



MOTIVATIONAL HOT BUTTONS: WHAT MOTIVATORS WILL MOVE WIC MOMS TO ACTION?

CHICKASAW NATION WIC PROGRAM

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Executive summary

Emotional forces are the most important factors leading people to action. By knowing the emotional forces that will lead mothers to action, public health programs can be more effective at leading them to health changes. The Chickasaw Nation Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program is charged with changing the eating, physical activity and breastfeeding behaviors of participants. In this paper, we identify the key motivations that speak to Chickasaw Nation WIC mothers. Knowing the emotional forces that drive behaviors will allow WIC providers to be more effective in leading clients to desired behavior changes.

In Month of 2013, twelve focus groups were conducted in three Oklahoma sites with Chickasaw Nation WIC clients. Respondents were segmented into four groups: Pregnant, breastfeeding, mother of child between birth and 18 months, and mother of child 18 months to five years old.

In the two-hour discussions with WIC mothers, we identified four emotional drivers—“hot button” motivators—that resonated with almost all respondents: Family values, nurturing, reinvention, and fun.

Family values were at the emotional heart of most of the respondents’ comments. Respondents aspire to be good parents and have strong families with happy and successful children.

The desire to provide care, comfort, encouragement, education, support and love to their children was also a common theme and suggests a need to nurture. Parents want their children to have a sense of belonging and security while thriving in strong and safe families.

People can reinvent themselves at different times in life. For some, the birth of a child is a time of reinvention. But the most powerful comments about reinvention came from respondents who had experienced childhood in dysfunctional, unhappy or insecure families, often with missing parents. Keenly aware of what they missed, they want their children to have very different childhoods. They want their children to have a greater sense of love and belonging than they had, and more guidance on making life decisions.

Fun may seem like a superficial motivator, especially when compared to family values, reinvention or nurturing, but it represents important benefits to mothers. To them, fun is the glue that holds families together and creates a sense of belonging and family memories.

To be more effective behavior change agents, WIC providers need to provide messages that align with the motivators of the people they serve. Focusing on what matters to WIC moms, rather than simply providing facts or trying to indoctrinate moms with their own values, represents an opportunity for WIC to be a more effective behavior change program.

Introduction

The Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program is charged with changing health-related behaviors. When the program first began, people had limited knowledge and access to nutrition facts, and they welcomed new information pertaining to their children's health. For almost 40 years, WIC has provided straightforward nutrition information with the hope that people's behavior would change.

Times have changed. Today, there are almost 50 million nutrition-related websites. Food labels, restaurants, and grocery stores, along with hundreds of health-oriented magazines, provide nutrition information. Today's WIC clients are more likely to be inundated and overwhelmed with nutrition information than in need of more from their WIC providers. They are interested in being great parents who raise healthy, happy children, but they want to be transformed, not simply informed.

WIC programs reach over 50% of American children at some time in their life. Yet poor eating patterns among children continue to lead to childhood obesity, and contribute to chronic diseases starting in childhood. The traditional approach of providing nutrition education and facts to parents is not consistently improving children's health.

Research suggests that simply providing more facts and logic-based messages to WIC clients is unlikely to affect behavior change to the degree needed to improve health. The world doesn't need another logic-based brochure. Instead, WIC change agents need to recognize and utilize insights into the emotional forces—motivations—that might lead their WIC clients to change.

Zaltman (What Customers Think) suggests that 95% of human decisions are based on subconscious or unconscious emotions, not logic and facts alone. Simply sharing factual nutrition information is unlikely to spur people to change because their powerful emotional drivers remained untouched--buried.

This report is about motivation. Specifically, it reveals the emotional forces—motivations—that drive behaviors. Messages and programs are far more likely to be effective if they trigger motivational rather than intellectual forces.

Motivational forces are hidden, often deeply ingrained within individuals. They are a result of genetics and life experiences. Motivations are different than emotions such as happiness, sadness or fear because those feelings are often generated in response to outside stimuli.

So, how can WIC providers use motivations to move their clients to action? WIC behavior change agents need to align their messages with the motivating forces that exist within clients. (Please note that logic and facts play a role in behavior change, but need to be addressed only after tapping into emotional forces.) Only when clients understand and

believe that taking action will help them achieve the deepest desires of their hearts do they respond to “how to” information.

The purpose of this report is to identify what motivational drivers are most likely to cause Chickasaw Nation WIC mothers to take action. By knowing what emotional forces will most likely lead clients to action, WIC providers will be more effective behavior change agents.

Although this research was conducted with Chickasaw Nation WIC participants, it is likely that other WIC mothers share similar motivators. After all, motivations are universal and are often consistent between people who share the same gender, age, life experiences and life stage. Further research needs to be conducted to determine how applicable this information is to other WIC populations.

Methodology and participant profile

The use of market research to identify emotional forces—motivators—is an emerging field. Since motivators are personal and likely to be unconscious or subconscious, identifying them seems like a daunting task. Asking straightforward questions about matters of the heart often leads to puzzled expressions, face-saving responses or outward lies. People are socialized to protect their deep feelings because being open and authentic is risky, especially in focus groups where respondents don’t know each other. Why reveal so much of yourself when it is safer and easier to hide behind a carefully constructed mask?

This project used projective techniques to circumvent “masks” that respondents normally construct to protect their feelings. A projective technique is an activity designed to let people respond to ambiguous and vague stimuli with the assumption that responses will reveal hidden emotions, motives, beliefs and concerns. Because there is no correct or “right” answer to the questions, people project from their sub consciousness and unconsciousness before they have time to think of socially acceptable responses. Although originally used in clinical settings as part of psychological care, projective techniques are now commonly used in market research to determine emotional “hot buttons” and motivations.

Why don’t we just ask clients to tell us what motivates them? Humans are complex. While this may seem logical, the answer may be difficult or impossible to reach considering that people often don’t fully know what motivates them. And even if people are aware of their true motivations, they may not want to share them with others, preferring to protect valuable truths that may make them feel vulnerable.

Focus group instrument

#1: Projective technique

Each person has a distinct and unique emotional footprint that is formed by genetics and life experiences. This combination of forces arouses, drives and sustains behavior.

Although the emotional forces that give life meaning are one of a kind, there are a limited number of basic instinctual desires. Genetics and life experiences dictate which combination of drivers are present and to what degree. Research suggests 16 basic desires motivate actions including a desire for power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical activity and tranquility. Market research uses slightly different titles for emotional drives such as the desire for control, revaluing, family values, the desire to belong, fun, time, discovery, status, self achievement, sex/love/romance, nurturing, reinventing oneself, desire to be smarter, power/influence and wish fulfillment. This report uses market research titles since they more closely align with respondent comments. The purpose of the projective technique was to tease out which emotional drivers were most common to most if not all mothers. The most powerful emotional drivers are referred to as “hot buttons.”

