A Qualitative Study of Food Pantry Patron Experiences in Philadelphia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

Food pantries are emergency food distribution centers that provide food items and other basic household necessities to low-income families in need (Chhabra, 2014). Low-income families that rely on emergency food are often disproportionately affected by obesity, a leading public health issue that is linked to health outcomes such as diabetes and heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States (CDC, 2015). According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health’s Community Health Assessment, the highest rates of obesity are most prevalent in the neighborhoods with the highest rates of poverty (Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 2014). Philadelphia has a substantial obesity problem with 68% of adults and 41% of children classified as overweight and obese (CDC, 2013). In response to this, food pantries have introduced nutrition-profiling systems. Nutrition profiling systems label food items based on their nutritional value in order to encourage patrons to make healthy eating choices. Even though these systems are being developed in food pantries, there is limited evidence of their success. Thus, we conducted a study to better understand patron experiences in three food pantries in the greater Philadelphia area which employ different types of nutrition-profiling systems. Findings of this study will inform decisions about the strategies for Health Promotion Council as they to develop nutrition interventions in food pantries.

Methods

A convenience sampling approach was used to recruit 15 pantry patrons, 5 from each of 3 pantries: 1) the Jenkintown Food Cupboard; 2) the Drueding Center; and 3) the KleinLife Center. Eligible participants included those who spoke English and were aged 18 years or older. Intercept interviews were conducted and each lasted an average of 20 minutes. Interviews were
recorded and transcribed verbatim and analyzed in order to identify salient themes. Thematic analysis allowed for insight into the experience of patrons at each of the three pantries.

**Results**

Emergent codes were organized into the following themes: 1) perception of pantry/experience; 2) food choice; 3) nutrition profiling system; 4) nutrition education; 5) healthy eating; and 6) food sufficiency. We sorted findings by pantry when appropriate.

At all three pantries, respondents reported a highly shared satisfaction with their current access to the food choices available. Additionally, at each pantry the majority of patrons expressed an interest in receiving healthy food shopping assistance, recipes that include food items they obtained at the pantry, learning about healthy eating habits, and learning about meal planning strategies.

We were particularly interested in understanding whether or not patrons had negative or positive perceptions of the nutrition-profiling systems at each of the three pantries. Results from this part of the study are highlighted below:

**Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:** Two of the five respondents reported that they noticed the colored shelving. However, neither of those patrons believed the system helped them make their choices. The remaining respondents did not notice the traffic light nutrition program, and thus were explained the system and its goals to encourage healthy choices. Once aware of the traffic light nutrition program, all respondents reported a high level of interest. Thus, we recommend reeducating the traffic light nutrition program to patrons to benefit and potentially promote them to make educated food choices.

**Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:** Four out of the five participants reported that
they noticed and valued the green light pantry system. From the words that patrons used to describe the food items, we understand that patrons’ perceptions of this pantry are that they are receiving the highly nutritious foods that are available at the green light pantry system.

**KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:** All participants reported that the computer-based points system helped them make their food choices at the pantry. All patrons reported positively about the computer-based points system helping them make food choices. However, there were negative perceptions about the difficulty to make food exchanges and the difference in the amounts of points allotted to each category. Thus, we recommend possible changing aspects of the computer-based points system, such as making exchanges more accessible for patrons and reexamining the point distributions in each category to best accommodate patrons’ needs.

**Summary**

Intercept interview data collected from three different types of choice food pantries provided an understanding about the patron experience. Distinctions between the types of nutrition profiling systems offered insight of the patron experience at three different types of choice model pantries. The current barriers highlight avenues for potential improvements. Despite some study limitations, we feel the data highlight the perceptions and experiences of food pantry patrons in Philadelphia. The findings of this report have the potential to greatly inform Health Promotion Council’s nutrition initiatives in Philadelphia area food pantries and will allow HPC to communicate patron perspectives to potential stakeholders invested in food pantry improvement and success.
FULL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation Purpose and Question

Health Promotion Council is a non-profit organization in Philadelphia that is dedicated to empowering individuals and families by addressing the environment in which they live, work, learn and play (Health Promotion Council, 2016). We have partnered with Health Promotion Council’s food access services department to examine nutrition-profiling systems in choice-model food pantries. Through the development of initiatives and health literacy, Health Promotion Council is interested in the best possible outcome for the Philadelphia population. In order to optimize patron experience at food pantries, Health Promotion Council is interested in future efforts to provide the best outcome for patrons at food pantries in Philadelphia. This research aims to answer the following question: What is the patron experience of three different types of choice-model food pantries with nutrition-profiling systems in Philadelphia? To this end, we conducted a qualitative research study to understand food pantry patron experiences in three types of choice-model pantries with different nutrition-profiling systems. Findings of this study will inform decisions about the strategies for Health Promotion Council as they to develop nutrition-related initiatives in Philadelphia.

Background

Food insecurity is defined as the inability to access an adequate amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods for active and healthy lives (Chhabra, 2014). This public health problem has been shown to increase negative long and short-term consequences, such as inadequate dietary quality and poor mental and physical health status (Chhabra, 2014). Food insecurity has become a public health problem as it has increased dramatically in the U.S. since the economic crisis in 2008 (Hardison-Moody et al., 2015). Low-income families that rely on
emergency food have been shown to have increased rates of obesity, which increases the risk of serious chronic illnesses such as, diabetes and heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States (CDC, 2015). Importantly, obesity is disproportionately prevalent in low-income populations due to the fact that food insecurity is related to a lack of consistent access to nutritious food.

To address this growing public health issue, the U.S. government offers food and nutrition assistance programs for food insecurity relief. The two largest programs are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which offers nutrition assistance through economic benefits to low-income families, and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Chhabra, 2014), which offers benefits to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, as well as infants and children (up to age five) who are at nutritional risk. In addition to governmental programs, some communities house food pantries, which are emergency food distribution centers that provide food items and often other basic household necessities to low-income families in need (Chhabra, 2014).

