



# UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION



# UGA Extension: Healthy Georgia Wellness Curriculum: Educating Georgia's Workforce and Beyond

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## Situation

In rural Georgia, Health Indicators for Heart Disease, Cancer, Hypertension, and Stroke are extremely high. Among the average adult, many are overweight with high stress levels. UGA Extension is called on to answer the question of how to help individuals and communities to improve their overall health and increase their quality of life.

The need for educating the community on wellness goes further than nutrition, weight management, and chronic disease prevention. It includes looking at the whole person. Key dimensions of Wellness include Physical, Social, Emotional, Environmental, Mental, and Spiritual.

Southeast District FACS Agents are constantly receiving many requests for lunch-n-learn programs delivered without the aid of smartboards, computers, and projectors. Meeting community needs and creating a "culture of health" was the driving force for this project.

## Response

The Southeast District Family and Consumer Sciences Agents developed the **Healthy Georgia Wellness Curriculum**. The curriculum is designed to encompass a wide variety of topics that focus on the wellness of an individual and/or the entire family. This program can benefit both rural and urban FACS programming efforts. It promotes all Georgians' health needs including consumers' fiscal health. The program is designed to be used as a lunch-n-learn for employee and community education. The curriculum was piloted in 2018. After revision, the final package was completed in 2019. It is currently being taught in 20 additional counties across the state.

These lessons are meant to be used in a group setting and do not require a PowerPoint or equipment, but offer hands-on activities that can be taught in a 30 to 45 minute timeframe. These lessons have been used for Employee Wellness Programs. *Healthy Georgia Wellness Curriculum* includes these topics:

**S.M.A.R.T. Goals**  
Adequate Sleep  
Let's Get Physical  
Preventing Portion Distortion  
Understanding Food Labels  
The Power of a Can  
Mindful Eating

**Food Safety**  
Stress-less Meal Planning  
Dining Out  
Financial Wellness  
Clean is the Foundation of Everything  
Health & Wellness Apps  
Stress Less, Live More

Consumers are constantly in search of ways to make their lives healthier, happier, and less stressful. With the topics chosen, it is the hope of the SE FACS Agents that this curriculum will be a go-to for providing ample information with a small amount of time and commitment from our clientele.

*Special Thanks to Agents who pilot tested project:*  
Aaron L, Eddy A, Childs A, Waters N, Hawkins J



## Results

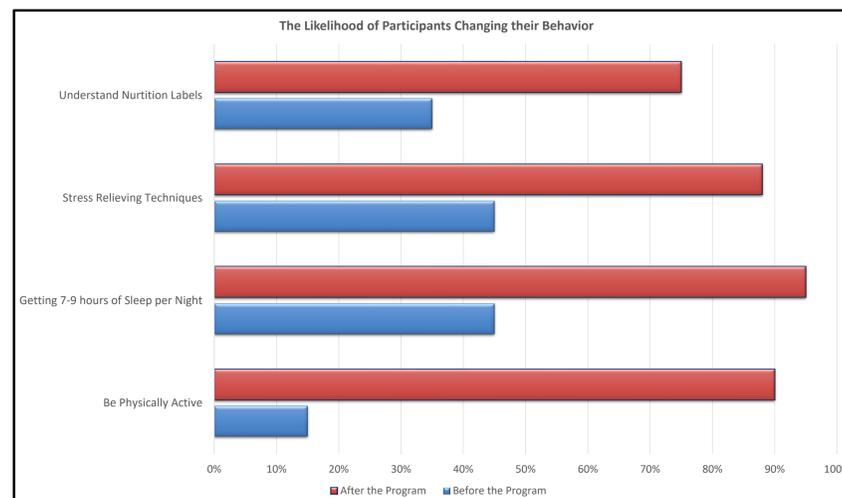
Since its inception, **2,000 workforce and community based educational adults** completed this class for a total of **2,500 contact hours**. The data on participants attending training was obtained from class evaluations and a Qualtrics online survey.

### Evidence of Impact on participants/clientele/audience:

**100% of participants** noted they learned/gained knowledge in the class with **95%** stating they felt extremely knowledgeable after the sessions. Evaluations measured participants' intentions to use the information with **90%** stating they will definitely use the information after the program. **92%** indicated improving knowledge on reading nutrition labels and **80%** improved their knowledge on the importance of eating less foods high in fat, sugar, and sodium.

Participant evaluations noted that they plan to do the following regularly:

- **90%** To keep a record of their sleep pattern to compare it to how they are feeling
- **87%** To use the deep breathing exercise for managing stress
- **80%** To decrease sugary drinks
- **75%** To increase physical activity in their daily lives
- **65%** To decrease portion sizes
- **60%** To divide expenses to manage them better



## Results

Comments on evaluations from participants about the most beneficial part of the program to them:

- *Learning about the portion sizes*
- *Ways to see signs of sleep deprivation*
- *Ideas on how to incorporate physical activities in a tight schedule*
- *Techniques for managing stress*
- *Seeing the Choose My Plate image and understanding it*
- *Understanding how to read the new food label*
- *How to set up a budget*
- *Learning how much sugar was in certain drinks and snacks*

In the evaluation, participants state the amount of money they believe they will save over the next month as a result of attending the class. Ninety percent felt their financial benefit was in the \$50-\$99 category, with 5% in the \$10-\$49 category. This financial savings is estimated to total over **\$7,210**. Also, the participants indicate how they felt on a scale of 1 to 5 as a result of the classes, with a 5 having the most positive feeling. **90%** indicated they felt better from the sessions. **85%** indicated they felt less stressed and more in-control as a result of attending the sessions.

## Impact

The *Healthy Georgia Wellness* program is encouraging employers to take part in the lives of their employees. It is also encouraging employees to actively change risky behaviors and lifestyles to improve their quality of life. Importantly, this program is becoming part of a developing culture of health in many communities where employers are investing in the education and wellness of their employees. In some communities, employers are offering incentives for employees who participate and actively engage in the program.

HGWC is currently being taught in 14 states in addition to Georgia. They include Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. The curriculum has been included in community health improvement plans. Thus, it is improving community health directly through the program and indirectly through the other efforts and programs it has inspired, while expanding the reach of FACS Extension.



In collaboration with Florida Extension, the HGWC is being **translated to Spanish**. The Spanish version should be complete by the end of 2021.

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