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Food Security Site Project

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Johnson & Wales University

Food Security Site Project

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ILS4340

Dr. Stamm

11 May 2020

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Food is the one thing that affects every human on earth, and the availability, access, and affordability of nutritious food is what determines if we are food secure or insecure. I have had the privilege of always being food secure, and I have grown up in a climate that encouraged me to cook and see food as a creative outlet. I earned a degree in Baking & Pastry Arts and am now studying to receive my Bachelor of Science in Food and Beverage Entrepreneurship. As a chef and entrepreneur, it is important to see the value food has in every person's life and not take it for granted as just a tool to produce pastries and sell for profit.

I enrolled in ILS4340 because I wanted to get a better understanding of what makes a person food insecure, how food insecurity is interconnected to other sociological aspects of our world, and how I can get involved in my own community to make a difference. The Food Security Site Project aims to connect the student with a local organization that works to alleviate food security. The organization's goals may be met by participating in a variety of activities, such as gleaning farm produce, teaching people to cook, or changing public policy. I have chosen to work with the organization Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island for my Food Security Site Project because it involves local farmers and hands-on culinary training, both of which are passions of mine. I connected with Harvest Kitchen by reaching out via email to the director of the program, then I conducted an interview and did online research to develop a better understanding of the organization.

Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island is one of several services created by Farm Fresh Rhode Island and the State of Rhode Island as a twenty-week culinary job training program for youth ages sixteen through nineteen involved with the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Farm Fresh Rhode Island is a nonprofit focused on “environment, health, and quality of life” that began in 2004 that works with farmers and the Rhode Island community to run programs such as farmer’s markets, nutrition education, food access, and more (“Mission”). Harvest Kitchen’s mission is to buy excess produce from local farmers that cannot sell it and employ jobless youth who are on probation or are aging out of foster care (“Programs”). Trainees in the program not only get a steady job and paycheck, but they also learn culinary kitchen and retail sales skills as well as complete a five-week supported internship before graduating the program. Youth are impacted in many ways in terms of their knowledge about finances, cooking skills, job stability, and more.

Since the inception of Farm Fresh Rhode Island, farmers wanted to be able to do more with their produce. The idea for Harvest Kitchen started to come together in 2009 when there were thousands of pounds of apples left on the trees and ground of orchards in Rhode Island that farmers could not do anything with. Farm Fresh Rhode Island wanted to reduce waste by using those apples to make applesauce. However, they needed kitchens and cooks to make those dreams a reality.

The previous executive director of Farm Fresh Rhode Island, Noah Fulmer, and one of the current co-executive directors, Sherri Griffin, were instrumental in the start of Harvest Kitchen. Jon Scott, the liaison from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families, was another person who bridged the communities of agricultural producers and marginalized youth to make Harvest Kitchen a reality. Jen Stott was working part-time at Farm

Fresh Rhode Island in 2009 while also maintaining her position as culinary instructor at the social services agency, Tides Family Services. Farm Fresh Rhode Island serves as a food hub for the state, connecting small farms and consumers living in urban areas. Jen had time in her afternoons to be the chef educator of Harvest Kitchen and develop a curriculum for the culinary training program that would blend the ideas of reducing food waste, creating value-added products, and teaching marginalized youth culinary and job skills.

The program officially started in January of 2010, but it was not as “polished” as it is today. In the very beginning, the program started from a bakery commissary that did not even have a stovetop and had financial support from Farm Fresh Rhode Island and its network partners. Jen Stott found church kitchens and other small spaces for her trainees to work in, and they cooked applesauce then sold the food at Farm Fresh Rhode Island farmer’s markets. These early days of experimenting with different varieties of applesauce and different price points were the initial market research that led to development of other recipes such as stewed tomatoes, pickled vegetables, and dehydrated apple chips. Jen grew up making a lot of preserved fruits and vegetables, which is where she drew inspiration for certain recipes. Also, farmers gave their feedback and wanted more produce to be used in these value-added products Harvest Kitchen was producing. Over the next two years and three kitchens, Harvest Kitchen found a Rhode Island Health Department certified commercial kitchen to begin selling approved products from. In this new kitchen, Harvest Kitchen submitted recipes to Cornell for approval to begin low-acid canning and produce more value-added products.

In 2015, the current café and kitchen that Harvest Kitchen operates out of was being designed, and Jen Stott left her job at Tides to become the full-time program director of Harvest Kitchen. The Local Foods Café is in downtown Pawtucket that seats fifteen to twenty and offers

house-made breakfast, lunch, and snacks including vegan and vegetarian options, take out, and even on-site catering. Made primarily from fresh, local ingredients, the nutritious food at the café includes soups, salads, sandwiches, wraps, and more, plus items from local businesses like Providence Bagels and New Harvest Coffee Roasters. The space not only serves food, but they also have a cookbook exchange program and host cooking demos and workshops regularly to bring in more members of the community (Ciampa). The Local Foods Café also offer co-packing services and private label production, meaning that Local Foods Café will produce specific value-added items using a business' own recipe. This brings in revenue from local businesses and farms with a recipe development fee, Cornell University Cooperative Extension processing fee for shelf-stable products, kitchen rental fee, and staffing rate ("Processing Kitchen"). With all that goes on at the Local Foods Café, it is important to recognize the back of house culinary training program that is the foundation of Harvest Kitchen.

When the program started and Jen Stott was still working part time, the culinary job training operated as only an afternoon session primarily consisting of high school-aged youth and ran from 3:30 to 6:30pm. When the program expanded, a new morning session opened up from 10:30am to 1:30pm, and many of these trainees are the older youth, mainly ages seventeen to nineteen. The educational situation for many of these trainees are either they graduated high school or got their GED, participate in virtual learning, or they have dropped out of high school. This morning session is not always full, Jen said, but the trainees have shown interest in wanting to work longer hours because many have no structure to return to once they leave the Harvest Kitchen after a few hours each day.