The state of Pennsylvania has the highest rates of obesity in the Northeastern U.S. (CDC and DCH, 2013), and in Philadelphia more than two-thirds of adults and 40% of children are classified as overweight and obese (CDC, 2013). Consequently, several initiatives focused on preventing obesity in low-income populations have been implemented in Philadelphia. This includes The Food Trust and Get Healthy Philly’s Healthy Corner Store initiatives, which aim to increase availability and sale of fresh, healthy and affordable foods in low-income neighborhoods (Food Fit Philly, 2016). The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger estimates that there are 700 food pantries distributing emergency food. However, there is currently limited evidence of city-wide initiatives targeting food pantries as a strategy for obesity prevention initiatives.
throughout the Philadelphia area. Our research aims to gain insight of the patron experience in food pantries as a way to strategize future efforts to use food pantries as an avenue of providing nutritious food to families and ultimately reduce obesity rates in Philadelphia.

Historically, food pantries were created to provide emergency food in times of crisis. The traditional food pantry model provides patrons with pre-packaged bags of short-term food supplies (Martin, K. S, et al., 2013). Traditional model food pantries often involve very limited interaction between volunteers or staff and patrons. Due to the fact that this is a quick, relatively detached experience for pantry goers, research indicates that this creates a stigma against food pantries (Greer, A. E., et al., 2016). In order to eliminate this stigma, food pantries are shifting to the choice model. The choice-model pantry offers patrons seeking food assistance the opportunity to choose the food items they want for themselves. Choice-model pantries impart a sense of dignity by empowering clients to exercise personal and cultural food preferences (Martin, K. S, et al., 2013).

However, the choice-model process is much slower and has significantly more logistical and managerial requirements for it to function properly. Regardless, choice-model food pantries are becoming increasingly more common.

In response to the obesity epidemic, choice-model pantries have developed an interest in providing high-quality food for their patrons. Therefore, choice-model food pantries have introduced various nutrition-profiling systems. Nutrition profiling systems label food items based on their nutritional value in order to encourage patrons to make healthy eating choices. As a result, nutrition-profiling systems are gaining popularity at food pantries. However, there is a lack of research examining nutrition-profiling systems. In order to inform future developments, our research objective was to understand the patron experience at choice model food pantries with different nutrition profiling systems in Philadelphia (Handforth et al. 2013).
METHODS

This qualitative study was approved by the University of Pennsylvania’s Institutional Review Board.

Study Design and Setting

This qualitative study investigated the perspectives of food pantry patrons at three different types of choice-model pantries in Philadelphia: (1) a traffic light nutrition program; (2) a green light pantry system; and (3) a computer-based points system. Each of these three types of pantries are described in detail below.

A traffic light nutrition program is a labeling system that uses the traffic light symbol and colors to indicate the healthfulness of pantry food. The Jenkintown Food Cupboard, located in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania is the participating pantry that offers this type of nutrition program to patrons. Similar to the grocery store experience, patrons have the opportunity to shop through the aisles of the food pantry with a cart and choose food from shelving. Patrons are escorted and guided through the pantry by volunteers referred to as patron partners. Jenkintown Food Cupboard’s traffic light nutrition program consists of shelves separated into food group categories and divided into colored shelves based on the healthfulness of the food. The shelves are divided into three color-coded categories. Green labeled food is at eye level to top of the shelf and includes low-fat and low-sodium food options. Yellow labeled food is on lower shelves and includes food items that are either low-fat or low-sodium. Red labeled food is the lowest options on the shelf and includes high-fat and high-sodium food options. Depending on the size of the household the patron has, they are able to choose more or less food from each shelf.

A green light pantry system is used at the Drueding Center located in the Olde Kensington area of Philadelphia. The Drueding Center is one of the Coalition Against Hunger’s Green Light Pantries that was developed to provide only highly nutritious food to patrons. There are strict
specifications for the food items donated and purchased for the pantry; all food items must have high nutritional value. Each patron makes an appointment once a month and shops at the pantry. The patrons are escorted through the pantry with a volunteer helping them make their food choices. Throughout the pantry there is “Healthy Tip” signage that encourages healthy eating and food preparation habits. This pantry offers a one-on-one volunteer-to-patron experience. In addition to high quality food, the Green Light Pantry offers patrons monthly nutrition workshops, free medical screenings, assistance applying for SNAP and other nutrition-related programs.

A unique touchscreen computer-based points system that utilizes technology to assist patrons in making their food choices is used by The Mitzvah Food Project Choice Food Program located at KleinLife in the Bustleton, Northeast Philadelphia area. Each patron makes an appointment and is assigned a number of points to use to shop at the pantry. The number of points per month is based upon household size. Patrons choose their food items at the touchscreen and are assisted by volunteers if desired. In order to incentivize patrons to choose healthier food options, the items are strategically “priced”. For instance, a healthy option, such as brown rice, is worth 1.5 points, while an unhealthy alternative, such as white rice, is worth 3 points. Thus, the more food options patrons choose that have higher nutrition, the more points they will have left to spend.

**Study Sample**

A total of 15 patrons—5 at each of the three pantries—were recruited in person and on site at each of the participating pantries in October 2016. In order to be eligible, participants had to speak English and be aged 18 years and over. A convenience sample was taken during each pantry’s hours of operation on the day of the study. As patrons exited the pantry, they were asked
to participate in the study. After verbal consent was obtained, patron interviews were recorded.

**Procedures**

Intercept interviews were held at each of the three participating pantries. Briefly, intercept interviews are, ad hoc, short interviews that are unscheduled, and often occur in public places. Jenkintown Food Cupboard, KleinLife Center, and Drueing Center are all busy environments with limited space. Therefore, interviews took place in a small, crowded waiting room or outside of the food pantry. Since qualitative research typically seeks saturation rather than defining a specific sample size, the study aimed to explore and describe the range of patron experiences at three different types of choice-model food pantries.

