



Tips and Tricks to Improve Communication:

The Importance of Collaboration Between Chefs and Dietitians for Elevating IDDSI-Compliant Menus and Recipes

Often when we work on a team, we become so wrapped up in our own roles, responsibilities, and specific day-to-day tasks that we lose sight of the bigger picture. We need to remember that our colleagues are there to help and support us, and that we all share the same goal. Advocating for IDDSI-compliant menu items can be challenging then there is a contentious relationship between chefs and dietitians. Here are a few common challenges, followed by some tips and tricks to improve communication and help collaborate their common goal of providing safe, nutritious, and enjoyable meals.

COMMON CHALLENGES

- Both parties are focused only on their specific contributions to menu and recipe development (i.e. silo mentality), and each believe their part to be most important
- Lack of understanding of the challenges faced in each other's role (e.g. nutritional requirements on paper vs. actually implementing and executing these in the kitchen)
- Busy work environment and rushed communication leading to misunderstanding and confusion (e.g. not always able to speak in person, reading into the tone of email, language and word choice, telling vs. explaining or asking)
- Viewing each other as an opponent vs a collaborator (e.g. belief that the other party wants to make your job more difficult, seeing them as a hindrance vs a help)

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SOLUTIONS

- Create a common vision and goal for your team and acknowledge that everyone has valuable ways of contributing to that goal
- Create a safe environment by acknowledging everyone's ideas, contributions, and expertise as important
- Be aware that people communicate and make decisions differently
- Be respectful of each other's time and space (e.g. set up a brief meeting in a neutral space rather than attempting a rushed conversation during a busy time of day)
- Taking the time to explain your viewpoint can create a greater understanding of why you hold that opinion and can create "buy in"
- Use language that invites participation (e.g. "Do you agree?", "What do you think?")



Key Takeaways:

Although chefs and dietitians play different roles in developing and implementing IDDSI-compliant menus and recipes, in the end they both have the same purpose: to provide clients with a safe and enjoyable dining experience. Taking time to focus on this common goal is crucial to creating a collaborative environment, which will in turn produce a better outcome for clients.