It is important to analyze the background of these trainees to show the significant impact Harvest Kitchen can have on them. The trainees are chosen because they have significant

barriers to employment, including their historically low socioeconomic status, involvement with neighborhood gang violence, having no structure, mentors, and not living in a family unit, experiencing trauma, food insecurity, and poverty. The areas the trainees come from are mostly Central Falls, Providence, Pawtucket, and some Cranston, East Providence, and Woonsocket. Transportation can be an issue for many of the trainees. Jen Stott said, “Some kids take three busses to get here,” and she also explained that RIPTA busses do not even reach some places the trainees live so they rely on walking as their mode of transportation (Ciampa). The issue of gang violence impacts trainees that they may fear using public transportation or even being a part of Harvest Kitchen because they know others in their community may be a part of the program. Food insecurity is tied into all of these aspects because reliable transportation is necessary to get to grocery stores, having stable and structured family housing affects one’s education, and low socioeconomic status can cause one to drop out of school in favor of taking on financial responsibilities by becoming employed full time. Being involved with corrections facilities is yet another barrier to employment that Harvest Kitchen aims to help trainees navigate to find success. Harvest Kitchen deals with these social challenges that can impede on a young person’s attempts to pursue a job training program as a part of their broader goal to find legal, fulfilling, and more traditional paths to success in life.

When looking at the demographics of the afternoon and morning training groups, Jen said the program usually averages at 85% male and 15% female, with a maximum of eight people per group; there are usually up to three people on the waiting list for each group. Jen noted that the demographics of the trainees have been consistent over the past ten years, but the amount of participants they have (in the program and on waiting lists) has increased. The trainees are typically involved with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and are referred by

Juvenile Probation or a culinary teacher from the Rhode Island Training School, a correctional services center. At the RI Training School, trainees begin their culinary education, manufacture recipes, and learn about agriculture. There is a farm at the RI Training School that is part of the Urban Garden Project and funded by a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, which also provides the school with a “part-time Harvest Kitchen instructor, the barn, a greenhouse, gardens, garden supplies, feed, and resources for the science classroom to work on the project” (Cullinane). A large portion (though not all) of the Harvest Kitchen trainees come from the RI Training School, and when youth arrive at Harvest Kitchen for the culinary job training program, they still have a lot more to learn and experience.

Jen Stott has described Harvest Kitchen as "a full service-training program, not just culinary” (Ciampa). The culinary side of things begins with a fifteen-week kitchen training that teaches trainees how to create value-added products from locally sourced farm ingredients and how to market and sell those foods at Farm Fresh Rhode Island markets and the Local Foods Café. The back of house culinary training focuses on the following: “orientation to food service industry, knife skills, kitchen and food-handling safety, care and operation of kitchen equipment, basic methods of cooking and food preservation techniques, weights and measurements, food inventory and ordering, retail sales training, sales and marketing for the products created” (“Programs”). These skills give trainees the information and know-how to share with their families and community members so they can prepare nutritious food and perhaps dive into the culinary job field themselves. The trainees gain knowledge from the kitchen instructors as well as from guest speakers, trips to farms and large-scale production facilities, and volunteering at local soup kitchens.

The second part of the program is to complete a five-week internship with a local job site where the trainee may be hired upon completion of the program. The culinary training, retail experience, and internship is not all trainees learn from, however. The sense of structure, routine, and responsibility of holding down a job is vital to helping these youth have hope for their futures and careers. According to the Providence Journal, "Each session begins with a family meal and that sets a tone of responsibility" (Ciampa). Jen Stott emphasized that social workers, guest speakers, and mentors all contribute to this program with aspects of financial health and starting bank accounts, researching health insurance, and finding stable housing. All throughout the job training program, trainees receive a stipend if they attend sessions and complete certain goals. Completion of the program involves an awards ceremony where the graduate earns their ServSafe Food Handlers Certification, a Certificate of Completion, as well as personal awards to recognize each graduate's strengths.

The staffing at Harvest Kitchen began with just Jen Stott and an AmeriCorps VISTA member who worked with her to complete administrative tasks like programing and ordering; occasionally, Farm Fresh Rhode Island staff members helped. Jen noted that the staff of Harvest Kitchen was all women at the beginning, but now the gender balance is about half male and half female. It is important for the trainees to have a strong male presence in the kitchen as a mentor because so many lack father figures and role models in their personal home lives. Once the program grew, Jen transitioned to working full time as the program director and now has a larger staff to support her. Key full-time staff at Harvest Kitchen include the program director, AmeriCorp VISTA member, chef educator, kitchen manager, and retail supervisor. The kitchen manager is responsible for programming, coordination of food for the café, catering, and the Pawtucket Art Festival. Retail supervisor is a new position held by Charlotte Senders, a Brown

University graduate with a degree in the Ecology of Food. Charlotte attends the outdoor farmer's markets six days a week from May through November and also helps organize the Saturday winter markets where over three thousand people attend each week. Her work revolves around inventory and seasonal staffing at markets as well as social media, grants, and planning fundraising events like collaborations with Rhode Island Spirits and Flatbread Pizza.

Part time employees include the two front of house employees who train youth and work in the cafe; one of those staff members is a Harvest Kitchen alumnus. Another staff member that is a dishwasher and does kitchen prep is a Harvest Kitchen alumnus who graduated from Cranston Career and Tech High School in culinary and currently attends CCRI. Harvest Kitchen also gets volunteer helpers at times who help bake products for the café. Currently, there is social work intern from Rhode Island College at Harvest Kitchen who teaches life skills to the trainees, such as anger management, social media safety, and the consequences of substance abuse. Jen stated that in the past, Johnson & Wales University students have completed internships at Harvest Kitchen by working with marketing, recipes, cooking and working the front of house of the café, and mentoring the youth. Regarding wages, Jen stated that all staff are paid aside from volunteers.

When discussing funding for Harvest Kitchen, Jen Stott summed up the program as "the little train that could." This is because most funding they receive is from philanthropic donations and grants that Harvest Kitchen must reapply for every year or few months depending on the grant. One philanthropy that funded Harvest Kitchen over the last few years that Jen highlighted was the Angel Foundation, which was organized by the family of a deceased Rhode Island native to fund nonprofit organizations. Regarding grants and government money, some funding comes from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families in relation to child welfare in group

homes and foster care. Jen noted that recently in December, Harvest Kitchen received funding from The Department of Labor and Training, which mostly went towards the morning group. The Community Development Block Grants federal money goes through the city of Pawtucket to reach Harvest Kitchen. There is no guarantee Harvest Kitchen will receive funding in the future, which is why a large portion of Jen Stott's job is securing the funds to keep this operation alive.