After obtaining verbal consent, patron interviews were conducted with 15 participants—5 at each of the three collaborating food pantries. Interview sessions were approximately 15-20 minutes in length. Interview guide questions focused on product selection, customer experience, systems and nutrition education. At the completion of the interviews, participants were provided with a five-dollar gift card to a local grocery store and thanked for their time and effort. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Names and other identifying information about the participants are removed from all the transcripts that were derived from the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

All transcripts were open-coded in Microsoft Word and uploaded into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to extract themes and narratives relevant to the research questions. In the Microsoft Excel document, we created headings of categories that encompassed themes discussed at all three pantries. Once quotes were extracted and thematically organized, a row was created at the bottom of every category to express uniqueness. We found uniqueness in
every category by comparing each pantry to find topics discussed solely at the individual pantries. Uniqueness was analyzed to highlight the features that are distinctive for each individual pantry.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

Five intercept interviews were conducted at each of the three food pantries (total \( n=15 \)). Participants’ characteristics are described in Table 1.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1. Participant Characteristics (n=15)</th>
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Resultant Themes

Emergent codes were organized into the following thematic categories: 1) perception of pantry/experience; 2) food choice; 3) nutrition profiling system; 4) nutrition education; 5) healthy eating; and 6) food sufficiency. The sections below describe summaries of the findings for each of these themes along with primary data to support the summative statements; note that direct quotes are identified by indentation and italicized formatted text. We will share results in six sections; one section per theme. In each section, we organize results by pantry within each theme.
1. **Perception of Pantry/Experience**: Several respondents reported their opinions about the pantry and their experience at each particular pantry. Perception of pantry is broken into two further categories: experience and opinion of pantry itself as well as the pantry staff and volunteers. Additionally, negative and positive perceptions of each pantry were indicated.

a. **Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:**

While patrons are checking in at the food pantry to shop, there is a basket of food items that are available for patrons as they wait their turn to shop. One patron commented that they found having food available was as valuable saying:

> Now this is important, because the people that come here that may be very hungry when they arrive. So being able to pick out a package that is even marked organic that might be helpful or healthy for you is a good thing. –JP1

At Jenkintown Food Cupboard, the order that patrons get to shop is chosen through a lottery system. Patrons pull a number and that is the order number indicating when they are able to shop. Several participants believed this process was unfair. For instance, a respondent reported that:

> I think that procedurally, they should change (the lottery system). And, not today, but I have seen some biases...So I think to be fair, that they should do away with that number set-up...It’s a procedural situation, I don’t think that’s fair, you know. I mean if I come here and I’m number 52 than I’m fine with it. That’s me. You know, but if somebody else is here and they’re the first person here, they shouldn’t have to sit another two hours. –JP2

Jenkintown Food Cupboard is open once a week for two hours. Several respondents reported on the pantry the limited hours of the pantry as a challenge.

> I noticed that there's so many people here! Like over a hundred at one crack! Um, I know they were discussing to maybe have, um, a second opening, maybe one at night. But that would be involving a lot more volunteers so that's going to be a difficult thing in itself. But this is my favorite food cupboard, Jenkintown Food Cupboard. –JP1

Participants reported on the food pantry space as “crammed,” “constricted,” and “tight.” Even though there are challenges within the space, patrons were understanding and believe that the
pantry is well run with helpful volunteers.

I think the staff is very helpful. And I think even though the spaced is kind of limited...that much of it is organized very well. –JP2

Despite procedural challenges, participants enjoy the socialization that Jenkintown Food Pantry offers patrons. Due to the fact that there are nearly one hundred patrons that come to the food pantry at one time, there is a lot of waiting time involved. While they wait for their number to be called, patrons gather in the waiting room or outside on the church grounds and socialize with one another. These two participants reported that they valued socializing because:

You know you sit around and you talk to people and meet people, you learn that way. –JP2

It’s very good to see and people can socialize on the grounds out here. –JP1

**b. Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:**

At Drueding Center pantry patrons arrive at their assigned appointment times and are guided through the pantry by a volunteer. Respondents reported on the one-on-one volunteer shopping assistance as “nice,” “helpful,” “friendly,” and “uplifting.”

Oh I love (the shopping assistance). I love it because in case there is something that I don’t see they make me see it. And I love the people here when you come to shop. It’s really nice, I love this place.—DC5

It’s very nice because they help you with the labeling...that’s the first thing they teach you, about how to read the label on the back...something I never did [before]. —DC4

Drueding Center is located in a church basement. The area is set up in a way that flows patrons through, similar to a supermarket. Participants reported on the environment of the Green Light Pantry and that they perceived the supermarket set up, the volunteers helping them shop, and having the ability to choose items they wanted as positive.

I like the whole set up because it’s just like being in a supermarket. You know, the carts and everything included. And everybody takes time they take you around and show you everything that they have and you get a chance to pick what you want. So it’s nice. It really is. —DC5
c. **KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:**

At KleinLife Center patrons have one scheduled appointment time per month. Patrons arrive at their appointment time and after they check-in they may sit at an open computer to make their food selections. Patrons perceived the pantry as organized, neat and detail oriented. They also valued having an appointment time, short waiting times, and using the computer to make food choices.

> I like that you have an appointment time so you don't have to wait hours for your turn. I like the computer system so you can see your selection. I like that you have your food within 30 minutes at the most.—KL1

> It’s very well organized and I used to, years ago, go to different food banks...And when I came [to this pantry] I was awestruck...I love the neatness I love the organization...everything is just very detail oriented and that’s what I love about it, that’s what keeps me coming. —KL2

Several respondents commented on their experience with the computer-based system to select their foods. This participant did not understand how to use the computer, but did not seem concerned with having a volunteer or pantry staff person help them.

> I don’t know how to use the computer but they help me and, you know, I love it. —KL5

Additionally, several participants reported on their experience with the volunteers and staff at the pantry.

> I like it because people are so nice to us, they don’t be mean to us, they don’t embarrass us...you don’t feel ashamed to come. With dignity and respect they treat us...I feel so happy coming here. —KL5

> There’s no discrimination whatsoever. You don’t have to feel embarrassed to come. —KL3

Once the food is selected from the computer, a ticket of the items is printed out in the back room and a volunteer shops for the items for each patron. Volunteers encourage patrons to look over their order and the items given to ensure they are getting what they want. Participants reported that sometimes volunteers make exchanges for items based on the availability of food. However,
patrons believe they are ordering something based on the picture they selected at the computer and this is not what they intended to receive.

> *If you need to return something that you know you’re never going to use, you don’t take it. But you’ve already taken it on the computer which uses your points so you have to talk to somebody to get the points put back. It’s just a time-consuming situation. It’s like anything else, it’s complicated to make a change.* –KL3

2. **Food Choice:** Participants reported their opinions about the food choices available at each pantry.

The patrons’ perceptions of the food choice at each pantry includes their opinions of the quality of food items, the variety of choices, and the amount of food available.

a. **Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:**

The final section patrons come across as they proceed through Jenkintown Food Cupboard is the produce section. Respondents commented on the produce that was available on the interview day.