The first projective technique involved 75 photos tied to universal motivators like status, family values, nurturing, power and influence, sex, love and romance, self achievement, wish fulfillment, reinvention, fun, desire to belong, desire for order and control, discovery, revaluing, and time. We selected five additional images that visually correlated to each universal motivator, allowing respondents multiple opportunities to identify and select—or reject—images that they perceived to represent personal motivations. The images were truly projective, not identified by name or other identifiers, and provided a visual springboard for the conversation.

Respondent were asked to sort the images into two piles, with one image set representing things that were important to them and the other pile consisting of images that were not important to them. After completing this task, respondents were asked to select three photos from their “important” pile that best represented something that was very important to them, the deepest desire of their heart. They were also asked to select three photos from their “unimportant” pile that were particularly unimportant to them. As they showed their “important” and “not important” photos to the group, the moderator probed to determine what the photo represented to them in terms of motivations.

After this initial sharing, respondents were asked to sort the photos into piles by characteristics that connected them. The goal was to determine how respondents grouped motivators, and the titles they would assign to each motivation group. This proved difficult for many, if not most, of the respondents, but still yielded important information. After grouping the photos by characteristics, respondents were asked to select the photo grouping that best represented their deepest desires. This allowed another opportunity for the moderator to probe motivational desires.

#2: Wordle

A “wordle” is a piece of text that has been arranged into a visual pattern of words that connect to convey a message. (See example below for the “reinvention” hot button.) Respondents were presented with 15 “wordles” that contained words closely associated with emotional hot buttons. One of the focus group activities was for respondents to view the “wordles” and select the “wordle” that most closely aligned with their values and how they viewed themselves.



Prior to the focus groups, the selection of a “wordle” seemed a logical way to confirm respondents’ motivational “hot buttons.” We assumed respondents would select “wordles” that connected with responses from the projective techniques. It didn’t work that way, as some of the emotional drivers like status or power are not motivators people like to claim. They may be very powerful drivers, but few people have the emotional security or perspective to identify them as important motivators to them.

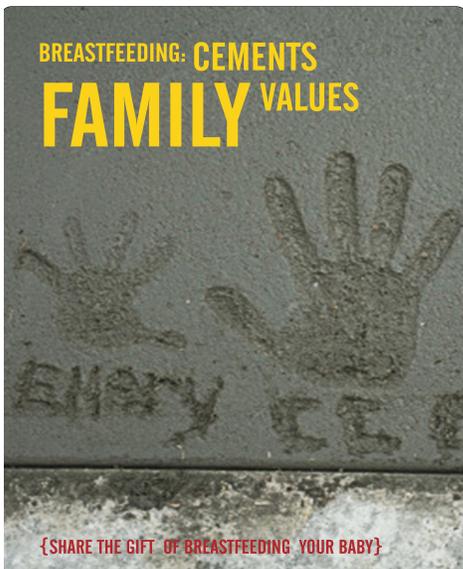
For example, no respondent selected the “wordle” that represented status. In fact, many shared they were not interested in status, preferring to focus their attention on family values, traditions or fun. Although they didn’t seem to value material items that conveyed status or strive to be “somebody” that impressed others with their wealth, many appeared very interested in their parenting reputations and what others thought of them. Their comments during the projective activities clearly identified status as an emotional driver for some. Many wanted to be viewed as card-carrying members of the “great mom club,” known for producing always-above-average children.

Although the “wordle” activity didn’t produce important insights or confirm statements made from the photo projective technique, it did demonstrate the importance of using projective techniques instead of logic-based approaches to determine motivational insights. Because projective techniques are designed to circumvent logic-based barriers,

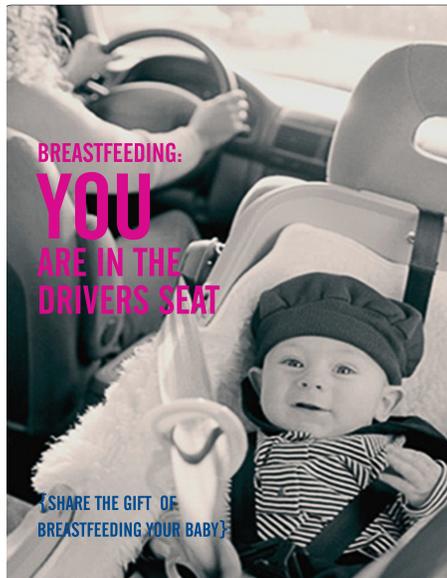
respondents revealed information that allowed their true motivators to be known including a deep desire for status and other less socially unacceptable drivers.

#3: Traditional WIC messages targeting key “hot buttons”

The final focus group activity involved handouts containing breastfeeding and fruit and vegetable consumption messages. (See sample handouts in Appendix X.) The breastfeeding and fruit and vegetable handouts are similar to those given in WIC clinics—but with a twist. The goal of each handout was to align the breastfeeding or fruit/vegetable message with a deeply held desire—motivation—that mothers may have, such as status, belonging, family values, nurturing, fun or more time.



Breastfeeding message targeting Family values “hot button”



Breastfeeding message targeting Control and order “hot button”

Rather than simply talk about emotional drivers using photos or wordles, we wanted respondents to select and discuss a handout(s) that targeted the deepest desires of their hearts and would likely motivate them to try the desired action. While projective techniques were broad and vague, this activity was intended to confirm and summarize. While this seems logical on the surface, the activity didn’t go as planned, yet still yielded important information. For example, one breastfeeding message targeted the emotional “hot button” of control by informing the reader that she was in the “drivers seat” when she breastfed her baby. The assumption was that the term “drivers seat” conveyed the meaning of being in charge, but some respondents took the message literally, thinking it

meant that women should breastfeed while driving. It was impossible for respondents to identify messages that resonated with their motivations when they didn't understand the messages' intent.

Effective nutrition and breastfeeding messages are complex. They need to motivate and inform with a minimum of words. We expected respondents to simply share the handouts that resonated with them, assuming they would understand the messages' intent. Some respondents didn't.

Despite the confusion over some messages, respondents were able to share how most messages made them feel and how their feelings related to their emotional needs and motivations.

Focus group sites and respondents

Focus groups were held the week of October 21-15, 2013 in hotel conference rooms or community settings in Ada, Duncan and Purcell, Oklahoma. Respondents were recruited through the Chickasaw Nation WIC clinics in each of those cities. All respondents were WIC clients and were grouped by their pregnancy or breastfeeding status or their child's age (birth to 18 months or 18 months to 5 years). The purpose of this segmentation was to create groups with commonalities so respondents would feel safer in sharing information. Respondents received a \$50 gift card to cover travel and child-care costs. Pam McCarthy moderated the two-hour focus groups.

The Chickasaw Nation Internal Review Board (IRB) approved this project, including the focus group objectives, instrument, qualifiers and recruitment process.