The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) goes towards improvements to public facilities and services, infrastructure, affordable housing, and economic development projects. An article from Harvest Kitchen's website in February noted that "for every dollar in CDBG invested, approximately four dollars in private and public dollars are leveraged" (Cicilline). The CDBG was especially significant in Harvest Kitchen funding when it came to establishing the Local Foods Café. The space where the café resides used to be vacant for decades until over one million dollar from Home Investment Partnerships Program funds went to renovating the site, and CDBG funds are still what goes into operating the café today. The Home Investment is a federal grant with the aim to provide affordable housing for low-income areas. In 2019, the City of Pawtucket received a total of over two million dollars in funds from HOME and CDBG, and the current administration's proposed elimination of these programs and grants would cost Rhode Island 23 million dollars (Cicilline). This makes it evident that Harvest Kitchen is highly dependent on the monies earned from donations and grants because their own food and beverage sales go back into the program, but the profits from wholesale, farmer's markets, and Local Foods Café are not enough to sustain operation. Funding can be seen as a weakness of Harvest Kitchen's, but they also have many strengths as an organization and opportunities for success.

SWOT Analysis of Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island		
	Internal	External
Positive	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culinary education instructors • Locally sourced farm ingredients • A team of socially focused professions to support disadvantaged youths • Ability to provide steady paycheck 	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive interest in program (waiting list) • New farmer's markets • More farmer partnerships
Negative	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on donations and grants for funding • Lower than desired foot traffic in the café 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang violence and other social disincentives for participants • Lack of stable, in-person education or high school diploma/GED • Not stable housing • Low income

Harvest Kitchen has strengths that help it thrive. Jen Stott herself is an amazing asset to Harvest Kitchen, and the culinary educators and kitchen manager that help run the café are also beneficial in providing youth with instruction as well as being positive role models and mentors. By locally sourcing farm ingredients, youth learn about the food grown seasonally in their area, the importance of nutrient-dense food, and how to create value-added products. Youth in the program also benefit from guidance with accessing health insurance, finding stable housing, and navigating other barriers. Graduates of the program gain Harvest Kitchen as an ally that can provide letters of recommendation for the youth who may have had no other past employment. The ability to receive a stipend and graduate with a connection to a job site provides trainees with a steady income, which directly relates to food access. The strengths of Harvest Kitchen

were built upon curriculum from Jen Stott and Farm Fresh Rhode Island as well as the partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Unfortunately, weaknesses lie within Harvest Kitchen, as well. A major barrier is access to funding. Jen Stott noted that a lot of the work done by herself, the AmeriCorp VISTA member, and retail supervisor includes applying to grants, which is a never-ending and time-consuming process. This is a weakness because the time spent on researching grants and philanthropic organizations could be spent on expanding the program and working more one-on-one with the youth if the staff and director of the program did not have to worry about conditional funding to keep Harvest Kitchen afloat. Harvest Kitchen also earns profits from their sales at farmer's markets, Local Foods Café, on-site catering, and wholesale. Jen expressed that she wished the local community came to the café more because the food and beverages are affordable, and all the profits go back into funding the job training program. When originally speaking with Jen, this was a top priority; increasing visibility of Local Foods Café would mean more people in the community participating in a service that gives back to marginalized youth and more people eating food made with locally sourced farm ingredients.

Harvest Kitchen has the opportunity to expand because there is plenty of interest in the program, especially the afternoon program for high school aged youth. Jen said there are usually three people on the waiting list for the morning and the afternoon groups each, which shows that there is demand for more of the services Harvest Kitchen provides. Relationships with farmers are also positive opportunities for Harvest Kitchen because local farmers will continue to want to do more with their crops and innovation will lead to more recipes and value-added products being made by the trainees at Harvest Kitchen.

External threats to Harvest Kitchen are truly the barriers to employment and food security that the youth face. Many trainees come from Providence and Central Falls, which are Rhode Island areas with high rates of poverty, 26% and 32.8% respectively. Many people (20.2%) under the age of sixty-five from Central Falls also do not have health insurance, and the per capita income is \$15,606 (“US Census”). Aside from low income and poor access to health care, trainees typically come from areas of Rhode Island that face lower graduation rates, high rates of being in foster care, and exposure to gang violence.

Harvest Kitchen was founded upon the idea of connecting with agricultural systems to put to use the surplus of produce farmers were not able to sell in Rhode Island. Farm Fresh Rhode Island and the local farmers did not want to see food go to waste. This connects to the concept of gleaning, which is when typical unsellable farm produce is collected and provided to consumers at a more affordable price. The concept of value-added products is what made Harvest Kitchen such a viable opportunity because it takes into account seasonal freshness of food and not wasting nutritious, locally sourced farm ingredients. Farmers wanted their apples, zucchini, and carrots to be transformed into pickled, canned, stewed, baked, and dehydrated items because it was another way for them to reach the market when they already had a surplus of fresh produce. By starting with applesauce, Harvest Kitchen was able to demonstrate an important aspect of food, which is seasonality. Jen said that people would often ask for their famous apple chips and apple sauce when it was not in season, and explaining how Harvest Kitchen works to the consumers is teaching them how eating with the seasons makes the most sense nutritiously. When apples are in season, the local farms grow them and they do not have to travel as far to reach consumers, meaning they retain more nutrients and less pollution enters the environment from the shipment of foods from many miles away to this final destination.

Seasonal produce being available to Harvest Kitchen is a valuable part of the agricultural connection with this organization.

