In-Home Food Safety

Amanda Ruth
Emily Eubanks
Emily Rhoades
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Food Safety Facts

- Between 6.5 million and 81 million cases of foodborne illness a year (May 1996, GAO)
- 6.5 million to 33 million cases of foodborne illness occur in the U.S. every year (CAST 1994)
- The wide range in cases of foodborne illness is due to the uncertainty about the number that go unreported.

Food Safety Facts

- 9,100 foodborne illness deaths per year (The National Center for Health Statistics)
- 2 to 3 percent of all foodborne illness cases lead to secondary long-term illnesses (FDA)
Food Safety Facts

- 2 and 4 million illnesses occur each year in the U.S. from the more than 2,000 strains of Salmonella (CDC).
- Campylobacter is the most common bacterial cause of diarrhea in the U.S., resulting in 1 to 6 million illnesses each year (CDC).

Communication about Food Safety

Information Sources
- Broadcast Media
- Television
- Radio
- Print Media
- The Internet
- Cooperative Extension Services
- Print Materials
  - Fact sheets
  - Brochures

www.fightbac.org
www.foodsafety.gov

Actors

- Media
- Consumers
- Educators
- Retailers
  - Food Service
  - Grocers
- Regulators/Policy Makers

What are the Players Saying?

- Ann Welsh, Restaurant USA Writer, 1998
  - “Some media reports on food safety often exacerbate consumers’ fear of foodborne illness. This food phobia can only be calmed through education, telling consumers about the restaurant industry’s efforts to promote food safety and reassuring the public of each and every restaurateur’s dedication to serving safe food.”

- Thomas Hoban, Professor in Food Science at NC State Univ.
  - “It wasn’t too long ago when food safety was nothing anybody knew about, the reports are often influenced by certain groups that have their own agenda. The media’s focus on the risks associated with unsafe food began with a television report that aired a while back about apples said to be contaminated with the chemical Alar. People really reacted to that in a big way. It changed the way the media follows these kinds of stories.”

- Jorge Hernandez, manager of food safety at the ServSafe Foundation
  - “We know that a majority of problems result from poor operational practices and personal hygiene issues, and that much of the problem can be eliminated through education.”
What are the Players Saying?

- Julie O'Sullivan Maillet, ADA president
  - "We learned from the survey that consumers have improved food-handling practices in their homes, but there is still much to be accomplished to translate knowledge into practice, understanding into action, and concern into achievement."

- Carolyn O'Neil, registered dietitian and national spokesperson for the ADA/ConAgra Foods Home Food Safety program
  - "We have become a culture of 'diners-out' and 'takers-out.' But without a basic understanding of proper food handling and storage for these foods, consumers may be ordering up a case of food poisoning for dessert. Each carry-out meal or doggy bag poses a potential food safety hazard if it is not promptly eaten and/or handled correctly."

Issue in Relation to the Actors

- Food consumers underestimate their control over food safety.
- Educators recognize that there are no regulations or guidelines established for in-home food safety and feel it is their responsibility to inform the consumer on proper food safety practices.
- Food retailers are not concerned with the food once it leaves their hands.

Issue in Relation to Actors

- Regulators are in favor of voluntary programs to educate the consumer on food safety practices in the home because currently they lack the power and resources to regulate food products once they leave the public arena.
- Media want news that sells, so are more apt to present negative news on food safety.
Communication Issues

- Media typically only covers the issue when there is a problem.
  - They do nothing for prevention.
- Extension and the government put out information that is ignored.
  - People choose not to listen to messages, thinking it could not happen to them.
- Retailers have an audience, but don’t put information out there.

Self and Identity – (Baumeister)

- Self Reference Effect
- Private, Public and Collective Selfs
- Self Presentation
- Self Esteem
- Self Esteem Motivations
- Self Awareness

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura)

- Learning can occur through observation of others
- Modeling helps to promote learning
- Self Efficacy – degree of control or capability over an issue and sense of capability to handle the issue
Selectivity (Wheeless, Burelson & Samter)

- Selectivity
  - Even if consumers are exposed to messages about proper in-home food safety practices, they are most likely to choose not to listen to or make a purpose to remember the messages due to selectivity reasons. There are several types of selectivity and accompanying reasons why selectivity occurs.
    * Selective Exposure
    * Selective Attention
    * Selective Perception
    * Selective Retention
    * Selective Recall

Agenda Setting

- "Agenda can’t tell people what to think but they can tell them what to think about."
- Mass media serve as organizations whose product is news and entertainment.
- Position of the story effects how people perceive the issue

Group Activity

- In groups of two, propose possible courses of action in relation to one of the following theories:
  * Self and Identity
  * Selectivity
  * Agenda Setting
**Recommended Course of Action**

- Empowering consumers with the tools and self-beliefs for exercising personal control over food habits (self efficacy)
- Develop a campaign first for awareness and then knowledge to show consumers they have a degree of control or capability over their food safety
- Then, give consumers a sense of capability by an in-store campaign for grocery stores showing people how they can prevent food safety problems, presented by normal people from their community to show them that they too can do it.

**Questions**