> *I noticed they had many more pieces of produce in big bins. Looks like great food and packed to the hill! What we are seeing in front of us is wonderful. These vegetables, sweet potatoes, salads, apples, everything you could ever want that was lacking in previous years in food cupboards, they have here now today!* –JP1

Patrons reported that they were “impressed” by the fresh produce. However, the limited amount of produce was noted by patrons that shop later in the day.

> *The only thing is like on the fresh produce...I usually come later in the day and it’s all gone by the time I get here.* –JP4

Patrons commented on the quality of the food choices available.

> *I’d like to say it’s just right I mean I’m pretty impressed that for the amount of people that are coming out here...the variety that we get.* –JP3

> *I like the variety...you can go and pick several different items and it’s nice to get to try different things.* –JP5

At Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Wawa donates a large amount of food items. The way in which the patrons shop through the pantry, they start at the Wawa table. Respondents reported negatively about feeling forced to take items that they did not particularly want.
I think the options are great. I’m going to tell you what I do have problems with is the Wawa. Some people like it, but it’s kinda like, you’re kinda steered that way and I understand that they want to get rid of it or whatever. But I feel like if it’s something that you don’t want or don’t need then you shouldn’t have to take it. –JP2

Several respondents reported their positive perceptions of the meat choices available at the food pantry in particular.

*We have a fairly large selection of meat...so that’s really nice...it doesn’t differ much from what if I was still working, I would buy and put in my home...I’m very impressed with that.*

–JP2

*They have very good meats, I’m thankful and impressed that they have things from [company names]. I recognized that they are good meats and I look at the price and know how expensive it is in the store...It’s nice when one can get good quality meat and they have a good selection and they have several to offer, not just one per person.*

–JP5

**b. Drueing Center, Green Light Pantry:**

In order to be considered a Green Light Pantry, the food items must all have high nutritional value.

Therefore, several respondents commented on the nutritional quality of the food choices offered.

*I like the nutritious stuff. I like the broccoli and I love greens and onions, lots of fruit and green beans.*

–DC2

*Well once we got something that was too ripe I think. But that only happened once and you know...every other time its been really really good. Good produce, really fresh. Like the carrots looked great...they said they were just picked and the corn, really good.*

–DC2

*All diet food. I’m satisfied and so is my family.*

–DC3

Participants reported positively on the choices that are available to them. Patrons enjoy the opportunity to make their own choices and value the independence this choice model food pantry offers them.

*I love the way they just give me the options of taking what I want...They’re not giving it to you, they’re asking you what you want. And I feel great about that...I don’t have the money to buy it so I come and I can choose what I want to eat and that’s great.*

–DC3

*The options are just right. Because it gives you a choice too. Like if there’s things that you don’t like, there will be things that you do like. So the options are great.*

–DC5
c. **KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:**

Participants reported their perceptions on the quantity of food choices offered on the computer-based points system.

*I love the options, the choices. It’s not like I just have two selections, there’s a few selections that we can go on.* –KL1

The computer-based points system is divided into six categories: 1) Fruit, 2) Vegetables, 3) Dairy, 4) Protein, 5) Grains, and 6) Other. Each category has a designated amount of points depending on the household size of the patron. However, all patrons are offered the same fraction of points in each category. Several respondents commented both positively and negatively on the way that they choose their food based upon the points in each category.

*Some areas can be a little more, but basically all around it’s just right.* –KL1

*I feel great about the options. I haven't run into any problems because what I wanted it was always there...I had to learn this new system...I like it because it breaks it down into categories so I know exactly what I am choosing. And it tells me like how many I can choose from, how many I can get...so, I'm like okay, I'm not going to get too much of this because then I'm going to be out of that. So I'm always satisfied.* –KL2

However, patrons reported that due to the fact that there was no protein available on the day of their appointment that they were displeased that those points in the protein category could not be used to select food items from a different category.

*Well here's the problem, the last time I was here and today they don't have any meat. They're out of protein. I use most of my points for other categories so you can't use anymore if you're up to your limit.* –KL3

3. **Nutrition-Profiling System:** Respondents described their experience as it relates to each nutrition profiling system at each food choice model pantry. Each pantry has a different nutrition profiling system and the perceptions of patrons at the separate locations was enlightening. Participants offered insight into their experience of each system and their opinions about it.

a. **Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition System:**
The traffic light nutrition program is a labeling system that uses the traffic light symbol and colors to indicate the healthfulness of pantry food. The labeling system consists of red, yellow and green labeled shelving, stickers, as well as a sign explaining the system for patrons to make informed decisions. Participants were asked if they were aware of the traffic light nutrition program with the following question: “Did you notice the different colors on the shelves?” Respondents that answered no were then explained the traffic light nutrition program. Participants had a variety of responses after being explained the traffic light nutrition program:

- Oh interesting! I did not know! Thank you! I will keep an eye on that next time! —JP1
- Oh! I did notice that! I didn’t stop to read it though. —JP3
- That’s what those little dots are! Okay! I’m going to pay more attention to that. Cool! —JP3
- Coding on the shelves? No I didn't. If I did, I didn't mean anything to me...I guess it wasn't explained to me what that meant...I don't know what those color codes mean I was not explained in it. But the staff here hadn't really illuminated that to us, if they put in that little color code wrote out the notation what it meant, I would maybe see it more...if they don’t, you know just color code doesn't explain what it means. —JP5

Three out of 5 respondents did not notice the traffic light nutrition program. Thus, there may be a need to explain the system to patrons since there is evidence of interest. The remaining 2 participants who indicated that they noticed the color system were asked, “Did the color system help you make choices today?” Respondents indicated that they did not base their choices on the labeling system.

b. Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:

The Green Light Pantry that was developed to provide only highly nutritious food to patrons. There are strict specifications for the food items donated and purchased for the pantry; all food items must have high nutritional value. In order to understand patrons’ perceptions of having solely
nutritious options available at the pantry we asked “What did you notice about the options available at this pantry?”

