

research in brief

EFNEP Group Dynamics Training

One way of helping and encouraging aides to become proficient in teaching groups of homemakers is training in group process. Two experimental week-long sessions were held in one Ohio Extension area in November, 1973. The subject matter for these sessions was group dynamics integrated with nutrition and money management concepts and focused on EFNEP homemakers. The specific objective was to evaluate the relationship of training EFNEP aides in group dynamics methods to their adoption of group organization, maintenance, and teaching methods.

A second aide group was given a different type of group dynamics training by the teacher responsible for the experimental training. This training was given in 2 day-long sessions in March, 1973. The subject matter consisted entirely of group dynamics concepts.

A third group had no training in group dynamics except a brief introduction to the bulletin, "Working with Groups."

Findings indicate that the experimental training did result in changed aide behavior. Many treatment area aides did adopt group practices with homemakers in the 6 months from November to May. The importance of reinforcing aide training is evident. It appears that agents in the treatment area considered the experimental training sufficient while there was reinforcement in the two control areas with an increase in knowledge over time.

Implications for recruitment of aides who will work with groups also resulted from the data. It will be helpful to hire people with a history of prior group leadership and attendance and favorable attitudes toward group methodology.

Evaluation of the Use of Group Dynamics Training in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Marjory M. Mortvedt. Columbus: Ohio State University, Cooperative Extension Service, Leader Staff Development and Program Analysis, 1974.

Irene Beavers