



Talk,  
Listen,  
Connect

TLC Group Nutrition Education



## Talk, Listen, Connect - TLC

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Washington WIC has focused on participant centered (WIC Connects) services when offering individual nutrition education. Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC) offers an interactive training method so that staff have a plan and tools for group nutrition education that is participant centered, engaging, and opens the possibilities to behavior change.

Studies have shown WIC participants prefer to learn from one another. TLC participants will share feelings and experiences in a facilitated group discussion. WIC staff have the nutrition and breastfeeding knowledge to lead classes; but they don't always feel confident in facilitating a group discussion. TLC will model and share new tools and ideas for group education that have had positive feedback and outcomes in other states.

WIC staff are often challenged to have the time and space available for groups. TLC training offers a session format that can be adapted to any clinic setting and because it is meeting the needs of the client, time spent for these interactions are meaningful for both the staff and the client.

### **Objectives**

- Identify differences between knowledge-based and emotion-based questions
- Identify pulse points for WIC families
- Describe differences between TLC groups and lecture-style classes
- List 4 components of TLC
- Facilitate a practice session
- Increase confidence in effectively using facilitation skills

### **Additional Resources**

- Touching Hearts Touching Minds:  
<http://touchingheartstouchingminds.com>
- WIC Sharing Center:  
[http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing\\_Center/NY/talklistenconnect.pdf](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing_Center/NY/talklistenconnect.pdf)

### What is Talk, Listen, Connect?

A Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC) session is the nutrition education portion of a WIC appointment in which a group of participants gather with a facilitator to discuss a nutrition/health-related topic in an open and informal exchange.

The TLC session is a participant-centered approach to group nutrition education. Generally, each session lasts about 15 minutes. The optimum size for a Talk, Listen, Connect session is 4-8 participants. It could be as few as 2, or as many as 10. Smaller groups allow the participants to connect with one another and allow everyone to contribute. Group members feel good when they are able to help someone else in the group.

There are three main components of a Talk, Listen, Connect session:

- ❖ Open
- ❖ Share & Connect
- ❖ Summarize & Act

Every TLC session is a different learning opportunity because it reflects the interests, knowledge, and experiences of a new group of participants.

### Purpose of Talk, Listen, Connect

The purpose of a Talk, Listen, Connect session is to:

1. Provide an opportunity for participants to focus on their interests and learn in a pleasant, informal atmosphere.
2. Encourage participants to help each other by discussing their knowledge of a topic and sharing their real-life experiences.
3. Enable participants to share their concerns, give and receive support from each other.
4. Empower participants to make desired behavior changes.
5. Provide access to resources for participants, if desired.

The primary emphasis is on the feelings and experiences of the group members around WIC-related topics.

Participants in a Talk, Listen, Connect session will help educate each other by sharing their experiences. Parents like to help other parents avoid the problems they have had. It builds their self-esteem to see that the experiences they have had are of value to others.

Part of the facilitator's role is to help the group share real-life stories of what has worked and not worked in various situations. We all like stories, especially stories about what works. The more you can guide discussions to the experiences and knowledge that will help parents cope, the more effective, and even popular, your Talk, Listen, Connect sessions will be.

### **Pulse Points**

Everyone has emotional “pulse points.” These are the underlying feelings we have, which can trigger behavior change. Many of our decisions are not based on logic; rather they come from tapping into our emotions. To achieve behavior change, the first connection must be emotional; logic follows.

WIC families share similar emotional “pulse points.” The most prominent of these are pride, security, happiness, and hope for the future.

#### **Pride**

“I want to feel good about myself when I take care of my child.”

#### **Security**

“I want to keep my child safe.”

#### **Happiness**

“I want to have a meaningful impact on my family.”

#### **Hope for the future**

“I want to lead my child towards a successful life.”

To help our participants make positive behavior changes, we need to reach participants on an emotional level and connect with their “pulse points.” These pulse points are a good basis for inspiring meaningful discussion during Talk, Listen, Connect sessions. Remember to relate to the feelings and behaviors of group participants. The facilitator uses knowledge of pulse points to connect with feelings that trigger behavior change.

**We are not thinking machines;  
we are feeling machines  
that think.**

#### **Facilitate; don't teach.**

This is the hardest thing for many who have been in a teaching role most of their careers. You may wonder, “But why did I go to school for nutrition if I am not going to teach people how to eat healthy?” Trust that the value of the group will be realized by everyone present. Give yourself permission not to teach and trust that positive messages will be expressed by the group.

**Trust that the conversation within the group will go where it needs to.** This may be difficult to do at first, but experience will teach you how to meet your participants' needs.

#### **Above All -- Have fun!!**

- Remember that it takes time for a group to grow and develop trust.
- Be patient and never define success by the number of people attending the session.
- Enjoy yourself and the group members, and encourage them to do the same.

For more about Talk, Listen, Connect facilitation visit:

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing\\_Center/NY/talklistenconnect.pdf](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing_Center/NY/talklistenconnect.pdf)



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