*That they’re all health choices. They’re really really good.* –DC2

*Because of the food that we getting here...I lost weight eating from [the food] I get from this program...It makes a lot of difference.* –DC3

*I only get 95 dollars in food stamps. So I can’t afford to buy a lot of vegetables. That’s where the pantry comes in, they really help. And everything you get here is so good and so fresh.* –DC5

c. **KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:**

Patrons are assigned a number of points based upon their household size. In order to incentivize patrons to choose healthier food options, the items are strategically “priced”. The more food options patrons choose that have higher nutritional value, the more points they will have left to spend. Participants did not comment on the healthfulness of the food items they spent their points on. Therefore, we are unaware of whether or not patrons were successfully incentivized to choose healthier options. Our results indicate that there is a potential gap in knowledge of the strategic “pricing” of food and suggest a need for the pantry to explain it to their patrons.

In order to understand patrons’ perceptions of the computer-based points system we asked, “Did the point system help you make choices today?” and “How do you feel about the point system?” Participants reported their opinions about using the computers in general as well as the system for selecting their food items.

*It helps us choose what we need...I like the computer system so you can see your selection.—KL1*

*I had to learn this new system like how they were doing things so, I like it because it breaks it down into categories so I know exactly what I am choosing. And it tells me like how many I can choose from, how many I can get...So I have been satisfied with knowing, I've been learning how to navigate the whole system so, I'm okay, I'm not going to get too much of this because then I'm going to be out of that. So I'm always satisfied. —KL2*
I am computer illiterate, I do nothing on the computer, I don't have a computer, I don't know how they work...But, that being said, once I came here and realized that you can't do it without some kind of elementary knowledge of this computer system that they have here. Maybe you can't use it anywhere in the world, but here, because I've come here for some time I've learned how to work the computer to fulfill my...need for food here. I know what to do...It's complicated like everything else, but I did learn...I've learned the system to accommodate myself and I was proud that I was able to learn a new skill.—KL3

It's so easy. I mean maybe not for everybody, but for me, It's so easy. I just find what I like and it's so fast. For me it's so fast. –KL4

4. **Nutrition Education**: Participants reported whether or not they were interested in a variety of nutrition education services at each pantry. Patrons were asked about topics regarding their interest in nutrition education services such as, receiving recipes, learning healthy eating habits, learning meal planning strategies, and more.

a. **Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program**: Respondents reported on varying levels of interest in nutrition education services. Patrons were asked: “Would you be interested in getting recipes that include food items you received at the pantry today?” Most patrons responded positively to receiving recipes at the pantry. Additionally, several participants reported that they enjoyed when the “nutritionist” from Health Promotion Council does cooking demonstrations, gives out samples, and offers recipes of what they prepared.

    *When the ladies come and give you samples and they give the recipes it's great, I love it.—JP4*

We wanted to understand patrons’ interest in learning about how to choose healthy foods, meal planning, healthy cooking lessons, etc. Patrons had varying levels of interest in learning about these healthy eating habits and strategies.

    *At this moment, no, because...when you don’t have a lot of time and you’re here you gotta get the food, you gotta get home, you gotta put it away, you got a doctor’s appointment, unemployment, whatever. It’s kinda time consuming, you know, so. —JP2*

The same participant later reported their preference for receiving written material rather than
sitting in a class-type setting for nutrition education.

> If there was paperwork that we could pick up and read later, take with us, fine. But I wouldn’t want to sit in class.—JP2

Respondents indicated that despite the fact that they are interested in nutrition education, there are challenges to preparing enough healthy food while dealing with food insecurity.

> Because I'm limited on funds, I would like to know how I can gain the same amount that I need without needing to buy a lot of food, if that's possible. Because that's the shape we're in, how do we get all that we need, when we are limited?—JP1

**b. Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:**

We wanted to understand patrons’ interest in learning about how to choose healthy foods, meal planning, healthy cooking lessons, etc. Several patrons were very interested in learning about meal planning in particular.

> Sure! I'm always anxious to learn more. [When asked if they would like to learn about anything in particular] How to plan for the week. You know, like meal planning because it seems like I get in the kitchen and I'm like hmm what are we going to have tonight, you know. Meal planning would be helpful. –DC2

> Yes, yes I would be interested in that. That would help me out a lot. –DC3

Respondents reported their level of interest in healthy food shopping assistance.

> I would like to learn how to do it myself so I don't have to bother anyone. Learn how to do it and...cause it has to be at your own taste...everything I make I have to like make it at my taste so everybody has a different taste. –DC4

> It's very nice because they help you with the labeling. I never bought anything without reading the label, so that's the first thing they teach you, about how to read the recipe and the label in the back. So that's something I never did. –DC4

At the Green Light Pantry, they offer monthly samples for patrons to try and they provide the recipes of the sample food. Patrons can receive the ingredients to make the recipes each month. Several patrons commented on the sample table set up in the pantry.

> Every time I be coming over here I be tasting the products that they leave at the table and it tastes good and I be wondering what do they put in this and the...lady gives me the recipe
and I be taking them home also. And I be trying to learn it from the recipe...so yeah, I would like to learn more of whatever. Every time I come over here there's a new recipe...so yeah, I would like to learn that.—DC3

I used to...see the way we were raised we were eating chicken and fried stuff and you know...the rice and the...all the food that is fatting and I want to learn more about the vegetables and the way you steam the broccoli. It's just a different way to eat than what I was eating before. So, yeah, I would like to learn more about that because it's very healthy. It's very healthy.—DC3

Every time I come here, they always have literature on the table that helps you. And each time I come I get some of the literature besides what the ladies tell me.—DC5

c. KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:

We wanted to understand patrons’ interest in learning about how to choose healthy foods, meal planning, healthy cooking lessons, etc. Patrons had varying levels of interest in learning about these healthy eating habits and strategies. Specifically, we asked patrons about their thoughts about having someone help them shop on the computer for healthy food items.

Sometime, yes. Maybe choosing foods with less sugar intake would be helpful. –KL1

Absolutely not necessary. I know my health status. I have coronary artery disease. I've also had a heart attack in my history and so I need to be very careful with my diet because I don't want to become obese and overweight which I see a lot of people that are. It's just frightening. So I have to watch everything I put in my mouth.—KL3

Several patrons discussed someone that comes to the pantry to do cooking demonstrations and offers samples and recipes of the “healthy” food samples. In addition to the samples, respondents reported their level of interest in receiving recipes at the food pantry.