Technological innovations have impacted how Harvest Kitchen operates. The program started in kitchens without the proper tools and equipment to even produce apple sauce, but as the program grew, they were able to access more technology (including a stovetop) that allowed them to expand their product line, which now includes twenty items. The technology for canning, preserving, and dehydrating food is a large part of how Harvest Kitchen produces value-added products. Not many additional ingredients are used in the production of value-added products, but technology is something that must be invested in. However, the continuous use of dehydrators, canning tools, stovetops, and preserving tools pay off the initial capital expenditure on this technology. Once Harvest Kitchen expanded and launched their café, they were able to use their commercial kitchen space and equipment to bring in more revenue by offering production and packaging services to local farmers and businesses. It was the access to a commercial kitchen that was vital to growing the Harvest Kitchen program.

The connection between farmers, technology, the environment, and the economy all affect Harvest Kitchen in their ability to help alleviate food insecurity. The agricultural system relies on technological development to continue to produce their crops efficiently, with proper irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Large farms that have economies of scale have easier access to the expensive farm technology that improves efficiency, so small farmers that Harvest Kitchen may source from may not have the most efficient technology to produce crops. This affects the price at which Harvest Kitchen can sell their value-added products because if the crops are already expensive, Harvest Kitchen needs to make a profit as well so they can put that money back into funding their culinary job training program. Economic drivers of consumption

would lead one to believe that consumers would try to get the best value for their money, and they may not prioritize purchasing a more expensive locally-sourced pickled cucumber from the farmer's market but instead the commercially produced jar at the supermarket. Environmental hazards also come into play because agricultural practices can exploit the land by draining or polluting groundwater supply, making crop production in coming years more difficult, thus affecting the market for crops in the future. Farm Fresh Rhode Island and Harvest Kitchen support local farms, which enables them to continue providing natural, local, and sustainable foods via a profitable model.

Harvest Kitchen is an organization that works to alleviate food insecurity by focusing on food stability and utilization. Matching the work of Harvest Kitchen with sociological theory enables us to connect the work they are doing to prior research that seeks to identify best practices for reducing food insecurity. Other social sciences that deal with economics and history can also help to examine what causes lead to food security and insecurity. Focusing on the sociological perspective means to look at different social factors including aspects like age, income, education, and home environment as to how they have contributed to the current problems with our food system and the effects it has on the community. The social cognitive theory is a change theory that can be applied to the work done at Harvest Kitchen to focus on certain pillars of food security.

There are multiple pillars of food security and nutrition that contribute to overall food security. A person having food security means that highly nutritious and affordable food is regularly available to them, they have access to it, they have the means to utilize it, and these aspects are all stable. Without these pillars, a person can face food insecurity, leading to not enough nutrient-dense food being consumed; improper nutrition can cause malnourishment and metabolic diseases. Overall, we need nutritious food to be able to properly grow and develop, learn in school, and take care of our families. Being food insecure can cause physical harm to a person, but the factors that lead to insecurity can also touch on social issues that impact society as a whole, like access to healthcare and jobs.

Harvest Kitchen's impact on food security can be connected to the social cognitive theory for change in behavior. This is a sociological theory that explains human behavior through the continual dynamic interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior. Humans learn not only through their own personal experiences but also through what they

observe others doing and the consequences of those actions. This theory can be used as a change model where change in behavior can happen through methods of self-control, self-efficacy, reinforcement, and observation. One construct of this theory is reciprocal determinism, essentially meaning that a person can be an agent and responder to change. By setting goals, having role models, and increasing confidence (self-efficacy), a person can experience healthy change and become a role model who helps others change. Self-efficacy is especially important in the case of Harvest Kitchen because the trainees have significant barriers to employment and may have faced poverty and other trauma, so their own self confidence and determination to continue despite challenges is what makes change happen. The social cognitive theory applies best to Harvest Kitchen, and the various instructors, from kitchen personnel to social workers, are an important part of that social cognitive change in the trainees.

There are other sociological theories aside from the social cognitive theory that can be used to explain the work done to alleviate food insecurity. The social ecological model is similar to the social cognitive change model because both focus on environment as a factor that can influence change. In the social ecological model, however, multiple levels of influence are highlighted, from public policy, community, organizational, and interpersonal to individual. Harvest Kitchen does focus on the construct that people can be agents and responders of change, but the social ecological model would not best apply here in the case of Harvest Kitchen because there is not as much focus on different levels of influence and examining or changing public policy. Another theory is the transtheoretical model, which focuses on the stages of change and a person's readiness for behavioral change. Harvest Kitchen works with youth from similar backgrounds that deal with Juvenile Corrections or the foster care system, so many of them are referred to Harvest Kitchen because their instructors and case workers believe they are ready for

change, learning, and transitioning out of the Rhode Island Training School or other services. The social cognitive theory is a match for the work done at Harvest Kitchen as it relates to the pillars of food insecurity in the individual specifically.

One pillar of food security that Harvest Kitchen addresses is food access. Food access deals with the intra-household distribution of food, income, and markets. Just because food is available at grocery stores does not mean people can afford to buy it, especially because fresh food is more expensive. Harvest Kitchen provides youth, with what is for many, their first legal, dependable job. Jen Stott said that cashing their first paycheck is a big moment of pride for many trainees because they can support themselves and sometimes even their families in a legal way. By doing the job training program, trainees are exposed to farmer's markets and the Local Foods Café that helps to ensure affordable foods are part of their business model.

Another pillar of food security addressed by Harvest Kitchen is food utilization. People must be able to prepare the food they have and have the knowledge of nutrition to make decisions on what to purchase and how to cook nutrient-dense meals. Healthcare, childcare, and illness management come into play because specific food needs must be met for certain populations. Clean potable water, safety and hygiene, and energy saving cooktops are also tied into food utilization because people are unable to prepare food safely without practicing proper hygiene, and energy use regarding refrigeration and cooking can be another financial burden for people. For the most part, Harvest Kitchen addresses nutrition knowledge and food preparation by way of hands-on culinary instruction and visits to local farms and large-scale food producers to expand the information these youth have at their disposal to be able to prepare food at home with nutrition in mind. Some of the youth have attended high school where they may or may not have learned about nutrition or have had cooking classes, but many of the trainees do not come

from stable home environments where they have learned to cook nutritious meals. Teaching them the skills to cook will help them utilize their food not only professionally, but in their personal environment as well.

