Nudging in the School Cafeteria: Priorities and Plans

STEP 1: DEFINE THE GOAL BEHAVIOR

What behavior would you like students to adopt? (e.g., choosing legumes when they are offered)

STEP 2: DESCRIBE THE NUDGES AND CHOICE ARCHITECTS ALREADY IN PLACE

What prevents __________________________ from ____________________________?
(target population: students, teachers, staff) (desired behavior)

What makes __________________________ so easy for __________________________ to do?
(undesired behavior) (target population)

Who has the power to make changes? ____________________________________________

What barriers might you face in making changes? ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

STEP 3: DESIGN THE NUDGE

A nudge IS...
✓ Any small cue or feature that impacts our choices
✓ Subject to individual choice
✓ Attentive to human tendencies

A nudge is NOT...
× Unstructured
× A bribe
× A punishment
× Left to random
× A mandate
× Coercive

What small feature of the environment will you change to make healthy choices easier? (e.g., place apples close to the checkout, keep treats out of view)

____________________________________________________________________________

How do you expect this nudge to work? Sketch out the details:
STEP 4: IMPLEMENT THE NUDGE ON A SMALL SCALE

Where can you apply the nudge and test its impact? __________________________________________________________

What else would you need to do? (e.g., collaborate with principal, other administrators) __________________________________________________________

STEP 5: EVALUATE THE NUDGE

What outcomes and/or indicators will you look for?
(e.g., the number of fruits and vegetables selected in the lunch line)

How will you measure your success?
(e.g., compare quantities served before and after the nudge)

Reflection Questions:
• Was the nudge coercive or paternalistic?
• Were there unintended consequences?
• Did the nudge impact vary with lunch period?
• What did the target audience think about the nudge?
• Are the results worth the cost of implementing the nudge?

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE NUDGE (OR REPEAT STEPS 1-5 UNTIL IT WORKS!)

If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again… but when it works, scale up to nudge a larger population toward healthy behaviors.