Yes, because they have...They have people that come out and cook...its a lady there and she has like her recipe and everything so at times I kinda like, take...advantage of this sometimes. Sometimes I am just funny when it comes to like...different stuff. You know like it’s all little sample and stuff, but I...I've never heard of this...So I'm still learning how to broaden my horizon with some stuff because it’s very natural. The stuff that they use is so...nutritional, has such nutritional value and stuff like that, but I'm kinda like ew I kinda of require a taste bud for this stuff. But I like it, its good. –KL2

I do take the recipes. There is a young woman that comes here on Tuesdays...and she always offers samples of her recipes and she writes out the recipe...and if you want to
duplicate that at home you can. I haven't, but I do partake in her samples and they're quite delicious. She makes a lot of substitutions of unhealthy things and she substitutes it...So you might have zucchini in the brownies or something like that. This girl makes...recipes up and she offers them as sample. So...I really don’t need to be educated in it. If I am going to take the time to buy it...I know what to do to substitute healthier ingredients. –KL3

Yeah because you can always, you know pick up things, I like it because you can just take it...there's always room for growth and things that we think we know we may not know it all or maybe we'll be doing...somebody can give it to you better. So yeah, I'm all for that. –KL2

One patron indicated their interest in learning more about how to read nutrition labels and better understand the meaning of the amounts of nutritional value in their food and its ingredients.

I'd like to know how to, like some people whose studying in college or study exactly knowing what is exactly in that, you know, particular rice or what's come from or what it has inside. So, I'd like to learn more, what is...how to read this. What exactly is in this? What is good, how much is not, but it's not from here, so maybe I can learn from the website.—KL4

Patrons also reported a high level of interest in learning about how to cook healthy foods in particular.

Sure. It would be good so, maybe I'll learn something new. I like to cook so I like to try something new.—KL4

Like how to cook healthy food? Yeah...Because, I'm a diabetic. I don't eat certain things, but my grandchildren use it so. If they tell me it's healthy I'll try it, I don't mind, because I use insulin. –KL5

5. Healthy Eating: Participants reported a variety of attitudes and opinions about healthy eating at each pantry. Respondents indicated whether or not healthy eating was important to them. Additionally, participants indicated their level of knowledge of healthy eating strategies based on their responses.

a. Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:

Several respondents reported on whether or not they believed that the pantry offered them foods they considered healthy. Although there was varied interest in learning more about healthy eating,
we wanted to understand patrons current healthy eating level of knowledge.

I noticed that they're starting to have organic things, even in a candy bar, it was marked organic.—JP1

So, but I'm just figuring out, how can I really afford these things?...To get from being down and under to not being down and under? And this thing today...is wonderful. These...vegetables, sweet potatoes, salads, apples, everything you could ever want that was lacking in previous years in food cupboard, they have here now today!—JP1

I would prefer to be getting non-packaged foods, but, uh, you know stuff that's healthier for you, vegetables, fruits and all that. I mean the fruits that they do have I mean is canned in syrup. So I actually didn’t take any of that because I just really don’t even like it...But a lot of the stuff that they do have, we have a 6 year old daughter, and she will eat, you know the Ritz Crackers and stuff like that which, again, I’d prefer that she’d stick to healthier, more natural foods, but, we’re eating, so that’s important. You know...it could be worse. – JP3

It would be nice if we had more fruits and fresh fruits and vegetables. They definitely make an effort that’s for sure...I am very grateful...but yeah, if there was more, you know I would lean towards getting more of those.—JP3

I've learned to be selective...choosing here or anywhere...items that are more healthy. Such as, hamburger of 9% or 10% fat, or...being careful about salt in soups or too much sugar, but, um, I am careful I know, as I said, about getting tuna fish, or peanut butter, or other high protein items when they are available. I guess I kind of know what I'm looking for and trying to choose carefully and wisely and not just overload with excess, such as sugar, sugary cereals or sauces that might have a lot of sugar in it or donuts. I try to bypass. When they offer that variety beyond the food, they have a treat. Sometimes they’re good, such as cakes and cupcakes, but its wasted or empty calories in a way. But I guess everyone is deserving of a dessert as well.—JP5

b. Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:

Participants reported a high level of interest in learning more about healthy eating.

Yes, yes I am. I really need to...to start eating a lot better. Not only that you are asking me that question but my doctor also asked me that same question too. For me to change the way I eat. So yes I do. I would be interested in that.—DC3

Oh yes! I always like to improve my dieting. And I always like to improve new things food wise. I like to make always...new recipes because I was looking at that one over there and it had a lot of good food, but no recipe. It's just a picture, so...I'm learning.—DC4

Patrons described their level of knowledge about healthy eating and that they found the food
available to them at this pantry as valuable.

*You know, non-fat and more protein wise...Because I don't like greasy food...so it has to be fresh or baked.* –DC3

*It was better than what I was eating at home. It’s a lot better. It’s more protein, more...now like I say it’s better than regular food at home. All I eat is sweets and fried food and I stopped that most of the time. So I don't eat chicken no more, I eat salmon and fish. So I'm doing pretty well.*—DC4

c. **KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:**

There was varied interest in learning more about healthy eating. Despite their level of interest, we wanted to understand patrons’ level of knowledge in healthy eating. Several participants indicated an interest in healthy food and value the high-quality food they are able to choose at the pantry.

*I start with the vegetables. I get potatoes, white potatoes. And then I would move down on to the next section, so it's healthy choices that I'm picking.*—KL2

*I guess there’s healthy things they give us and you know, some places I go years ago you know you get some food it be expired you know...these things are not expired, you know, its good food.*—KL5

*Because, I'm a diabetic. I don't eat certain things, but my grandchildren use it so. If they tell me it's healthy I'll try it, I don't mind, because I use insulin.*—KL5

6. **Food Sufficiency:** All participants are eligible to visit each of these three food pantries; thus, they are considered food insecure individuals. In order to understand the patron perception of their own food security, we aimed to understand whether or not they consider the food offered at each pantry as sufficient. Participants reported whether or not they believed the food they received from this food pantry was enough to last them each month. In order to understand patrons’ perceptions of their own food security we asked the following questions: “Have you ever run out of food by the end of the month? How often does this happen?”

a. **Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:**

Participants indicated varying levels of food insufficiency. The following are the patrons’
responses and their perceptions about their own food security:

Yes, that's why I'm here, yes. Well it happens every month...especially for the last two, two and half years and there's a reason behind that. So I'd like to speak to someone further on that, it really wasn't a food problem exactly...I think somebody should really start finding out why people need to be at the food cupboard. Some people want to tell their story and there's a way to get them out, but if they're dispersed between...you're here today for food, somebody's here today for something else, or for money or for medical. It has to be combined! You need one person to understand the whole thing. If you're getting help here, maybe you didn't need help over here. Maybe if help was over in this area, then somebody wouldn't be in the food cupboard. So I think that needs to be looked into as a whole.—JP1

Well...we've moved twice and both times it's hard to get signed up for SNAP, it's hard...for the money to come...to get transferred over...So it made things challenging, but, like I said, we've been fortunate to get...to get by.—JP3

I can get sufficiently in one round going through enough for more than a week. As I said they're liberal about getting some hamburger or some bits of pork chops or chicken. You can make different meals that go more than a couple of days. So, I can shop for two weeks at a time, but come just twice a month. If I come twice a month that sustains me. But I'm just a single person knowing that I don't have a family to support on this...I can honestly say that I come here, it sees me through...it's still a food insufficient society because of the economy.—JP5

b. Drueing Center, Green Light Pantry:

Participants indicated whether or not they perceived themselves as food insufficient. Several participants reported positively, stating that the food “lasts” and is “enough.”

It lasts...it lasts pretty good.—DC1

By the end of the month...before I used to run out of food. But since I got into this program, I have enough to set me up for the month. And when I do get my food stamps, the food doesn't last that much. And with the program that they lady gave me, that she's helping me out a lot. It makes a big difference. I always thought that wow it isn't going to make a difference...and it really does. It really makes a big difference for everybody. Not only for myself, but for everybody it makes a difference, whether they got kids or they don't have kids.—DC3

On the other hand, several participants reported negatively, stating that the they believe food insufficiency happens to them “most of the time” and that the food they received is “never enough” and “limited.” Additionally, one patron reflects on the tragedy of food waste and how they believe
more food pantries should be available similar to this one to provide food to those in need.

Most of the time...it happens every month. You only get a certain amount of food stamps and most of the time I do. When I don't have, it I sit with my mom and my family...we'll share... because we all need food. We'll share it, but we also need the food and this program helps a lot, it makes a big difference. I don't understand how a lot of food gets thrown out. I used to work at different restaurants and the food they'd throw...they could give it to programs like this and that could help other people. It makes a lot of difference. It's sad to see somebody go to sleep without eating. It does make a difference...I wish that this that there were more programs like this around the world. Not just in Philadelphia, but around the country and everywhere else. People need this...people need programs like this because there's other people out there that doesn't have food, they don't have programs, they don't have benefits, they don't have anything. And programs like this one does make a big difference. It does help even if you could get a little apple, or a piece of bread...you go to sleep and you feel good that you ate something that day, so it does make a difference. And I like that! –DC3

You have a lot of options. It's never enough, you could always get more. It's very limited, so whatever they offer is good. And I'm very satisfied.—DC4

c. KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:

Participants indicated varying levels of food insufficiency. The following are the patrons’ responses and their perceptions about their own food security:

Yes. Um...its happened maybe three or four times.—KL1

No because I...no because...I would pick like a peanut butter and cause I know if I have bread...and I have jelly at home so I can always make a peanut butter and jelly. And I have cans of tuna. And if I have mayo left...you know, it's like improvising. So, I may have like a can here and there or something like that...It would be like the last thing I would resort to, like if I run out. Like I would jump on the frozen vegetables here and I would also get canned vegetables, so my choice is always frozen and fresh over the canned. Say, you know, I am running low and I have...I'm out of my frozen, I have my cans and that's what I like about this because I get cans and I can have a shelf like, stocked up with cans like that and I have my cans like that leftover, so. I can always make meals, you know, with that.—KL2

SUMMARY

In sum, respondents identified a highly shared satisfaction with their current access to the food choices available to them at each of the three pantries. Additionally, at each pantry the
majority of patrons expressed an interest in receiving healthy food shopping assistance, recipes
that include food items they get at the pantry, learning about healthy eating habits, and learning
about meal planning strategies.

We were particularly interested in understanding whether or not patrons had negative or
positive perceptions of the nutrition-profiling systems at each of the three pantries. Results from
this part of the study are highlighted below:

**Jenkintown Food Cupboard, Traffic Light Nutrition Program:** Two of the five
respondents reported that they noticed the colored shelving (traffic light nutrition
program). However, neither of those patrons believed the system helped them make their
choices. The remaining respondents did not notice the traffic light nutrition program, and
thus were explained the system and its goals to encourage healthy choices. Once aware of
the traffic light nutrition program, all respondents reported a high level of interest: “I will
keep an eye on that next time!” and “I’m going to pay more attention to that. Cool!”
Thus, we recommend reeducating the traffic light nutrition program to patrons to benefit
and potentially promote them to make educated food choices.

**Drueding Center, Green Light Pantry:** Four out of the five participants reported that
they noticed and valued the green light pantry system. Patrons described the food
available as “nutritious stuff,” “good produce,” “really fresh,” “diet food,” and “healthy
choices.” We understand that patrons’ perceptions of this pantry are that they are
receiving the highly nutritious foods that are available at the green light pantry system.

**KleinLife Center, Computer-Based Points System:** All participants reported that the
computer-based points system helped them make their food choices at the pantry. Patrons
reported that the computer-based points system: “helps us choose what we need,” “you
can see your selection,” and “I can visualize what I need and what I can get.” Although all patrons reported positively about the computer-based points system, there were negative perceptions about the difficulty to make food exchanges and the difference in the amounts of points allotted to each category. Thus, we recommend possible changing aspects of the computer-based points system, such as making exchanges more accessible for patrons and reexamining the point distributions in each category to best accommodate patrons’ needs.

Overall, this study was successful in achieving the goal of understanding opinions and experience from Philadelphians who visit food pantries for relief of food insecurity. Some limitations of the study should be considered when interpreting the results. While we attempted to engage a representative sample of patrons meeting the inclusion criteria, it is unlikely all potential stakeholder opinions were represented in a study of this size, which limits the transferability of these findings. We only looked at three specific sites, thus we recommend further studies to be conducted that are larger and more in-depth to incorporate more types of food pantries.

