

Background

The Livewell Greenville At Worship Evaluation Team conducted the assessments and evaluations of eight original (pilot) faith communities from 2013 to 2015. Results indicated that congregants were primarily African American, female, and over 45 years old. After the one-year congregation-led health promotion initiatives, a significantly lower proportion of congregants reported a lack of motivation for exercise and a significantly higher proportion reported regular participation in physical activity at a gym. Congregants also reported significantly fewer regular offerings of fried foods, chips, baked goods, sweets, and sodas. Lastly, a significantly lower proportion of respondents reported a diagnosis of high blood pressure. We are interested in illuminating these results and propose to invite congregants who have completed the pre/post surveys to share and document personal experiences with healthy eating and active living. Specifically, we will use Photovoice to capture photos and their descriptions as shared by congregants to teach us what congregants perceive as significant to define their concerns and priorities surrounding healthy eating and active living. We chose to use Photovoice because it is an effective tool for engaging communities in participatory program evaluation (Wang, 1999) and identifying public health concerns and potential targets for change (Kowitz, et. al., 2015).

On December 10, 2016 Drs. Lynette M. Gibson and Toshua W. Kennedy held the initial informational session for the qualitative research study - *Photos that HEAL from Faith Communities in Greenville County*. A purposive sample of parishioners from six congregations in Greenville, South Carolina participated in this session and all volunteered and consented to take part in the qualitative research study.

Research Study Goal

This qualitative study has one major aim and that is to empower congregants to define their concerns and priorities surrounding healthy eating and active living. To reach this goal, study volunteers from among the eight congregations will independently capture photographs, then share and describe selected photographs in group settings. Photographs and discussions from the group will be recorded and analyzed for commonalities and differences to create a collective voice for the group relative to healthy eating and active living.

Using Photovoice as the method of data collection, this study will capture the voices of faith communities regarding healthy eating and active living not found in the literature. Using faith-based community-academic partnerships our study will use Photovoice to explore the perceptions of congregants by illuminating the pre/post survey results of healthy eating and active living behaviors.

Procedure

In this study, volunteers will receive two specific assignments to be completed and discussed in two separate sessions. When completing assignments, study participants are encouraged to seek creative ways to communicate their thoughts in the photographs. These volunteers will receive ample time for completing the assignments and after the agreed upon timeframe, the group will convene and share their photographs. Once both assignments are completed, the group will collectively decide how to present group photos.