



INTRODUCTION

- Bridgewell is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing comprehensive support services to individuals with disabilities, mental health challenges, and other unique needs. With a mission to empower individuals to live more independent and fulfilling lives
- There is a clear disparity in access to nutritional education and healthy food choices for those with intellectual disabilities, which can lead to poor eating habits and health issues.



INTERNSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- The goal of this project is to help residents eat healthier by using better ingredients and smaller portions when cooking.
- The project also teaches basic nutrition, helps with meal planning, and tracks calories and weight to see progress.
- To prove that even those with an intellectual disability can be assisted and reach their health goals

RELATED LITERATURE

- Dietary interventions can improve physical health, emotional regulation, and cognitive function (Molina-López & Molina-Recio, 2021).
- Direct Support Professionals significantly impact the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) (Friedman, 2018).
- Structured meal planning and calorie monitoring can help individuals make informed food choices (Smith & Whitehouse, 2024).
- Person-centered care leads to greater independence and improved daily living skills (Friedman, 2018).

Healthy living is possible for everyone, Especially when we teach, support, and empower along the way.



MATERIALS & METHODS

- I asked the site supervisor about goals that needed to be worked on with the residents
- I looked over the areas where the specific resident struggled and assessed how I could help
- I decided to have a conversation with the resident and asked him:
 - What are your goals for your health?
 - What areas do you need the most help in?

Meal Preparation Activities:

- Weekly meal planning sessions with Rob
- Substituting high-calorie items with healthier alternatives
- Cooking together on designated days (e.g., Tuesdays and Thursdays)
- Teaching portion control and meal storage techniques

Materials Used:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Alexandra German- Site Supervisor, Residential Manager
Eric Schisler- BHS 520 Internship Professor/ Advisor

RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS

- This project set out to help residents, especially Rob, make healthier eating choices through simple meal substitutions, portion control, and basic nutrition education. By cooking together and tracking calories and weight, we found that even small changes like using lean meats, adding vegetables, and planning meals can make a big difference. Rob became more active, made better food choices, and felt more confident in his ability to care for his health.
- This project shows that individuals with intellectual disabilities can learn to meal prep, understand nutrition, and build healthy habits when given the right support. It's important because it helps promote independence, improves overall well-being, and creates long-lasting lifestyle changes.

REFERENCES