The following chart provides demographic information on the focus group respondents.

Number of focus group participants: 62

Age

11% less than 20 years old

68% ages 20-29

19% ages 30-39

1% 40-49

Marital status

21% single

71% married or living with a partner

5% divorced

3% separated

Racial/ethnic group

50% American Indian or Alaskan Native

3% Asian

3% Black or African American

43% White

Hispanic or Latino origin

5% yes

95% no

Highest educational level attained

2% 8th grade or less

11% 9-12 grade with no diploma

34% high school graduate or GED

13% Associate degrees

6% Bachelor's degrees

2% Master's degrees

Employment status

11% student

36% unemployed

9% unemployed, actively seeking work

16% employed, part time

26% employed, full time

Number of children

1 child—27%

2 children 31%

3 children 19%

4 children 5%

5 children 2%

14 children—2%

Pregnant-10%

Emotional drivers of WIC mothers

Behavior change is driven by need. All people, especially mothers, are busy and unlikely to change their habits unless the change helps solve a problem in their life. People change when they recognize a need in their life and are alerted to a solution that solves a problem for them.

But isn't that what WIC does now? Every WIC visit starts with a nutrition assessment that clearly pinpoints a need for change. The advice provided by the nutrition educator is intended to solve a problem in the life of the mother so she can create a healthier future for her child. What is different about the "hot button" approach?

Simply put, it is emotion instead of logic, and feeling instead of thinking. People are not as motivated to make changes based on *functional or factual* benefits as they are on *emotional* benefits. By tapping into people's deep emotional needs—their motivations—the "hot button" messages resonate in a more powerful and direct way. Consider the breastfeeding example below:

Functional, logic-based message	Emotion-based message
Breastfeeding provides your child with powerful antibodies that prevent infections in the first year. Breastfeeding can also help prevent childhood obesity.	Every mother wants what is best for her baby. You get to decide how to welcome your miracle to earth, how to nurture her baby for the first year, how to share your love with her baby. Breastfeeding is the gift that lasts a lifetime.

The first example represents the traditional WIC behavior change approach, which is to provide functional, logic-based messages that are intended to move clients to action. The second example, the emotion-based approach, is more commonly used in commercial marketing but can easily be applied in public health settings as well.

Emotion-based motivations, not logic and factual processing, are the powerful foundations of client decision-making. WIC change agents (educators) can tap into their clients' deepest needs, but they first need to know what emotional drivers to target. And that is the purpose of this report: To identify the emotional "hot buttons" that are likely to drive the behaviors of WIC mothers.

Identifying the exact emotional drivers of WIC mothers is challenging since these drivers appear to be layered and braided together rather than individual forces that stand-alone. Blurred edges rather than distinct lines exist between emotional drivers. Consider this quote:

“I want to give my kid a better life than what I grew up with. Like knowing my mom ain’t going to treat the kid bad and because my childhood was bad and I don’t want my kid to be like that so I would say more take them out, have fun and go do stuff with the kid.”

In this short statement, the mother identified three emotional drivers that guide her behaviors: The desire to reinvent life for her child to be better than what she experienced, to spend time nurturing her family, and to have fun. It appears that the desire to reinvent her child’s childhood is the fundamental force, but the desire to spend time nurturing her family and having fun are visible ways to accomplish her reinvention. It is almost impossible to separate or rank the drivers in terms of importance or power other than to note which ones mothers mention most often, what emotions accompany their comments, and in what order they say them.

Although emotional drivers were intertwined, there were clear “winners” that emerged as most powerful. (Drivers will be grouped in this paper as primary, secondary and less compelling. This grouping is subjective.) Emotional drivers listed in the “less compelling” category were mentioned less often or even dismissed by many respondents, yet were of primary importance to a limited number of mothers. Distinction was based on the number of times the driver was mentioned as well as the emotions that surrounded their comments.

Most individuals are strongly motivated by only a few of the emotional drivers listed below. These findings highlight the most frequent and powerful drivers that surfaced in the discussion. Like all qualitative research, the results suggest *what* people feel and think but not *how many* feel that way.

Primary Emotional Desires

The most frequently mentioned emotional drivers are grouped together here without rank.

Family Values

Respondents were given a deck of 70 photos that represented different emotional drivers, and asked to select images that were most important to them. Once they identified images of importance, they were asked to select one photo that showcased their deepest desires and share what that photo represented.



The most frequently selected image was one that suggests family values. (The image in the box was the most frequently selected photo.) The photo showed a family gathered around the dinner table, holding hands before a meal. To most respondents, the image suggested their aspirational value to be a strong, connected family, one that “had each other’s back” and gave children a sense of belonging. To some, the image also represented their desire to convey spiritual values to their children.

The desire for family values may be the most firmly rooted emotional driver of WIC mothers. Indeed it was the one that appeared to be omnipresent in almost all respondents.

Respondents who had a strong sense of family growing up recognize the value it represented in their lives and want to preserve it for their children. They want to devote time and effort to raising their child “right.” Their definitions of “right” were not consistent. For some, it meant spiritual values that would direct a child’s path. Others said it was inner strength that would allow children to face life’s challenges, help them be more successful and give them a sense of belonging.

For some respondents, their world was built on a firm foundation of weekly meals with close and extended families, multi-generational traditions and unconditional family love. Family values flowed as a result of this together time.

“All the family is together and we are all happy. We are always together. We have to stay together. It’s just how I’ve always been. I’ve always had a big family and always together. (What would your child miss if they didn’t have that family togetherness?) They would be very lonely.”

“It’s always been an important thing for us to spend Friday nights together. All of us together, no matter how old we get. We go to our parent’s house, have dinner, play

“My mom doesn’t necessarily get along with her family. I don’t know any of my dad’s family and my mom’s family is the only family I have and I don’t want to have no family. It got to the point where we didn’t see each other for ten years. That’s ten Christmases I didn’t have with my family. A close-knit family is important to me. You have that support and you have that love and you know that no matter how bad you screw up, you can always go back to your family and they are going to be there for you.”

games. And I’m really close with my mom and I want to pass that on as an example to my daughter...”

“Friends are good and friends are people that can be very positive in your life but sometimes friends can come and go and family is always going to be there.”

“Material things can burn you. They are not as important as having a relationship with your family or a good family bond or being a good person.”

“I would pray that my kids get to spend time with their father and to have bond. That my kids would learn how to respect others and they do really good in

school and they have a relationship with Christ. That they know values and have respect.”

“There are some things we cannot explain or don’t know why and our questions are always answered through prayer, and that’s what I really tell my kids. If there’s something that’s bothering you at school, always pray for it, always pray for that person bothering you and stuff like that. And we just, we do a lot better when we say our morning prayer. That is my number one.”

“Friends come and go and even outside family members come and go. We have falling-outs with families all the time. But if your family is strong, you’ll make it through anything. We tell our kids: you don’t have any friends. We’re your friends.”

