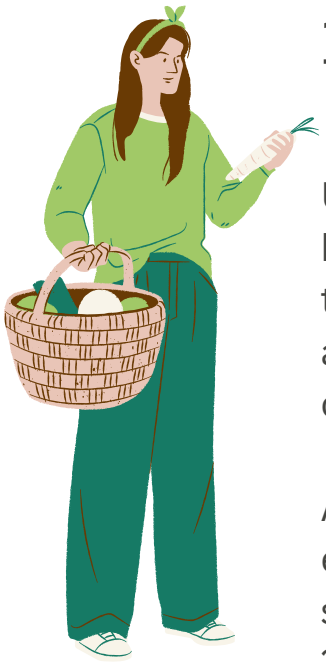
UBC SEEDS

FNH 473 GROUP 7

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FOOD SYSTEM (CFFS) TOOLKIT

Guidelines For Language



1) Use Positive and Actionable Language

Using positive language has been shown to increase behavioral change and promote positive attitudes toward that change. Focus on the benefit of an action rather than the negative consequences of its opposite action (Abrahamse, 2003).

Action-oriented language also provides a sense of empowerment, as it is clear and directs the reader to something they can do right away (Himsworth et al., 2020).

Instead of: "Don't choose foods that are high in emissions."
Try: "Choosing plant-based foods contributes to a healthier environment."

2) Use Relatable and Relevant Examples

The toolkit should aim to make sustainability personally relevant to the reader. This can be done by using language and examples that are relevant to the reader. Using narratives like personal anecdotes from reliable sources can be helpful. Locally-framed messages are also more effective than globally-framed messages (Scannell & Gifford, 2011).

Instead of: "Food waste worldwide"
Try: "Food waste in Vancouver/British Columbia"

3) Communicate the Larger Effort

Recommendations for individual sustainable food choices should be emphasized as part of a larger campaign at UBC.

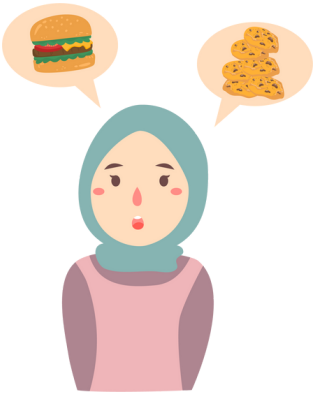
- Highlighting sustainability efforts at UBC can help gather support
- Help the reader feel like a part of a community working toward a shared goal
- Build a relationship between UBC and the reader
- Increase commitment to the lifestyle changes recommended in the toolkit by illustrating the larger context

Research shows that messages aiming to inspire change are most persuasive when the desired change is perceived to be prevalent in a group that the audience identifies with (Bator & Cialdini, 2002).

4) Transparency Increases Trust

Being transparent about uncertainty, obstacles, and errors, as well as explaining what is being done to address these things can help build trust with the reader. This can encourage them to want to align themselves with the toolkit goals and act on the provided recommendations (Himsworth et al., 2020).

4) Keep it Clear, Consistent, & Catchy



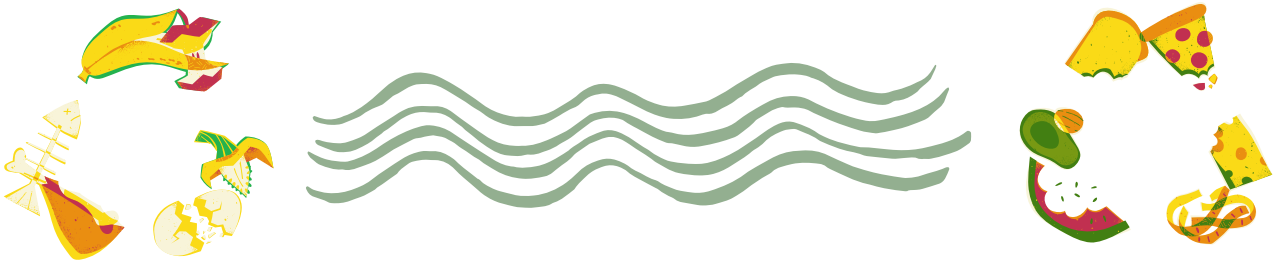
Clearly define the terms that are used in the toolkit, as this builds a common understanding of the purpose of all of the terms. Consistently use the same terms when referring to the same concept to avoid confusion (Thoele et al., 2020).