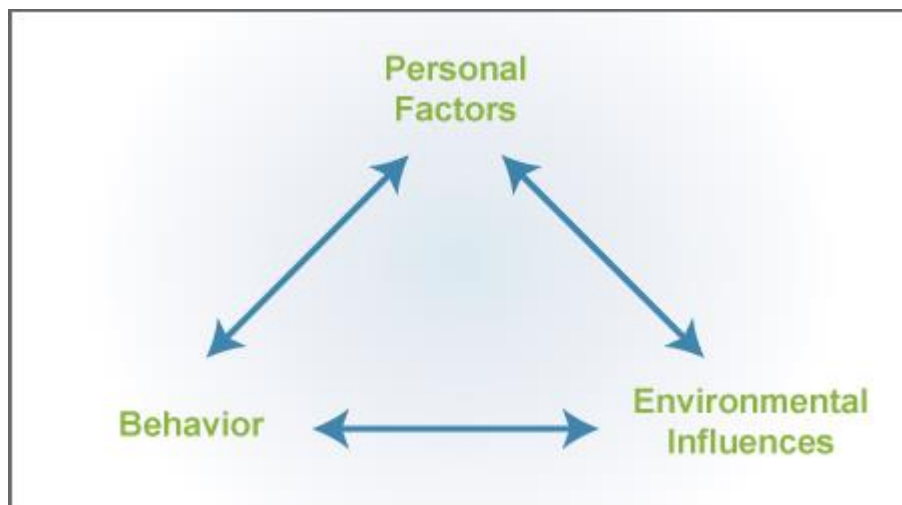
Food availability, access, and utilization all tie into the last pillar of overall food security. Stable food availability would include having diversification in the food and agricultural businesses and having enough food for natural disasters. Having a safety net and dependable income from a steady job would bring stability in food access. One also needs consistent access to sanitation, clean water, and childcare to be able to utilize their food. Harvest Kitchen makes a big impact on the trainees' lives by giving them a stable job that is not just seasonal, and the program can lead to more career opportunities after internships are completed. Harvest Kitchen also teaches life skills and helps trainees set up bank accounts so they can manage their money, which can become a safety net for them in the future.

The problems faced by youth in the Harvest Kitchen culinary job training program stem from a variety of environmental influences. Growing up in low income neighborhoods, being exposed to gang violence, having unreliable public transportation, and not living in stable family units can cause these youth to not have the proper role models, structure, self-efficacy, and tools to succeed and escape food insecurity. Change occurs when these factors as well as personal ones are taken into account and addressed via social work and culinary nutrition education. The mission of helping jobless youth is met when trainees learn new skills and are prepared to work steady jobs upon completing internships and graduating the program.

Harvest Kitchen has been successful in helping to alleviate food insecurity in Rhode Island. Over the past ten years, seventy percent of the 130 trainees have graduated the program,

and ingredients have been sourced from more than fifty farms (“Programs”). Teaching youth about agriculture and cooking while putting unsellable or surplus produce to use as affordable food is what Harvest Kitchen achieves with each group of youth that graduates their program. By working at Harvest Kitchen, the trainees’ food access and stability of income to be able to afford nutritious food has increased. Trainees also have the education from farmers, chefs, and mentors to purchase and cook nutritious food for themselves and others. Harvest Kitchen alumni have returned to work at the café and mentor current trainees in the program, showing they are not only responders to change but also agents of change themselves.

“Social Cognitive Theory”



Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island is an organization that addresses food insecurity via a culinary job training program for youth ages sixteen through nineteen. This program utilizes local farm produce so trainees with significant barriers to employment can create value-added products and sell them at farmer's markets and the Local Foods Café. Funded by grants and philanthropic donations, Harvest Kitchen is able to address the food insecurity in the area by teaching youth culinary and retail sales skills as well as responsibility, nutrition, and good financial habits. The environmental influences of neighborhood violence and unreliable access to transportation and education coupled with personal factors of having experienced trauma and poverty are some of what have shaped the behavior of these trainees. The social cognitive theory of change can show how the interaction between personal factors, the environment, and behavior all influence one another. Harvest Kitchen makes a change by promoting self-efficacy and positive mentors who have become agents of change themselves after graduating the program.

In order to continue this successful operation, Harvest Kitchen must be able to have their café open for customers to learn about the program and support it. In the following part of this project, I will outline a way for Harvest Kitchen to continue what they are doing but in a safer way. Recent implications from COVID-19 has already had real impacts on Harvest Kitchen and their ability to continue alleviating food insecurity in the community. By creating a plan of best practices when the café reopens, I will be able to help ensure the continued success of Harvest Kitchen in alleviating food insecurity.

Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island is working to alleviate food insecurity in many ways, such as through their culinary job training program and Local Foods Cafe. Currently, public retail space of the café is closed. This halted the culinary job training program as well as revenue that Harvest Kitchen would have earned through dine-in or take-out sales. Thankfully, Harvest Kitchen is still able to operate in some capacity through Farm Fresh Rhode Island's winter markets and the Market Mobile service. Farm Fresh Rhode Island adapted their scheduled weekly winter markets to meet new safety guidelines, and they expanded their Market Mobile wholesale food delivery service to be available to individual customers. That being said, the successful re-opening of Local Foods Café is going to be vital. Director of Harvest Kitchen, Jen Stott, already expressed concern that Local Foods Café was not frequented by enough community members before the pandemic hit. Once some restrictions are lifted and Local Foods Café can begin serving customers out of their retail location again, they must show customers that they are taking all precautions necessary to ensure their food and environment are safe.

When I spoke to Jen Stott at the beginning of March, she explained that she would like to see more local residents come to Local Foods Café. The revenue of the café goes right back into the culinary job training program that supports marginalized youth, and the food served at the café is reasonably priced, locally sourced, and nutritious. I was originally going to work on a marketing project to highlight these strengths of Harvest Kitchen, but as the COVID-19 situation developed, Jen and I discussed the possibility of creating a "best practices" plan for when Local Foods Café reopens. This project would include safety and sanitation guidelines to assist in making Local Foods Café a food service establishment that respects social distancing, hygiene, face coverings, and other updated precautions from sources such as the Center for Diseases Control and Food and Drug Administration. Jen directed me to documents Farm Fresh Rhode

Island created for their Market Mobile operations regarding COVID-19 as well as pre-existing Harvest Kitchen standard operations for safety and sanitation. Connecting with Jen about planning for the future is important because Harvest Kitchen needs to regain its footing and come back stronger than before to supply the community with local, nutritious food.

