



A New York Minute



CASA Newsletter

NY Conference
Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

Issue 4, Volume 10
December, 2010

President's Message

Holiday Greetings to NY Conference members!

This year has been a challenging yet rewarding year. The 94th Annual CASA Conference was a huge success and I cannot thank you all enough for this accomplishment. Our membership numbers continue to grow because of your hard work and commitment. Membership attendance for our quarterly meetings always has large turnouts. Our invited speakers are all knowledgeable and experts in their fields presenting current topics in Public and Environmental Health. Many thanks to all members who volunteered to speak at our open forums. As a result of an increase in membership and attendance, we are again able to subsidize a portion of the cost for our Holiday Training this year at Terrace on the Park, Flushing, New York. I am encouraging all members to renew their membership and to encourage your colleagues and co-workers to join this unique networking organization.

Enjoy your Holidays and hope to see you all Terrace on the Park.

Kind regards,
Wilma B Arce
President
NY Conference of CASA

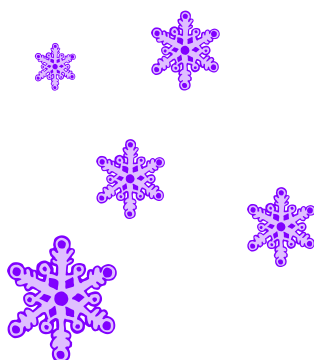
Membership Drive



In order to facilitate an increase in our membership, the board has approved an incentive program for the recruitment of new members.

Bring a friend or colleague to a CASA meeting. If they join our organization, your next meeting is free!*

* applies to *new* memberships only. You will be given a voucher good for one free meeting for each new member you recruit. Vouchers may not be used at the holiday meeting. See any board member for more details.



Save the Date



The 95th Annual CASA Conference will take place on May 16th-19th 2011 at the Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel in Towson, Maryland.

View the Conference Center at www.sheratonbaltimore.com

H. Price Thompson Scholarship



The deadline for CASA members or their relatives to take advantage of the H. Thompson Price Scholarship is March 1, 2011. Applications must be completed and submitted to the Scholarship Chairperson by that date.

News and Notes

FDA's Oral Culture Project Represents Innovation in Food Safety Education and Training

By Alan M. Tart
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Have you ever wondered whether your food safety training program is effective in changing the behavior and practices of employees? Have you ever been frustrated because despite your best efforts to train them, employees sometimes fail to implement proper food safety practices on a continual basis? Unfortunately, just because an employee is *trained* on the proper food safety practice or procedure does not necessarily mean that the employee will always *implement* it.

So, how can you change your training program to make it more effective at changing behavior? Initiated in 2008, the Oral Culture Learner Project underway by FDA's National Retail Food Team and Public Affairs Specialists hopes to answer this question.

Research by Donna Beegle, Ed.D. (2004) (Available at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodborneIllnessandRiskFactorReduction/RetailFoodRiskFactorStudies/ucm119616.pdf>) suggests that food employees are predominately "oral culture learners," whereas health inspectors and industry quality assurance personnel are "print culture learners." The concept of print versus oral culture learning styles has to do with the way we receive and process information.

Although most people utilize both communication styles, we tend to prefer one style over the other depending on our background, education, and other factors.

So what are the differences between oral and print culture learners? Oral culture learners seek out new information from people they know and with whom they have a relationship. They place emphasis on emotion and being able to personally relate to the information being presented. In contrast, print culture learners do not require a personal connection with the information being presented. They are motivated by facts and usually seek out new information by looking for written material (a book or article, for instance) on the subject.

Oral culture learners are able to process many ideas at once; however, they like to focus on the big picture, not the gory details. In contrast, print culture learners like to focus on one concept at a time and categorize concepts in a very orderly fashion (e.g., first this, then that; step 1, then step 2; etc.).

This is important to food safety training since the requirements of the *Food Code* are written to be prescriptive and detailed. It is important to provide the public health rationale of the Code requirements in a way that relates to the life experiences of the employees (i.e., give the "big picture") before (or with) the discussion of the desired behavior required by the Code.

Print culture learners are comfortable learning a concept and applying it to various settings and circumstances. For example, if a food employee is a print culture learner, he or she could receive training in a classroom setting or on a computer and apply the concepts learned in the kitchen. In contrast, if the food employee is an oral culture learner, he or she would learn better if taught in the kitchen where the concepts will be applied.

The majority of food safety training materials and instructional methods commonly in use today are designed by and for print culture learners. If an oral culture learner is taught through print communication like pamphlets, standard operating procedures, posters with a lot of words, on-line computer courses, the "message" being delivered can be misunderstood or unconvincing. To ensure control of the foodborne illness risk factors (poor personal hygiene, improper holding temperatures/cooling, inadequate cooking temperatures, contaminated equipment/cross-contamination, and food from unsafe sources), the desired food safety practices or procedures must be taught in a way that can be easily understood and is compelling enough to bring about behavior change.