Mothers who didn’t grow up with strong family units were keenly aware of what they missed and hoped to create it for their children. The emotional drivers of reinvention and family values were closely woven throughout their statements and suggested they deeply desired this for their children despite their past or current circumstances.

Family values represented a safe and powerful way to show love to their children and they didn’t waver on their understanding of its importance or their desire to achieve it—no matter what.

“I just wish they’d grow up in a good strong Christian faith. That’s all that really matters. I doesn’t matter how much money they make or anything as long as they are right with God. That’s all I wish for.”

Family togetherness—the way family values are communicated-- took different forms for different respondents. To some, spending quality time together having fun was a way to establish idealized family values. Others wanted to discover new things in nature and outdoors as a way to connect family members. Traditions were an outward sign of family values as was church attendance. No matter the format, family togetherness was the way respondents reported working toward their true goals: A strong, connected family that communicates family values to their children.

Interestingly, no respondent expressed doubt or hesitation about being able to achieve her dream for a strong family. All seemed hopeful and committed to achieving this dream despite significant challenges. This suggests the power and importance of family values as an emotional driver, and represents an important opportunity for WIC to help them achieve this dream.

Reinvention: New beginnings

Reinvention happens naturally as people develop, gain new perspectives and evaluate where they are on their life journeys. It occurs more commonly at pivotal times like leaving home for the first time, becoming a parent or entering retirement. Reinvention is also more common when people realize they are unhappy or uncomfortable with their pasts, driving them to want a new start.

The desire for reinvention was a common emotional driver among the WIC respondents, but not always in a traditional sense. Traditionally, reinvention applies to an individual life as people strive to forget past wounds and sadness, learn life lessons and recreate new lives for themselves.

For many respondents, the desire for reinvention was fueled by a great deal of physical and emotional baggage from their childhood. WIC respondents wanted to reinvent a better life than they had when they were children. They wanted their children to grow up with parents who were *there for them* in ways they had not experienced. They wanted their children to belong to strong families that allowed them to achieve educational and personal goals, have fun, feel they belonged to people who loved them, and create happy memories. They were more interested in wiping away the mistakes of their parents than their own mistakes because they knew how their unstable or unhappy childhoods had affected their life choices, happiness and success. By seeking reinvention, they visualized very different childhoods for their children, those that were happy, stable, and fun, without life-changing mistakes.

“I’m like the oldest in our family and I grew up without a mom and dad. I was there for my little brothers. And I didn’t get to go to school that much because I had to worry about my brothers and them getting to school and I just want my kid to know that their mom and dad are there and they are not going to be out running in the streets.”

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“It’s always been a fear since I was small that I wouldn’t be a good mom. My mom was a single mom. We had what we needed but I couldn’t talk to her about anything. She was neglectful in that way. We co-existed. She didn’t interact with us and that’s my part of not wanting to be a bad mom. I want my child to have a sense of belonging and a sense of security. I want her to know she has a place in this world. And I had to figure that out really late and it was hard for me.”

“I wish my kid has a good life and be happy, not like the life that I had in my childhood. A life where the dad and mom are together so he won’t grow up and be all bad and end up in jail and stuff.”

“Growing up with a single mom, I had all these preconceived ideas that babies ruin relationship and that’s why I did not want to have a baby.”

“My mother left when I was little. And I didn’t have a mother until I was 19. She just ran off. My dad was an alcoholic for a while. All I had was my sisters and the rest of my family. I want a mother and father for my kids. Everyone else had mothers on mother’s day or grandparents or someone. I never had anybody show up. You see all the other little kids with all their family and you are alone. It’s hard.”

“I want a good relationship with the baby’s father. Even if we divorce, I want to make sure that we are able to connect and talk for the kids. Because my parents can’t even be in the same room still to this day. I want to have that relationship for the kids so they don’t feel awkward.”

“I don’t want my kids to relive my life. For my child to have a different childhood than I did, I’ve got to change something.”

“I hope me and my husband are able to work together and not make our parents’ mistakes. When I was 16 they were like okay, do whatever you want and that got me in a lot of trouble. My husband’s parents were constantly buying him beer. And they didn’t feed us. I have home movies of me eating fried chicken at five months old and my husband was fed the exact same way and he had his gall bladder taken out at age 21. I hope we are able to learn from our parents’ mistakes so our child can have a really good life. I have thought a lot about this. I sit at home thinking about this.”

“I grew up without my mom. She passed away when I was six. So I just hope that I’m always there for my kids and they don’t have to go through that.”

“If you didn’t have a great childhood, and you find out you are pregnant, you probably are going to automatically want your child to have a better life than you did. And you are going to do things and try to change things for that to happen.”

“I wish I would have spent more time with my mom. She passed away when I was born and so I didn’t get to see her. Since my mom died at my birth, I didn’t get to try breastfeeding. That’s why I decided to try it with my son. When I was young, I drank formula and was always sick. I don’t want that for my son. I stay home with him because I never got a chance to spend time with my mom so I want to give time to my son.”

“I want my child to have a fun childhood. I don’t want him to freak out and cry whenever he thinks about his childhood. Like I did. I might cry right now...sorry.”

“My mom and dad were always working so I didn’t get to have both of them at the same time. We try to have dinner together every night because I want him to have at least some memories of both of us with him.”

“I want my kid to grow up to know what’s good and what’s bad. And to go to school and not drop out like a lot of my family did and to have a better life for him.”

“I want to make sure he doesn’t feel not wanted. That’s a big issue from my childhood. I got tossed around from family members to friends of the family, and then I lived with my sister. I know them but I just, when my mom died I didn’t even know what her favorite color was. I mean that’s things kids usually know because they’ve had that conversation with their parents.”

“My mom was in prison for two and a half years and that’s why I was with my grandma. Not for anything really bad. She didn’t murder anybody. But the yelling! I think you should find something that relieves stress before you get to that point. Sometimes you have to raise your voice because kids just don’t understand but you don’t have to scream at them.”

“My dad did not work. My mom worked. All they did was fight. And I guess we didn’t really have that great of a childhood. It was really crazy. And I just want to make sure that I’m spending as much time as I can with my son making sure that he knows that I love him and that I’m here for him.”

Although respondents’ desires to reinvent better childhoods for their children was a common theme, some mothers reflected on their own past mistakes and were reinventing their own lives as caring mothers. They regretted past individual decisions like drug use, associations with the “wrong” crowd, teen pregnancy, “hooking up” instead of looking for true love, and not completing their education. They too were in the reinvention process, with more of a focus on their own behaviors, but the end goal still had implications for their children. They wanted to be positive role models that would inspire their children to achieve in areas where they had failed.

“I want my children to not follow in my footsteps. I want them to go to college before they start a family.”