The action plan for Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island is a compilation of best practices relating to food safety and sanitation in our post-pandemic world when Local Foods Café reopens. Updates to the established Harvest Kitchen standard operating procedures will refresh employees on existing safety and sanitation policies and inform them of crucial new guidelines that must be followed. Other safety and sanitation documents (in both English and Spanish) will be used to promote hygienic behavior for all individuals that come into contact with Local Foods Café, including customers and delivery drivers. Local Foods Café will be demonstrating they take the safety of their employees and customers seriously by making changes to the procedures for ordering and dining in at the café. Altogether, these changes will promote the success of Local Foods Café and their mission of alleviating food insecurity.

Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island currently has standard operating procedures relating to food safety and sanitation, and their culinary job trainees complete ServSafe training within their program. It is vital that the already strong safety practices of Harvest Kitchen are reinforced by having infographics and documents readily available for employees to reference, such as the infographics that stress the importance of thorough and frequent handwashing (see “Hand Washing Educational Materials for Food Handlers” Appendix B). Procedures regarding food labelling, receiving, storage, and cooling are crucial in preventing cross-contamination and the spread of foodborne illnesses. According to the most recent information from the Center for Disease Control, "there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food." Nevertheless, standard food safety practices must continue to be followed strictly. New policies regarding COVID-19 are addressed in the best practices for employees, relating to face coverings, social distance, and potential COVID-19 exposure. One infographic about face coverings will be prominently displayed in both English and Spanish near workplace entrances

to remind employees about the face covering policy (see “COVID-19 Clots Face Coverings 2” Appendix B). More frequent and thorough cleaning of work surfaces, hand washing, and self-monitoring of symptoms are all encouraged. These practices aim to keep employees informed and aware of the procedures they must follow.

The layout of Local Foods Café is not currently conducive to a socially distant environment. The current layout of the front of house includes 2 tables, each with 4 chairs, as well as a bar with stool seating for at least 6 more customers. Each table has a napkin dispenser and salt and pepper shakers. Customers stand in a line before ordering at a counter, and there is a self-serve station for utensils, coffee creamers, and other supplies. Pastries are on covered stands at the counter, and packaged goods are displayed next to the counter for customers to pick up in line. The current set up of Local Foods Café allows for customers to sit at tables close together, touch an array of self-serve items, and stand in close proximity before ordering.

By minimizing seating and establishing floor markers for the line, Local Foods Café can enforce social distancing practices. Outdoor seating is another possibility for Harvest Kitchen. Adding a table or two outside can provide more safe spaces for customers to enjoy their food while also maintaining social distance. The convenience of self-serve coffee additions and condiments may have to be compromised for the safety of customers. By keeping such supplies behind the counter, customers can simply ask for what they need, and those items will be included with their order. This reduces the number of items in the front of house area that are touched by many customers and can spread germs. Many of these changes will be made by the staff of Harvest Kitchen, but there needs to be a way to enforce some of these changes, as customers will not be used to them at first. Local Foods Café can display signs that explain why aspects of their operation have changed, how it benefits the customer, and how to follow these

new policies. Customers will have to learn to adapt to these new food service practices and see Harvest Kitchen's actions as a sign that they prioritize health and safety. Staff will be trained to gently yet firmly repeat the importance of following the new policies because they are intended to keep everyone safe.

Local Foods Café aims to alleviate food insecurity by providing the local community with access to affordable and nutritious food prepared by disadvantaged youth who are being taught the value of responsibility, stability, and career skills. When Local Foods Café reopens with these safety and sanitation best practices, they will be demonstrating the importance of health and caring for a community. This relates to the social cognitive theory of change, a theory that explains human behavior through the continual dynamic interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior.

The customers, delivery drivers, and community members who encounter Local Foods Café once they reopen will recognize that safety, health, and providing beneficial services to the community is important. Humans learn through their own experiences and also through observation, so by seeing the steps Harvest Kitchen does to promote safety, perhaps other individuals will feel compelled to prioritize safety and health in their own lives. Trainees in the Harvest Kitchen culinary job training program will be impacted by the new best practices and learn about food safety in a new environment, showing them the power of adaptation. This will enhance the trainees' overall culinary knowledge and personal health practices that they can use to influence others in a positive way. A construct of the social cognitive theory, reciprocal determinism, states that a person can be both a responder to and an agent of change. The trainees of Harvest Kitchen can go on to become agents of change in their lives going forward.

Harvest Kitchen has already done immense work to alleviate food insecurity. Food utilization is a pillar of food security, along with access and availability. Harvest Kitchen gives marginalized youth the tools and knowledge to utilize food and prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their families. Improved food access is also achieved through Harvest Kitchen, as the community and trainees are exposed to the Local Foods Café, an affordable place to access nutritious food. In order for Harvest Kitchen to continue doing this work, their Local Foods Café must reopen and bring in revenue to fund the program. The success of the Local Foods Café depends on if the public feels safe to eat food prepared by Harvest Kitchen in the post-pandemic world. By creating a best practices plan, Local Foods Café can equip their employees with better knowledge of safety and sanitation procedures, and the layout of the space can be reworked to better suit a socially distant environment. To make the public aware of Harvest Kitchen's new safety policies, they may upload a concise version of the best practices plan to the Harvest Kitchen website and social media pages for customers to see. By doing this and also contacting local news, new and loyal customers alike will hear about what Harvest Kitchen is doing to be proactive and consider eating there. Local Foods Café will adapt to this new world and continue succeeding in connecting the local community with locally sourced, nutrient-dense, delicious food.

