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Evaluation of the Impact of Food Insecurity Education

There seems to be a general awareness that in today's world not everyone always has enough to eat, yet a lack of specific knowledge about what is termed food insecurity often arises. Food insecurity means not having reliable access to sufficient amounts of nutritious food through normal access channels to lead an active and healthy life. Professor Alison Harmon developed an educational experience where pre-health professionals can get a taste of food insecurity by limiting student's food expenses to \$3 per day, or \$15 over five days. From journals completed daily, qualitative data was sorted to characterize strategies related to maximizing one's budget, food choices and overall diet quality; physical, emotional, and mental consequences during the exercise; insights and observations of the participants, participant feelings about completing an application for food assistance and visiting a food bank, and participant predictions related to how the experience would benefit them in their professional practice. Implications of this research are intended to assist educators in creating student experience that foster empathy and understanding about food insecurity issues. A simulated food insecurity experience can be useful in increasing competence for health professionals working with limited resource clients.