“My first child changed my entire life. To me, she saved me. I was on drugs. Bad, bad times and when I found out I was pregnant, it totally changed everything in my life. Everything turned out better.”

“I learned how to actually be there for family. You don’t have to be out drinking and having fun. You can just start a whole new life and make it better. Not just for you but for your kids.”

“Once you’re a mom, you are still the same person but you definitely make a lot of changes in your life. You are a very different person. The person that I was four months ago is not the same as I am today. I want to be better for my daughter. I want to have a good life. Being pregnant isn’t necessarily what I wanted in life but you can still be happy and you can still roll with the punches and still achieve your goals and be happy in life.”

“My mom left when I was nine. So it was just me and my dad and so a lot of times we would go through a drive-through and that was our dinner. He didn’t have a choice. And I feel like we missed out a lot on just sitting down together and talking and being able to do activities together.”

Reinvention is an evolutionary rather than a radical process. WIC can help parents in the process of their reinvention by framing behavior choices in a way that resonates with parents whose emotional driver is reinvention.

Nurturing

Nurturing is about doing something for someone else. Lots of traditional parental activities fall under the “nurture” hot button, like educating children, protecting them from harm, and supporting their mental, physical and emotional health. When mothers successfully nurture their children, they feel assured that they are “doing right by their child.” They feel significant and successful.

Although most moms want to nurture their children, moms also feel insecure at times. Deep inside, they wonder if they are doing enough for their children. They question their success, especially if they have had few positive role models. For many WIC moms, the powerful desire to nurture their child is also a psychological need waiting to be fulfilled.

“I didn’t see my parents interact that much and I think if my son sees us interact he can build on that relationship. But if you never see parents together, you don’t see your parents loving and appreciating each other. I think my son needs to see that’s how relationships go and he needs to see how fathers can be hands on with their children. If you see your parents love each other then he will know what love is and how to treat people.”

Respondents rarely mentioned the word “nurture” when discussing what was important or motivating to them. Instead, they talked about aspects of nurturing like protecting their child, educating and teaching them important life lessons, devoting time to be with them, and spending time as a family. They also talked about traditions, memories, support, encouragement, love, bonding, and fun—all ways parents nurture their children so they can become successful, independent adults.

As noted before, most comments represented a mix of emotional hot buttons, and nurturing was no exception.

The comment below shows multiple emotional drivers including the desire to nurture a child’s healthy development, reinvent the past, and convey family values.

Many parents want to nurture their children’s faith through example and practice. Prayer and church attendance is intentionally woven into their lives so their children will come to share the parents’ faith. Faith is a value they hold, but they know it needs to be nurtured to establish a hold in their children’s lives.

“My number one goal as a mother is to have my children live for God.”

“Every day we pray. Our child says, ‘Mama, pray. Daddy, pray. Mama time to pray for bed.’ She is not even two and we stress it very hard that we pray over everything. And we go to church two days a week and that is just part of who we are. That is how we were raised.”

In addition to family values, respondents wanted to nurture character discernment in their children.

“I want to teach my son to be a better judge of character than me. I don’t think I was a good judge of character. I made friends with a lot of people that ended up being bad influence or not good friends. If I had surrounded myself with better people I would have stayed in school and made a bunch of better choices.”

As with most respondent comments, nurturing was closely aligned with other emotional drivers, especially family values and fun. Spending time together is seen as a way of communicating family values and a sense of belonging, but also a form of nurturing. Family time was viewed as a way to pass on traditions, encourage learning, make memories, explore the world for long-term success, show love, provide support and encouragement, bond, teach important lessons, and have fun.

“Family time. Bonding time. You want to have the family there so you know you have someone to count on.”

“It kind of feels like I’m giving something to my kids that not everybody gets to have. It’s important that everybody has it. Just letting them know everybody is important enough for everybody to be together and everybody is important and loved and together. It’s not just about you; it’s about everybody. The whole family is happy hopefully. Everybody will find their way.”

Nurturing is also closely aligned with the emotional driver of accomplishment. The act of nurturing their children makes mothers feel successful and brings them closer to achieving deeply held goals they have for their lives.

FUN

Life is hard. Raising children is challenging. Relationships can be stressful. Financial concerns are persistent. Sure, fun can add momentary relief, but can it really be an important emotional driver? After all, it seems a bit superficial considering the heavy emotional connotations that wrap the other

“My grandpa was very controlling and we lived on his land. We didn’t get to have fun. We had to work all the time so when I think of my childhood activities, it was cleaning out horse stalls or working cattle. It wasn’t finger painting and blowing bubbles. I want my son to have a bunch of finger paintings on the fridge so he can have good memories.”

powerful emotional drivers such as family values, nurturing and reinvention.

But fun represents something much more powerful to mothers than just a release from life's challenges. Fun activities cement families into one unit and convey a sense of belonging and love. Family fun is the creator of traditions and memories that serve to connect members to the past as well as establish their family unit as meaningful. In addition, family fun times allow children to discover the world and add to their educational achievement and success. Fun isn't superficial at all, but rather a tool that allows mothers' hopes and dreams to come true.

As was typical of most statements, mothers intertwined fun with the other important emotional drivers of nurturing, family values, and reinvention. Respondents want to have fun while nurturing their children, creating happy memories, communicating a sense of belonging, and reinforcing family values.

“My mom doesn't have a lot of pictures of me when I was young and I want to make memories so my child will know that this is you when you were one, your first Christmas or whatever. I want her to look back and not necessarily remember it but know she had a good childhood and good memories and we did fun things. I want to do stuff with kids that make memories so they can look back and maybe want to do the same with their kids.”

Secondary emotional drivers

Order and control

Most people feel at times that their lives are out of control. Young mothers facing unstable relationships as well as financial and parenting challenges may feel even more out of control. At times, they may feel like victims to outside forces that really don't care about them or their futures. They seek control over their lives so they can feel reassured that their actions will make their lives—and the lives of their children—better.

“With everything going on, you don't know what's going to happen with the economy. What's going to happen with wars going on? I used to sit down and watch the news but not anymore because it's too upsetting. Stuff that's going on in other countries--what's going on over here, I mean, come on, we just had the government shut down! People were so scared that they were losing their food stamps and WIC and not knowing how they were going to feed their kids or how they were going to feed themselves.”

“My dad was a really bad drug addict and it was always just me and my mom and when my dad moved up to (town), I had to go live with him. I had to make sure that I didn't fall in with the wrong people because my mom had always been my backbone and I didn't have that any more. So I had to make sure that I could stand up and be on my own, and go out there and go to school and make good grades and be a role model for my younger

brother, so he could know that you don't have to be like these people just because you go to school with them."

"I mean there's a lot of stuff out there, I think especially now with all the shootings and you never know what's going to happen."