Over the past ten weeks, I have been exposed to a new world of social change and barriers to food security. Before enrolling in this class, I had never examined so extensively the ways in which food insecurity impacts society. I have learned about how many societal forces work to create barriers to food affordability, access, and availability. By connecting with Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island, I learned first-hand how people living so close to me are personally affected by food insecurity. It was inspiring to learn about organizations like Harvest Kitchen that are working to alleviate this problem. Programs that teach youth how to prepare food, give them career training, and inform them of nutrition are vital to making a change. It is crucial that non-government organizations like Harvest Kitchen stay open so that urban consumers can be connected to local, fresh, nutritious food from small farms. In order to keep Harvest Kitchen alive and thriving, they must be able to generate revenue through the Local Foods Café. I believe that the “best practices” plan will be beneficial in bringing back customers to Harvest Kitchen who can monetarily support the culinary job training program while also learning about the nutritious and fresh food in the local community.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Harvest Kitchen Rhode Island

Best Practices Guidelines

Created 05/01/20 in response to COVID-19

Utilizing Guidance from CDC, FDA, RI DOP, EPA

CONTENT:

Updates to Current Standard Operating Procedures

COVID-19 Exposure Policies

Additional COVID-19 Updates

UPDATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP):**Personal Hygiene and Dress Code**

PURPOSE: To help contain the wearer’s respiratory droplets from being spread, therefore slowing the spread of the coronavirus. Wearing a cloth face covering “may help people who unknowingly have the virus from spreading it to others,” (“Use of Respirators, Facemasks, and Cloth Face Coverings in the Food and Agriculture Sector During Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic”).

SCOPE: This procedure applies to all employees at Harvest Kitchen.

POLICY:**Face Coverings**

1. Workers should wear a cloth face covering if the employer has determined that a respirator or a disposable facemask is NOT required based on the workplace hazard assessment.
2. Maintain face coverings in accordance with parameters in FDA’s Model Food Code sections 4-801.11 Clean Linens and 4.802.11 Specifications, as applicable.
3. Face covering must: cover nose and below chin, fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric, allow for breathing without restriction, and be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change in shape.

4. When it is not practicable for workers to wear a single cloth face covering for the full duration of a work shift, particularly if they become wet, soiled, or otherwise visibly contaminated, a clean cloth face covering (or disposable facemask option) should be used and changed out as needed.
5. Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use.
6. Following standard hand-washing procedure, wash your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 then air dry seconds after putting on, touching, or removing respirators, masks, or cloth face coverings.

MONITORING:

- Harvest Kitchen Management will monitor employee activities to ensure adherence to this procedure.

CORRECTIVE ACTION:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
 - a. Document violations of this procedure. Issue 3 warnings. If violations continue, discuss termination of employment.
2. Discard/compost affected food.

UPDATED SOP: Hand Washing

PURPOSE: To prevent the spread of germs (“Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)”).

SCOPE: This procedure applies to foodservice employees who handle, prepare, or serve food.

POLICY:

Hand Washing (U.S. Public Health Service)

1. Wet your hands with clean, hot, running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.
 2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together, scrub your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails for at least 20 seconds.
 3. Rinse your hands under clean, hot, running water.
 4. Dry your hands using a clean paper towel or air dry them.
- Employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single use-gloves, or dispensing equipment. Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or hand hygiene.
 - If your task requires direct contact with ready-to-eat food, wash your hands and the exposed portions of your arms for 20 seconds prior to donning gloves and before touching food or food-contact surfaces. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
 - When to wash your hands: before starting work and after any of these activities
 - Using the restroom

- Leaving then returning to the kitchen area
- Clearing tables or busing dirty dishes
- Handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood
- Eating or drinking
- Handling chemicals that might affect food safety
- Taking out garbage
- Handling money
- Touching your apron, face, hair, body, or clothing
- Sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue
- Taking a break (especially smoking)
- Before and after using gloves
- **Putting on or removing a face covering**

MONITORING:

- Harvest Kitchen Management will monitor employee activities to ensure adherence to this procedure.

CORRECTIVE ACTION:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
 - a. Document violations of this procedure. Issue 3 warnings. If violations continue, discuss termination of employment.
2. Discard/compost affected food.

COVID-19 Exposure

PURPOSE: To prevent the spread of COVID-19.

SCOPE: This procedure applies to all Harvest Kitchen employees.

POLICY:

Pre-Screening (“Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition”).

1. All employees will have their symptoms assessed and temperature taken before entering the workplace.
 2. Employees must regularly self-monitor for symptoms throughout the day.
- If an employee has **symptoms associated with COVID-19**, report to the supervisor, and leave the workplace.
 - Supervisor must report to the Rhode Island Department of Health if there is a positive COVID-19 case in a business workplace (“State of Rhode Island: Department of Health”).
 - The employee will be made aware of CDC guidelines that include directives to stay home, isolate, monitor symptoms, and seek medical attention if emergency warning signs emerge (“What to Do If You Are Sick”).
 - If an employee is **asymptomatic but knows they have been exposed** to COVID-19, follow CDC-recommended precautions by not coming into work; only essential personnel should work (with specific safety measures) if exposed and asymptomatic.

- Potential exposure: “being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.”
- If an employee **becomes sick during their day work**, they must leave the workplace. The surfaces in their workspace must be cleaned and disinfected.
 - Individuals who have had contact (within 6 feet) with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and the 2 days prior to symptoms should be considered exposed and notified of this exposure while maintaining confidentiality.
- An employee with suspected or confirmed positive COVID-19 may **return to work** after both:
 - They have had no symptoms for 72 hours (including fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication) and at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (“State of Rhode Island: Department of Health”).

Additional COVID-19 Updates

PURPOSE: To prevent spread of COVID-19

SCOPE: These procedures and updates apply to all Harvest Kitchen employees.

POLICIES:

Social Distance

(“Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)”)

- Wherever possible, remain approximately 6 feet apart from other individuals.
- In the kitchen, avoid crowding in close proximity to other employees.
- Do not crowd the break area, front of house, or outdoor spaces surrounding Local Foods Cafe.
- Pieces of tape are to be spaced 6 feet apart on the floor in places where people generally cue up, such as at cash register areas. Signage will state that 1 individual may stand at each floor marker. No more than 5 individuals may be in line at a time.
 - Front of house employees will be trained on how to gently assert the importance of social distancing by reinforcing that the system is intended to “keep everyone safe” when customers question or do not follow this new policy
- All online/phone orders will be curbside pick-up (refer to Take Out section for further information)

- Front of house employees will give order-in customers promotional flyers to advertise/encourage the curbside pick-up take out option.
- No chairs and tables may be rearranged.
 - Seating will be minimized to 2 chairs per round table, with chairs on opposite sides.
 - Bar stools will be spaced 6 feet apart.
 - Outdoor seating will include 1 chair and table on either side of the entryway.