Despite these study limitations, we feel the data highlight the perceptions and experiences of food pantry patrons in Philadelphia. The findings of this report have the potential to greatly inform Health Promotion Council’s (HPC) nutrition initiatives in Philadelphia area food pantries and will allow HPC to communicate patron perspectives to potential stakeholders invested in food pantry improvement and success.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Guide

1. Introductory Questions
   a. Is this your first visit to this pantry?
   b. How many times have you been here?
   c. About, how often do you come to this pantry?
   d. Do you visit any other pantries? If yes, then how many each week? Each month?

2. Product Selection
   a. How did you choose your food today?
   b. Are you satisfied with the food offered? Can you tell me more about that?
   c. How do you feel about the options available here?
      i. Probes: Too many options? Too few? Just right?

3. Systems
   a. Jenkintown: Did you notice the different colors on the shelves? IF NO, explain color system. Did the color system help you make choices today? How do you feel about the color system? What do you like about how this pantry works? What don’t you like?
   b. Jewish Federation: Did the point system help you make choices today? IF NO, Why do you think it didn’t? What food did you use the most points on? Can you tell me how the points vary in the pantry? How do you feel about the point system? What do you like about how this pantry works? What don’t you like?
   c. Drueding Center: What did you notice about the options available at this pantry? What do you like about how this pantry works? What don’t you like?

4. Customer Experience
   a. How would you feel about having people help you shop at the pantry?
   b. Would you be interested in having help choosing healthy food at the pantry? IF YES, anything in particular?
   c. Are you shopping for one entire meal or a week of meals?
   d. We are trying to understand what you like and do not like about this pantry. We know that some pantries have you choose your food differently than others. How do you feel about how things work at this pantry? What do you like about it? What don’t you like about it?
   e. How do you transport this food to where you live?

5. Nutrition Education
   a. Would you be interested in learning more about healthy eating and how to choose healthy foods? What would you like to learn about in particular?
   b. Would you be interested in getting recipes that include food items you received at the pantry today?
   c. Do you cook? If no, would you like to learn how to cook?
   d. Would you be interested in learning more about how to plan meals for your week so you can shop for the entire week?
   e. Have you ever run out of food by the end of the month? How often does this happen?

6. Demographic Information
   a. How many people in your household do you shop for?
   b. Do you receive any welfare benefits such as EBT card, WIC, TANF, etc If yes, which ones?
   c. What is your gender?
   d. What year were you born?
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form

University of Pennsylvania

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
A Qualitative Study of Food Pantry Patron Experiences in Philadelphia

My name is Chloe Saeks and I am a graduate student conducting a research study from the University of Pennsylvania. This research is to better understand your experience in this food pantry in order to help inform further efforts to create the most positive experience for all patrons.

Your participation is voluntary. You have the choice whether or not you would like to participate and, if you agree, you are free to change your mind and stop at any moment.

To help you make your decision, I am going to tell you more about this research project. I will review with you the project’s purpose, the possible risks and benefits of being in the project, and what you will do if you choose to participate.

This is the consent form of the project. On this form you will find information about the project and after I review this with you and answer any questions you may have, I will ask you to participate.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study please feel free to contact Dr. Rosemary Frasso, (215) 746-8554 or email her at rofrasso@mail.med.upenn.edu

I have questions that are often asked by study participants. Let’s go over these questions to help me explain the project to you. Please stop me at any time if you have any questions.

What is the food pantry patron experience project about?

Our research team at the University of Pennsylvania in Partnership with Health Promotion Council wants to understand the experience of food pantry patrons throughout Philadelphia. We are interested in learning more about the experience of patrons in different food pantry settings. The research team is interviewing 15 food pantry patrons...
throughout Philadelphia. If you choose to participate, the research team would like you to explain your experience in this food pantry. It is hoped that you will have 15-20 minutes to share your experience with me and answer my questions as best as you can.

We may use parts of the interview with you in presentations, publications, and exhibits for the general public and academic audiences (for example, other researchers, doctors, professors).

**How long will the project last and what will you be asked to do?**

The study will take between 15-20 minutes. You will be asked to wear an audio recording device so that we can transcribe your interview answers for the purpose of the study. All identifying information linked to you and your answers will be destroyed once the study is over.

**Are there any risks to you?**

Since the interviews are going to take place in a public space, others may overhear part or all of the conversation. If you are not comfortable answering any of the questions or want to stop the interview at anytime, please let me know. The risks associated with participation in this study are very minimal. During the interview, personal or emotional topics may come up. You can skip any interview question that you do not want to answer or you can choose not to have the study team not use your interview at all.

**Will you benefit from the project?**

There is no benefit to you, but your participation could help us understand food pantry patron experiences in Philadelphia and help us understand ways to improve your experience in the future.

**Will you be paid for participating in the project?**

To thank you for your time you will receive a $5 gift card to a local grocery store following this interview.

**Can you leave the project or stop the interview once we begin?**

Yes, you can drop out of the project at any time. There is no penalty if you dropout, cancel our interview or stop the
interview once we begin.

You will not be asked to take any other steps. I (or other members of the researcher team) will not contact you again. Any information collected from you before you dropout will be kept by the researchers team but you may ask the us not to use your interview data in any publications, presentations, or exhibits.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

Participants in this project will be contributing to public exhibits, presentations, and publications. However, none of your identification information will be used. In other words, your participation in this project is confidential despite its public setting outside of the pantry.

Each participants interview will be kept confidential by the researchers and only the deidentified transcripts prepared by the student researcher. Digital audio files will be immediately deleted from the recording device after they are transferred to a password-protected hard drive. Transcription will occur on a password-protected computer. After transcription and verification of transcription accuracy, audio files will be destroyed. Individual transcript files will be shared with the research team using Penn+Box, a secure and protected site. Analysis will be facilitated by NVivo on password-protected computers. The University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board, and research team members from Penn may have access to data from this project. All identifying information, including audio recordings, linked to you and your answers will be destroyed once the study is over.

**Do you have any questions now?**

**What should you do if you think of questions later?**

If you have questions about the project please feel free to contact me through my professor, Dr. Rosemary Frasso, her email is rofrasso@mail.med.upenn.edu and her office phone number is 215-746-8554.

**Finally, are you willing to participate?**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your participation in this research study or if you have any
questions about your rights as a research subject, you should speak with Dr. Rosemary Frasso listed above. If a member of the research team cannot be reached or you want to talk to someone other than those working on the study, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any questions, concerns, or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.
REFERENCES