The desire for control would seem an obvious need and desire of WIC moms. Many respondents, however, seemed to accept a lack of control in their lives without too many worries, choosing instead to focus on each day's success or challenges instead of plotting a long-term strategy for success. Of course they want to master their environments and feel empowered to make key decisions that will better their lives, but this emotional driver wasn't as powerful or present as the need to nurture, convey family values, reinvent their lives, or have fun.

The desire for order and control is closely related to many of the primary emotional drivers. Mothers feel secure and in control when they spend time with their children, knowing they are communicating family values and giving their children a sense of belonging and security. They feel in control when they give their child extended family

*"Family time is important to me.
It's about joy. Happiness.
It's a sense of security that we are together.
Just knowing that everybody is right there,
by me."*

time, believing that family will also be there when they need them. All is right with the world when they are having fun with their children and they are controlling the memories they make as a family. The desire to have order and control is a bonus to the primary emotional drivers.

*"I like structure a lot.
I like the safety. The love. The tightness.
The security thing is huge for me. We live
across the street from my parents, my mom
takes care of my nephew, we just were a-
take-care-of-each-other-type of family.
My husband's family is the same way. So
that's a huge thing for me.
We're a tight group I think."*

"My goal would be that all of my children are healthy. Then I wouldn't be worried about them. I guess it would be a lot of stress lifted from me. I would feel more secure."

"I won't let his dad do nothing. I think he held him a couple times in the hospital. He thinks I have an unhealthy attachment to him, and I'm like he's two months old, calm down. I'm always in charge because I want to be, because if I

let him do it, it's going to get out of whack and he's not going to be happy. So that's why I say I'm in charge."

Power and influence

The emotional drivers of power and influence are closely related to order and control. Control and order are like an insurance policy. When people control situations with orderly processes, they feel more secure. But power and influence are game changers. Powerful people have mastery over their environments. Many respondents wanted to be the primary role models and key influencer in their children's lives.

It is important to note that respondents desire personal power in their families and personal lives, rather than positional power that comes from jobs and money. They did not appear to be interested in the trappings of power like expensive cars, but they did seek to be powerful in creating good lives for their children and influencing their values.

Acceptance and Recognition

All people want to be accepted for who they are. The desire for acceptance is universal. The desire for acceptance was present in respondents, but it was not equal to the primary emotional drivers.

Recognition is one way other members of the community accept mothers. Actually, positive recognition goes beyond acceptance by increasing status and giving mothers a sense of belonging and security. Positive recognition of mothering skills and successes can also lead to increased self-confidence and a sense of worth.

Rejection or judgment—the opposite of recognition—can lead to a lack of maternal self-confidence, feelings of being unworthy and even anxiety over their life and choices. To mothers with fragile self-esteem, simply a lack of positive recognition may be interpreted as critical or negative.

Positive recognition demonstrates acceptance. While most mothers welcome positive statements regarding their parenting successes, they are selective in who they want to convey that recognition to them and how it is to be given. They want recognition to be

“Growing up, I hung out a lot with a group of kids that nobody should hang out with. I hope that when my kids get to that age that my husband and I have taught them right from wrong and what friends to choose and which ones not to hang out with. I always felt the kids that would get in trouble would be okay to hang out with. I would think to myself, if I’m friends with them I can change their ways but I ended up falling into their ways. I just want to teach my children that even if you think you can change somebody, don’t fool yourself and try to change them. They just won’t care.”

genuine and come from a person who they know or value, and not be a flippant comment randomly given for no reason similar to “have a nice day” comments.

“Sometimes it’s nice to hear somebody tell you you’re doing a good job.”

“Being a super mom isn’t important to me. I want to be the mother, the nurturer that my children want me to be.”

“Because I really don’t care about being a super mom. I’m not out to win a trophy or anything like that. I just want to be a mom to my child.”

“People put too many high expectations on others and nobody’s perfect. So if you want to be considered a super mom, they’re going to look at you like you’re perfect. And nobody’s perfect.”

“I came from a broken home. My parents divorced when I was really young, and my dad died when I was young. So my mom being the only person I knew, even though she was remarried and I had a stepdad, she was the rock. And I guess that’s why I feel I want to be a super mom.”

Achievement

Achievement can be a powerful emotional driver. The feeling of success that comes when goals are achieved can be addictive, resulting in a deep desire to have another “fix” of achievement

The desire to achieve was important to some, but not most women. A few mothers talked about a desire to achieve educational goals, but framed this as a shared achievement that benefited both them in their children.

“I graduated with my bachelors and I thought that was going to be the biggest thing because I had a bachelors degree. But the biggest thing was afterwards: “Mommy, I’m so proud of you. I want to go to college.” It made me feel that I actually gave them something. They were proud of me.”

While educational achievement was important to some moms, most respondents measured achievement in terms of their nurturing abilities and ability to create happy lives for their children.

“Super mom isn’t necessarily a mom that can do it all. It’s not necessarily living for their child but thinking of their child always. And being there for them emotionally.”

“I want to be successful and to be able to help other people and to be able to show my daughter that I can do it. I want to provide a better life for her and to get a better education. Maybe to help more teen moms around because there wasn’t anyone around to help when I was a teen mom.”

“I’m not saying you have to be awesome at everything you do but you have to set little goals for yourself. And big goals too, so you have some feeling of self-accomplishment. For you and your child.”

“You set a goal and you do what you have to do to reach it and no matter how much work it is, once you hit that goal it’s rewarding.”

“I actually graduated from college with a four year old child. Which was very, very interesting at times. You don’t get to study by yourself. There are many nights that I was up extremely late. But it showed him that if I can push through even having him there with me then he can get through high school and college too.”

Although respondents were proud of what they achieved, especially educational goals, they framed their achievements in terms of role-modeling for their children rather than individual successes. Some respondents bristled at mothers who were too focused on their own success and achievements, suggesting those mothers were self-centered rather than devoted to their children.

(Respondent is referring to an image of a woman crossing the finish line of a race.) *“It looks like somebody’s concentrating on just herself. I guess that’s a good thing but I’ve got kids. ...I don’t do that. I’m all about being there for my kids. Seeing what they want to do when they grow up and just being there for them.”*

“I don’t want to be selfish and say that all I have are goals for myself. I definitely have goals for both of us.”

Even in statements that suggested a desire for achievement, there were still themes that reinforced the primary emotional drivers of nurturing, family values, reinvention and fun. Achievement often took the form of mothering goals that assured they were on the path to being “good mothers” and allowed them to fulfill their goal of reinventing better lives for their children than they had had.

“Achieving for myself makes me feel like I am not a bad parent. I am actually putting effort in there to help to him to be successful. Because some people just don’t try anything at all.”

Infrequent emotional drivers

Love, sex and romance

Most respondents were in their prime childbearing years, most were in relationships and all were either pregnant or the mothers of young children. These characteristics suggest that sex, love and romance could be primary emotional drivers of behavior. Surprisingly, the desire for love, sex and romance was an infrequent, or even a negative emotional driver.