Sanitation

(“List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2”)

- Sanitize high-touch surfaces (counters, tables, door handles, etc.) every 30 minutes or more frequently.
- Sanitizers are to be from the EPA approved list.

Take-Out (“COVID-19 - Takeout & Delivery”)

- Customers will be encouraged to pay on via phone or online by credit card to reduce in-person contact.
- When order is placed, customer will receive an order number and pickup time.
- Customers will be encouraged to wait in their cars outside the building for curb-side pick up.
- Credit card signatures will not be required in order to avoid close proximity.
- Single-use, pre-wrapped utensils and single-use condiments will be provided upon request.

Staff Meals

- The use of reusable plates, mugs, spoons, etc. is prohibited.
- Employees must eat only in designated areas, never the production or service area.
- Employee breaks will be staggered to ensure social distancing.

Additional Changes

- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates through the space.
- Self-serve items (condiments, napkin dispensers, utensils) will be held behind the counter and given to customers upon request to reduce the number of high-touch contact surfaces.
- Other packaged products and fresh produce will no longer be displayed in front of or beside the counter. Customers may still order those products and will be handed the pre-packaged item upon the transaction to limit potential cross contamination.

APPENDIX B

Supporting Documents and Infographics

CONTENT:

Handwashing Education Materials for Food Handlers

COVID-19 Cloth Face Covering Instructions 2

COVID-19 Cloth Face Covering Instructions SP

What to Do If You Are Sick

Social Distancing Sign for Counter

Social Distancing Sign for Line-Markers

Social Distancing Sign for Curbside Pick-up

“Handwashing Education Materials for Food Handlers.”

HANDWASHING

is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.

You're at work—You're busy.

Your hands look clean—But, they're not.

Your hands have germs on them that could make someone sick.

You could get sick—Your family could get sick—Your customers could get sick.

If you handle food, you must wash your hands often.

WHEN should you wash your HANDS?



- ◆ When arriving at work
- ◆ After using the bathroom
- ◆ After smoking
- ◆ After sneezing
- ◆ After touching your hair, face, clothing
- ◆ After eating or drinking
- ◆ After taking off or before putting on a new pair of gloves
- ◆ Before handling food, especially ready-to-eat foods like salads and sandwiches
- ◆ After handling garbage
- ◆ After handling dirty equipment, dishes, or utensils
- ◆ After touching raw meats, poultry and fish
- ◆ Anytime you change tasks – go from one thing to another

HOW should you wash your HANDS?

- ◆ Wet your hands with warm running water.
- ◆ Lather with soap and scrub between fingers, on the backs of your hands, and under nails. Wash for at least 20 seconds, or as long as it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' to yourself twice.
- ◆ Dry hands. Use single-use paper towels or electric hand dryers.
- ◆ Use a paper towel when you turn off the tap.



GLOVES should be changed:

- ◆ Anytime you would need to wash your hands (see left)
- ◆ When they are torn or soiled



“COVID-19 Cloth Face Covering Instructions 2.”



For Everyone’s Health and Safety
A Face Covering or Mask **MUST** Be Worn Here—At All Times.



- ✓ **Face coverings help prevent illnesses like COVID-19 from spreading to others while speaking, coughing, or sneezing.**
- ✓ **Your face covering can be a scarf, bandana, or a homemade mask.**
- ✓ **It should cover your mouth AND your nose.**

FACE COVERINGS OR MASKS SHOULD NOT BE WORN BY:

- ✗ **Anyone whose health would be harmed from wearing a face covering.**
- ✗ **Infants, babies, or children under 2 years old.**

As of April 14, 2020: Customers and employees must wear face coverings, per Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo's Executive Order 20-24.



For more information: health.ri.gov/covid

“COVID-19 Cloth Face Covering Instructions SP.”

COVID
ENFERMEDAD DEL
CORONAVIRUS
19

Para la salud y la seguridad de todos:
Mientras usted este aquí, **TIENE** que usar una máscara/mascarilla o algo para cubrirse la boca/nariz.



- ✓ **Cubrirse la cara mientras habla, tose o estornuda, ayuda a prevenir el contagio de enfermedades como el coronavirus o COVID-19.**
- ✓ **Para cubrirse la cara puede usar una bufanda, bandana/pañuelo o una máscara/mascarilla fabricada por usted mismo.**
- ✓ **Debe cubrir su boca Y nariz.**

LAS MÁSCARAS/MASCARILLAS O TAPABOCA/NARIZ PARA LA CARA NO DEBEN SER USADOS POR:

- ✗ **Nadie a quien su salud puede ser afectada al usar un tapaboca/nariz.**
- ✗ **Bebés o niños menores de 2 años de edad.**

As of April 14, 2020: Customers and employees must wear face coverings, per Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo's Executive Order 20-24.



Para más información: health.ri.gov/covid

“What to Do If You Are Sick.”

10 things you can do to manage your COVID-19 symptoms at home

If you have possible or confirmed COVID-19:

1. **Stay home** from work and school. And stay away from other public places. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.



2. **Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



3. **Get rest and stay hydrated.**



4. If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



5. For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



6. **Cover your cough and sneezes.**



7. **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



8. As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a facemask.



9. **Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



10. **Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.



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cdc.gov/coronavirus

Social Distancing Sign for Counter

**Additional napkins, utensils,
and condiments**

**harvest
kitchen** 

**AVAILABLE UPON
REQUEST**

 *thank you* 

**WE ARE MINIMIZING HIGH-TOUCH
SURFACES TO REDUCE THE
SPREAD OF GERMS**

For your health and safety

Social Distancing Sign for Line Markers



Social Distancing Sign for Curbside Pick-Up