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It is also essential that food safety training focus on how to perform the correct food safety practice, but equally important is that it needs to focus on the reasons why it is important to carry out the behavior on a consistent basis. The materials and instructional methods designed as part of FDA's oral culture learner project are specifically designed to help food employees understand the reasons why following proper food safety and practices is important to prevent illnesses, deaths, and loss of income and reputation resulting from outbreaks.

In contrast, materials typically in use today generally do a good job of describing how to perform important food safety practices required by the Code but often lack in their ability to communicate, in a compelling manner, the reasons why the practices are important. Consequently, FDA's oral culture learner project materials are meant to enhance, not replace, existing training materials and methods.

Examples of the materials the group has developed (and, in some cases, collected from other sources) include:

- Storyboards that describe foodborne illness outbreaks from the perspective of the food employees who caused the outbreaks. Telling the story from the first person perspective allows the food employee to share his or her feelings and the consequences of the mistake and showing the consequences of the mistake helps "put a face" on food safety.
- Cause and effect posters that show good and bad practices and the outcome of each.
- Videos showing the consequences of not carrying out the proper food safety practice followed by a discussion of the desired behavior
- Audio testimonials of victims of foodborne illness
- Demonstrations and activities that actively involve the food employee in the learning.

Preliminary results of the project suggest that using stories, sayings, and pictures with few words and vivid examples allow food employees to "feel" the impact of their behavior and better understand "why" following proper behaviors and practices is important to preventing foodborne illness. Using interactive demonstrations, allowing for two-way communication during trainings, and conducting the training in a format similar to focus groups may assist in lowering the power dynamic between the trainer and food employees and facilitate learning.

FDA is developing additional materials with feedback obtained from food employees during interactive workshops and from a stakeholder group composed of over 60 representatives from the state and local regulatory community, industry, academia, and trade and professional organizations. The Agency is also planning to test the effectiveness of the materials at changing the long term behavior of food employees.

FDA has posted materials addressing employee health and hygiene materials on their website at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm212661.htm>. The materials will soon be available in eight other languages including Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean, Hindi, and Arabic. Materials related to other foodborne illness risk factors are currently being revised and will soon be available. These materials are not copyrighted and may be used freely by industry and regulators alike.

If you have any questions or comments about the project, please feel free to contact Alan Tart directly at Alan.Tart@fda.hhs.gov or (404) 253-1267.



Quarterly Training Session

Our last quarterly meeting of the 2010 calendar year will be held on December 8th, at Terrace on the Park located at 52-11 111th St., Flushing Meadow Park NY. SEATING IS LIMITED, SO PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

Please join us beginning at 9am for registration and continental breakfast

9:30-10:30

“Update on Progress of Integrating the Food Safety System”

Joseph Corby
Executive Director
AFDO

10:30-10:45

Break

10:45-11:45

NYC Restaurant Grading System

Beth Torin
Associate Executive Director
Bureau of Food Safety and Sanitation
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

11:45-12:00

CASA Business Meeting and Annual Conference
Update

12:00-1:00

Lunch
Please join us for a special holiday luncheon

1:00-2:00

Open Forum



“Public Health Issues at a School in Haiti”

Bruce Johnson
Acting Senior Sanitarian
Suffolk County Department of Health Services

2:00-3:00

“USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service”

Lauren Behar
USDA FSIS



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Registration Form 2010 December Meeting

Name _____

Agency/Firm _____

E-mail Address _____

Meeting Registration: \$40 (member)

\$50 (non-member)

CASA Membership:

Regulatory Agency- \$15

Academic & Retired Regulatory Member- \$10

Associate Member- \$35

Please make checks payable to NY Conference CASA
Fax Registration form to Nadine Roe (631) 852-5871

Or, mail registration form to:

Nadine Roe

Suffolk County Department of Health

360 Yaphank Ave, Suite 2A

Yaphank, New York 11980

Directions to Terrace on the Park :

From Manhattan : Grand Central Parkway to Exit 10. Make a right turn at the first corner (Corona Ave). Proceed one block, and turn right on 111th Street. Continue on 111th until you reach Terrace on the Park.

From Brooklyn: Grand Central Parkway to the Midtown Tunnel exit. Proceed to 108th Street on service road. Immediately after exiting, make the first right turn onto Waldron Street. Go one block to Saultell Ave. Turn right and proceed three blocks to 111th Street. Terrace on the Park will be on your right.

From Eastern Long Island: Long Island Expressway west to sign for 108th Street. Proceed to your 1st right turn (Waldron Street). Go one block and turn right at Saultell Ave. Go three blocks to 111th Street. Proceed on 111th until you reach Terrace on the Park.

More detailed directions are available on the website at www.terraceonthepark.com