Many respondents seemed discouraged, despondent or even bitter about the topic of sex, love and romance. They felt burned by past relationships that were more about “hooking

up,” rather than love. For many, sex was on the “back burner” of life. Several pregnant women about to become single moms flatly said they were no longer interested in sex or romance, preferring to focus on their children and their lives.

Some respondents said intimacy was important to them, but the romance, sex and love “hot button” was again layered with other emotional drivers. They viewed love, sex and romance as a means to other ends like security, positive role modeling for children, a successful marriage, or a peaceful home.

“I don’t have time for my husband anymore because my kids are the most important thing to me right now. There’s no time for romance or play.”

“My parents have been married 32 years. And so I learn from my parents what I need to make this work: Communication, caring about each other, love and intimacy.”

“If me and my boyfriend are fighting all the time and we don’t get along, then obviously your child’s affected by that. There is not going to have a good home life. They are not going to feel secure. They lose that sense of security. So work on your relationship with your significant other in order for everything else to fall in place.”

“Family love and couple love go hand in hand. Because we wouldn’t have our family love if we didn’t have our couple love.”

“When you’re married you’ve got to be able to keep that together.”

“I know a lot of people that got married, had a kid and divorced. Or just had kids and separated. I don’t like that idea. So just put extra effort into keeping that romance there. Maybe it provides a little bit of security because without love there is no point in being around each other.”

“I’m going to be a single mother so having a man in my life is not important. I would love for my daughter to have a father but she has grandparents. It might be later, but it’s not right now. I have more things to worry about.”

“That looks like they are in the bedroom and I can tell you right now, that’s non-existent to me. That’s the least important thing.”

“I always pick my kids first. My kids don’t have the same dad. Before we got married, I told him, if it ever came to it and I had to pick my child or you, I was always going to pick my daughter over him. He didn’t understand until we had our son.”

“My least important for me is a romantic relationship because I am in the middle of a divorce and I don’t really want to rush into anything. Apparently what I thought I had is not what it was.”

“The whole boyfriend thing--I’m not looking or anything. It’s not important to do anything like that. I’m just making sure that my kids get what they need.”

Time

Time is of the essence to most people, and parenting a young child is one of the busiest times in life. Juggling jobs, families, childcare and education could leave anyone exhausted and wishing for more time to meet all the demands.

“That’s how I lost my baby weight is because I didn’t feel that I had time to take a minute for myself. It’s all about him and doing laundry and making sure the house is clean and my husband’s clothes were washed.”

Surprisingly, time was not an important emotional driver to many respondents. It may be because 43% of respondents were unemployed, but the issue of time didn’t surface even for the 26% employed full time mothers or the 16% with part-time employment.

“Time. It’s not important. I really don’t look at the time throughout the day unless I have something to do.”

When talking about time, many respondents focused on the passing of time rather than time management.

“Time is relevant. When I only had small children, time seemed to creep by. But I always have the perspective that I have children that are grown and they don’t live at home anymore. I think about that. It goes by so fast. It feels like it’s creeping but when you look back, it’s very fast.”

Status or “I’m better than you”

Status is defined as standing or prestige. It suggests competition—even envy—as people strive to communicate they are better than the next person or at least equal to the group they aspire to be in. Although this is a driving force for many people, few are aware of it or willing to admit it to others.

“Not that being a good mom is bad, I just feel when someone feels they are a super mom, that they are perfect, that their kids are perfect, that their kids don’t ever do anything wrong, that’s just not the way it is in life.”

No respondent selected the “wordle” that represented status. In fact, many moms openly said they were not interested in status, preferring to focus their attention on family values, traditions, or fun. Although they didn’t seem to value material items that conveyed status or strive to be “somebody” that impressed others with their wealth, many appeared interested in their reputations as mothers: what others thought of them. They

wanted to be viewed as good moms who paid attention to their children and families.

Interestingly, no respondent said they were interested in competing for status with other moms, but all acknowledged that some—or even most--mothers were competitive.

Status-oriented mothers were reported as using their children and their achievements to compete with other moms. Because this real but rarely mentioned maternal competition isn't always socially acceptable, it may be that mothers weren't aware of it as a driving force in their life, or hesitate to admit that having a reputation for being a very successful mother with "perfect" children was important to them.

Although respondents *said* they were not competitive, some of their comments suggested that status was indeed important. Many appeared to be watching, comparing and striving to be considered "top mom," one whose mothering skills resulted in above-average children.

"Not everything is a race. You don't have to win at everything."

Curiosity or "make me smarter"

Some people love to learn. They are curious about how things work and enjoy the stimulation and challenge that comes from learning more. The desire to feel smart and be viewed as smart is a driving force for them. Sometimes they enjoy feeling smarter

than others but often their desire to learn and change was stimulated by a life event or a desire to reinvent their lives and those of their children.

“

"Because we're Native American, he and I have started Weight Watchers because we're trying to change ourselves, teach our kids to eat more fruits and veggies. Because it's hard to see your family. Right now my dad is on the transplant list because his kidneys are failing, so that's been a major change for me. For me to look at myself and my brothers to say we need to do something about this because that could be me in 20 years. And I don't want to put my kids through that. Change starts with us, and I think trying to teach my kids how eating right is really important."

Respondent comments didn't reveal the "make me smarter" hot button to be a powerful emotional driver. In fact, it was rarely mentioned. Instead, respondents seemed to feel they already knew all they needed to know about good mothering. To them, it was all about values, family, nurturing, and reinvention and that knowledge came from life experiences rather than books or school.

Conclusions

Key points:

- Emotional drivers—the deepest desires of the heart—drive behaviors, along with small doses of logic or facts. When emotional desires and needs are satisfied, the person feels happy and fulfilled. When they are not satisfied, the person continues to seek opportunities to fill them.
- WIC can become a more effective behavior change program when it aligns its messages with the deepest desires of the clients it serves. Rather than deliver messages with logic alone, WIC should first weave emotional drivers into its messages, and last, conclude with emotion.
- The key emotional drivers of respondents in this study were the deep desire to nurture their children, teach family values, reinvent their lives and those of their children, and to have fun.
- Secondary emotional drivers like the need for power and influence, order and control, acceptance and recognition, achievement, and status also drive respondents.
- Emotional drivers like love, sex and romance, time management, and curiosity to learn are less motivating to respondents.

Recommendations

Terms like emotional drivers, hot buttons, motivations and emotion-based messages were mostly unheard of when WIC first rolled out in 1974. Incorporating new approaches like emotion-based messages into WIC practices will take commitment, focus and training.

This section of the paper will address the following key questions:

- What does this study have to do with WIC?
- How can WIC address the emotional drivers of clients in a busy clinic, especially when individual desires and needs vary?
- How will the USDA view and evaluate emotion-based messages?
- What kind of training do WIC behavior change agents need in order to turn from traditional logic-based messages toward messages that tap into universal drivers?
- How can state and national leaders keep the focus on behavior change rather than simple nutrition education?
- How can WIC start a national conversation on the use of emotion-based approaches?