Repetition of important terms may also help to increase memorability and emphasize their importance. It may be helpful to include a ***glossary*** defining any terms and abbreviations that are commonly used throughout the toolkit for the reader's easy reference (Thoele et al., 2020).

People who are reading the toolkit may not be in a position to immediately act on the toolkit's suggestions. Catchy messages tied to a visual or behavioural cue can prompt readers to remember to make sustainable choices at a later, more relevant moment (Cialdini, 2003).

Guidelines For Messaging

"Consumer-facing information about food sustainability must be visible and accessible, easy to understand, reliable, credible, and holistic." - One Planet Network (2022)



1) Use Concise and Relevant Information

Provide clear and easily understandable information in the toolkit. It would be beneficial to be concise and stick to only the most relevant and salient information. Cite sources accurately and in a user-friendly manner as information regarding food sustainability must be accurate and credible to the readers. Providing reliable and accessible information regarding food sustainability will improve consumers' experience when choosing foods and not reduce their freedom during the food selection process (Pornpitakpan, 2006).

2) Avoid Information Over-load

It's important to balance providing information in the toolkit with simplicity. While it is necessary to provide information in the toolkit, information overload can decrease the reader's ability to process and act on the provided recommendations (Eppler & Mengis, 2004).

3) Include Visual Prompts

Consider including visual prompts in the toolkit that will be seen by students around campus, such as climate-friendly food labels. Visual prompts should act as a reminder or cue for the students to engage in the ideal behavior (Abrahamse, 2020).

A food meal labeled with the happy planet icon means that this food menu item has at least a 50% lower environmental footprint per 100 grams than other items. (UBC Campus & Community Planning, 2022).

4) Consider all the factors that impact food choices

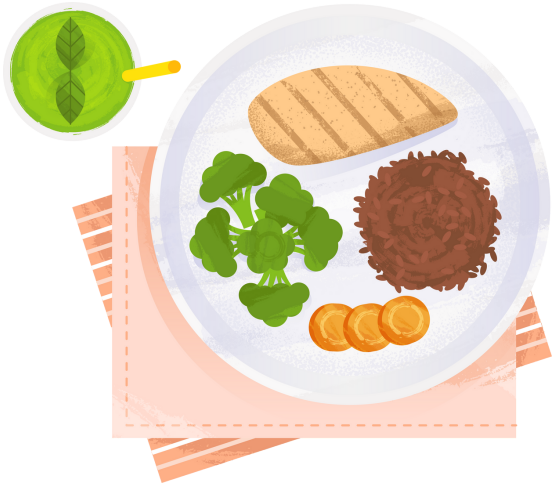
Consider the fact that people's food choices are affected by a variety of personal and environmental factors (Bishop, J., 2022). When drafting the information in the toolkit, keep in mind that food choices are not always conscious or rational. Sustainability is one of the factors that impact food choices but it may not be the most important one to consumers. Other barriers to making sustainable food choices are described on page 9-11 of this document.

4) Include Nudging & Narrative Strategies

Explain how to make optimal choices in a manner that is most convenient and has the least barriers for the students. This can be done by suggesting what to cook, where to shop, and what to substitute.

Consider using emotion-laden stories about local food suppliers, feature human stories behind sustainable ingredients/meals, and inspiring accounts of efforts by UBC leaders to create a more sustainable food system (Zhang, J. 2020).

When describing current environmental impacts, avoid emphasizing that many students do not make sustainable food choices as it sends the message that not making sustainable food choices is a social norm. This may indicate that making sustainable choices may be a socially disapproved behavior and discourage this behavior (Cialdini, R. B. 2003).



At the point of purchase, the use of nudging can address the communication gap on the sustainability characteristics of products and services. This may influence consumers to make sustainable purchasing choices (Zhao, R. 2018).

