), therapeutic/clinical interventions, and case management approaches. As noted above, Extension Education in community settings often forms partnerships with the other two domains to serve individuals and families in a holistic, comprehensive manner that brings together several levels of the human eco-system model.

As the table illustrates, Extension Education provides educational services to individuals and families. However, sometimes people have deeper problems that are not ameliorated by education alone and require more intensive services and case management. In some cases, providers of therapeutic and clinical services and case management providers refer clients to Extension education programs to strengthen their knowledge and skills in a specific area. At other times, the Extension Education program identifies a participant with a need for additional services and makes a referral. In all situations the goal is to ensure that the individual and family is served by domain of family practice that best meets.

Prevention Education – Intervention Continuum

| Question | FCS Extension Education's Responses | Therapeutic and Clinical Intervention Responses | Case Management Responses |
|--|---|---|---|
| Why? Purpose and goals of work with individuals and families | To increase knowledge and develop skills so individuals and families may build on their strengths and function at their optimal levels | To amend problems and disorders to achieve stability for the individual and family | To help navigate systems, understand and comply with legal and regulatory requirements to increase safety and well-being |
| What? Content base and foundation | FCS discipline; learning, pedagogy, andragogy, educational methods | Therapy and clinically focused philosophies and methods | Case management theories and methodologies; research about social/health systems, resources and policies |
| When? Timing of work with individuals and families | Deal with current family needs and challenges to prepare for and improve family functioning and future behavior change | Cope with results of past and current events focusing on past causes to improve current physical, social and mental health | Deal with current problems and immediate crisis |
| For whom? Target populations for services | Any individual or family willing and able to function in an educational environment and committed to learning | Individuals and families that are diagnosed with functional problems and are willing to participate in a therapeutic or health care environment | Individuals and families identified as being at risk or who demonstrate a need for assistance in meeting legal and social regulations |
| How? Techniques and methods used | Assess educational needs; set goals based on needs & strengths; occurs in a variety of settings; teaching about knowledge, attitudes & skills; families involved in active learning process | Diagnose problem; identify a treatment plan; occurs in a private setting; individuals and families have input but not with other families | Assess individual and family functioning; set goals to fill gaps; occurs in the field; coordinate services while monitoring compliance, difficulties & successes; families participate in services but rarely with other families |

Original Chart (Myers-Walls, et al) adapted by North Central Program Leaders, 2015

References

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