What does this study have to do with WIC?

Emotional drivers have everything to do with WIC. Because WIC is being held accountable for changing client behaviors, knowing what emotional drivers to tap into is essential to success.

Emotional messages may also be important to WIC's long-term program survival. If WIC clings to its past identity as a nutrition education program that provides logic-based messages, it is less likely to receive continued funding because it will not be as effective at changing behavior and long-term health outcomes.

How can WIC fulfill the emotional drivers of clients in a busy WIC clinic, especially when individual desires and needs vary?

Each individual has a different and unique emotional footprint that directs their life and brings them meaning. This individuality makes it impossible to create messages specific to individual clients in the clinic. The purpose of this study was to identify *patterns* within the target audience so messages could tap into the *most common and powerful* motivators. The emotional drivers identified in this paper were not coincidental or random, but are rather very strong, powerful, and present in almost all respondents. The challenge in WIC clinics isn't to identify what motivates mothers as much as to move beyond superficial or logic-based messages and frame them using the genuine motivators identified in this study.

Because messages that target emotional drivers represent a new way of thinking for WIC, it may seem like this approach will take longer than the traditional logic-based approach and thus be incompatible with a busy WIC clinic. But the time difference between logic and emotion-based messages should be minimal, if any. It may even take less time to target emotions because there is instant relevance and resonance, something that rarely happens with logic-based messages.

Consider the following messages, one that focuses on logic and the other on emotional drivers. Will the emotion-based message really take longer to deliver?

Fruits and vegetables benefit kids in many ways, including improved nutrition, decreased obesity risk and better school performance. Try to serve a fruit or vegetable at each meal. Research suggests that you may need to expose your child to multiple doses of fruits and vegetables before they learn to like them.

When you offer your child fruits and vegetables, you are giving them the very best. You are investing in habits that will change their life forever. Your child learns to value foods that are really a gift of love from you. Someday Jane may even thank you for caring enough to keep offering fruits and veggies to her, even when she didn't welcome them at first. There is nothing like a loving mother's persistence! And moms love the feeling of reinventing a new life of healthy habits for their children.

- **How will USDA view and evaluate emotion-based messages?**

The Southwest Region of the Food and Nutrition Service in Dallas funded and supported this innovative research. In addition to supporting this research, the Southwest Region is supporting a national dialogue on targeting emotional drivers and has created web-based training videos showing this approach in action. These visionary leaders recognize the need for new insights into behavior change and are continually working to get the latest research integrated into practice.

- **What kind of training do WIC behavior change agents (AKA nutrition educators) need in order to turn away from traditional logic-based messages?**

Shifting from straightforward logic-based, function-focused messages to emotion-based approaches will challenge long-held nutrition educators' beliefs, requiring a considerable shift in thinking and even reframing job expectations. Fortunately, a national call for more effective programs and greater accountability for health outcomes makes this conversation more compelling and significant.

In the past, nutrition educators were successful if they delivered nutrition facts and a brochure. Today's outcome-focused programs require that "educators" (behavior change agents) used multiple tools to influence positive behavior change, just not tell clients they need to change. It is a whole new world.

The transition to a new, more effective behavior change world won't happen with one-day trainings. Instead, the change needs to start at the top with national and regional leaders who publically declare—often and loudly-- that WIC is a behavior change program and then outline how they will hold local programs accountable for applying behavior change research.

To support the national conversation on behavior change strategies, Chickasaw Nation has been given funding to create videos that show traditional nutrition messages contrasted with messages that incorporate emotional drivers. These videos will be featured on a website so that national, regional and state leaders can join local staff in a respectful, stimulating conversation about behavior change approaches and how best to incorporate them into local programming.

- **How can state and national leaders keep the focus on behavior change rather than nutrition education alone?**

WIC staff members tend to be obedient. They know expectations are clearly defined by federal and state regulations, and they expect to be held accountable to them when evaluated. Daily practices are a reflection of the truth of this frequent saying: "What gets measured gets done."

To support and spur a national focus on behavior change rather than logic-based messages, national, regional and state leaders need to clearly define expectations and hold staff accountable for behavior change through observations and evaluations. A change in

words like saying behavior change rather than nutrition education clearly communicates the expected outcome of WIC appointments

Please note that behavior change conversations and messages can often include a nutrition education component. For example, once a mom responds to a behavior change conversation that aligns with her primary hot buttons, she may need information on how to achieve her goal. But emotion—tapping into the mothers’ hot buttons—should always precede nutrition education—it must always come before logic-based information.

- **How can WIC start a national conversation on the use of emotion-based approaches?**

WIC is at a turning point in its history. The transition to behavior change conversations that tap into emotional drivers—motivations—represents the next stage in its evolution into a more effective, successful program. But altering WIC minds and hearts—maybe even the souls—of WIC staff requires a respectful conversation rather than “crack the whip” dictates. After all, this represents a major change not just for WIC but also for academic organizations that train nutritionists and dietitians.

The WIC world is familiar with logic-based messages and approaches, but not as aware of how emotion-based “hot button” conversations look or feel. Developing videos of common nutrition behavior conversations using the “hot button” approach is an essential first step. These videos should be easily accessible on a website for viewing.

Viewing videos is a good first step but there needs to be respectful and meaningful conversation about the approach as well. To stimulate the national conversation, links to individual videos could be sent to interested parties along with a platform for asking questions and making comments. Viewers could be encouraged to try the approach and report on ease of use, client and staff reaction, and ideas for modifications.

- **What additional research is needed related to “hot button” messages and approaches for WIC?**

Research related to emotional drivers in the WIC clinic is in its infancy. Additional research is needed to determine how aligning WIC messages with emotional drivers affects the following desired outcomes:

- **Increased behavior change.** If behavior change is the new “gold standard” for WIC, we need to hold WIC agencies responsible for behavior change. The only way to know if behavior change has happened is to evaluate this new approach versus the traditional logic-based approach.

- **Increased job satisfaction.** Increased perceptions of effectiveness are often tied to increased job satisfaction. People who understand their clients' emotional drivers and how they can be applied to increase behavior change may feel more successful in their jobs. Will "hot button" approaches lead to increased staff job satisfaction? We need to determine this.
- **Increased connection between WIC staff and clients.** When WIC staff members speak their clients' language, using emotional drivers rather than logic-based language alone, will they feel an increased connection between them and clients? This bond may transform the entire WIC experience, leading to increased client retention, recruitment and positive word-of-mouth in the community.

Appendix A: Handouts targeting different emotional drives.

Question: Do you want the handouts included? Do you want all handouts full size?

Makes the file much larger to send. Included two different sizes here, for your consideration.

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