

Tri-Health Team Program Evaluations 2000 -2001

Submitted by Shani Gates, Planning and Evaluation Consultant

Evaluation has always been an important component of Tri-Health, as the Ontario Ministry of Health requires detailed data on program outcomes. Six evaluations were completed for Tri-Health Team programs during their last fiscal year (April 2000 to April 2001). The following are highlights from some of the evaluation reports:



Grocery Store Program: In the summer of 1999, the Tri-Health Team launched a grocery store program in order to increase the heart healthy food choices made by shoppers. The program pilot was designed for shoppers in 6 grocery stores throughout Leeds, Grenville & Lanark. The focus of the pilot was fruit and vegetable consumption. Posters and tear-off fact sheets were developed for placement and distribution in the pilot stores. A pre and post-test was completed with a random sample of shoppers from the 6 pilot stores. Evaluation results indicated a statistically significant improvement in knowledge about healthy eating and fruit and vegetable consumption in the 33% of shoppers who recalled the materials. As well, a significant improvement in awareness of the Tri-Health program and logo occurred. Shoppers were also asked a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with and use of the materials, resulting in the following:

- 86% found the materials visually appealing
- 77% read the materials
- 46% reported changing their food shopping behaviour
- 18% reported trying the recipe on the back of the tear-off sheets

Self-Help Programs: The Foodsteps Program is a series 4 self-help guidebooks designed to help men and women eat better by reducing the amount of fat in their diet. Each of the 4 booklets is geared to one of the Stages of Change. The Health Unit distributed 117 Foodsteps booklets through the mail for the Tri-Health Team from October 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000. An evaluation of FOODSTEPS was conducted in order to determine the effect of the booklets on people's eating behaviours. The results showed that the program was successful in moving people through the Stages of Change. Respondents were asked how often they engaged in 25 low-fat eating behaviours, such as selecting low-fat types of foods or cooking foods with little or no added fat. Respondents indicated selecting low-fat foods or cooking techniques for 21 of the 25 survey items.



"Walk This Way" and "Who Wants to Quit Smoking" are similar programs geared to the Stages of Change in order to help people increase physical activity and quit smoking. These well-received programs have also been found to help recipients improve their lifestyle.

Based on these results, it is concluded that all of the self-help programs are a relatively inexpensive and efficient method of helping people improve their lifestyle and therefore decrease their risk for cardiovascular and other chronic diseases.