5) Use social media & technology

Social media and technology-based sources are the main ways for younger generations to access information. Social media platforms may be used to express some key messaging from the toolkit to the UBC student population.

Each social media platform has messaging strategies that are associated with higher engagement (Minton et al., 2012). The use of these strategies should be tailored to the specific social media platforms to increase awareness, but it should be noted that an increase in awareness may not necessarily lead to behavioural changes (Minton et al., 2012).

In addition, the user motive on social media needs to be considered (Minton et al., 2012). When using social media as a communication platform, adequate research should be done on the target audience to incorporate their motives into the messaging strategy.

The user motive related to sustainable behaviour varies between each platform (Minton et al., 2012). It was found that responsibility motives on Facebook are negatively associated with sustainable behaviours, whereas Twitter shows no correlation between the two. The motive also varies depending on the geographical location of the user ((Minton et al., 2012). When developing the Toolkit, it should be kept in mind the diverse backgrounds and locations of where the UBC community came from.

Student Barriers to Sustainable Food Choices

1) Cultural Diversity & Appropriateness

Despite efforts to increase the cultural diversity of food services at UBC, cultural food remains a controversial topic in making food-related decisions. Most first year students at UBC, who are also international students, reported that the foods at UBC do not taste as authentic as their cultural foods. The lack of "culturally appropriate" sustainable food options is an important factor to be considered for suggestions (Fu et al., 2020).

2) Knowledge Gap & Lack of Awareness

When making food-related decisions, consumers mostly prioritize taste, health, and affordability of food options. Only 10% of youth report often or always considering the environmental and ethical impacts of their food. Moreover, most consumers do not have an awareness of how much GHG emissions are associated with a single food item or their chosen meal. The lack of awareness among food consumers significantly contributes to environmental contamination by food systems (Gelinder et al., 2018).

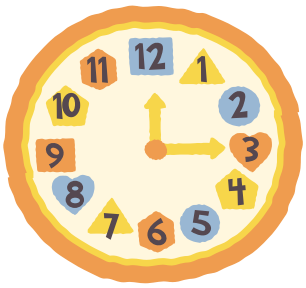
The majority of food consumers who are somewhat familiar with “sustainability” do not fully understand the term “sustainable food system”. Most consumers understand “sustainable food” as organic foods, locally or ethically produced foods, without actually being aware of the negative impact of livestock production. Without a comprehensive definition of “sustainability” and explicit measurements of the food system’s environmental impacts, consumers are not willing to prioritize sustainability over taste, price, and personal health (van Bussel et al., 2022).

3) Food Insecurity

Central to the topic of food systems, food insecurity also acts as a barrier to making sustainable food choices, including among university students. When asked about the cost of healthy and nutritious food on campus, the satisfaction rate of UBC students is only 10% (Chua et al., 2019). In most food service operations on campus, including UBC Food Service and private businesses, healthy food options are mostly overshadowed by packaged and conventional food items. These concerns are directly related to the food “availability” and “affordability” aspects of food security, as defined by the BC Centre for Disease Control (2022).

At UBC, 30-40% of students are food insecure and will be more concerned with obtaining food than with teasing apart the nuances in food systems and environmental degradation (The Foodhub by UBC, n.d.). Often, advice urging individuals to take responsibility for the environment asks them to invest their personal time or finances into the cause, which may not be realistic for busy students on a budget (Cohen, 2021).

The toolkit will not be widely applicable to the target audience of UBC students if it relies on personal sacrifice to address climate change. However, this presents the opportunity to make the toolkit particularly attractive to students by including strategies to save money alongside improving their sustainability. Students will have incentives to follow the advices that is financially beneficial to them instead of barriers. Whenever possible, the toolkit should highlight where sustainable behaviors can help with budgeting.



4) Limited Time

Given the workload of university students, limited free time can lead to choosing ready-prepared and convenient food, contributing to excessive packaging waste (Chen & Antonelli, 2020).

Any sustainability advice that is inconvenient should be accompanied by advice on how to manage the inconvenience. Strategies and heuristics around efficiently identifying and selecting sustainable foods should be included to minimize the risk of busy students running out of time and mental space to consider sustainability in their every day choices.

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