

Ask VENA
(September 2008)

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Implementing VENA will take time and there are many questions out there about how to do it. The table below contains some of the top questions that appeared on the training evaluations from the WIC Conference, 2008. Some of our VENA “experts” have taken the time to respond to the questions. Think about these. Consider how your work with WIC participants can be enhanced with VENA.

This document will be posted on the WIC Training Connection <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/WICPRO/training/index.htm> under VENA/Ask VENA.

Direct any questions and/or comments to Tony Zech at anthony.zech@wisconsin.gov.

Topic	Question	Response
Participant Interest	What do we do with a client who “has no concerns and their child eats perfectly”?	This participant may not be receptive to counseling, so you shouldn’t spend too much time with them. You could try asking them what strategies they use--maybe they have some tips that you could share with other parents that have children. This could also help you find out how they are really doing and allow them to open up. Provide positive reinforcement to the participant for what they have been doing and assist them with developing a goal that indicates that they will continue current nutrition practices.
	If someone refuses information on something important, what do I do if I still feel compelled to discuss it?	You can provide the important information that you feel compelled to discuss in a non-judgmental manner. The participant can decide whether or not they want to discuss it with you. Document in the care plan if the participant refuses information and if they are not receptive. Perhaps the topic could be covered at the next visit. Make any needed referrals.
Questions	Do we have to cover all the questions prior to counseling?	It is recommended that all of the questions be asked (using umbrella questions as much as possible) to assure a complete

		assessment is done. On rare occasions (e.g., the participant has a major concern) you would not want to delay counseling until all of the questions are answered.
	Do you complete the entire family before you come up with goals?	You can do the assessment for the entire family before coming up with goals or divide it up, whichever works best for you. For example, it might work out better to do two similar-aged children together after finishing with a mom and baby.
	How do you ask open – ended questions?	Ask open-ended questions, such as “Tell me about your child’s eating?” to allow the participant to elaborate with their response. Close-ended questions, such as “Does your child drink milk?” only allow a participant to make a short reply. A good mix of open and close ended questions is important.
Assessment	Is VENA meant to be a thorough nutrition assessment or a brief nutrition assessment – covering a limited area of interest?	VENA is meant to be a thorough nutrition assessment, but done by a program designed to screen for certain risks and make referrals. As a reminder, the core components of the program are the following: supplementary foods, nutrition education and referrals.
	Do we have to write a summary statement?	No, but writing a summary statement is a good idea. (Note: this policy could change, depending upon what we learn about the ADA Nutrition Care Process and how to apply it in WIC.)
Counseling	Addressing participant’s questions at the end – how can I do this and make sure they are comfortable and get the answers they want?	Use the new upcoming ROSIE drop-downs and care plan screen to make notes of participant inquiries and what topics to counsel on. Currently, some CPAs keep a slip of paper next to them to jot down reminders of what to address. Ask the participant if you can answer their questions at the end, when you will have a better understanding of the situation.
	How can I remember all the information if I am waiting until the end to counsel and educate?	Use the new upcoming ROSIE drop-downs and care plan screen for topics and reminders of what to address.
Goal Setting	What if a participant doesn’t want to participate in goal setting?	Find out if there is any information you can help them with (or maybe what you can discuss with them next time). Document relevant information and their lack of desire to participate in

		goal setting in the care plan.
	In many cultures, clients are respectful and they feel you should be the expert. They want you to direct the goals.	This may not be true for everyone in a particular culture, so provide them with the opportunity to take the lead. If they want your help or direction, provide it.
Documentation	Is it always necessary to write an additional statement in O & A sections?	An additional statement is not always needed in the “O” section, but a summary statement in the “A” section may be helpful.
	How much documenting is needed?	Document only what is needed to meet requirements and help with follow-up.
Time	How do we complete all of this (summary, questions, redirect questions, responses, etc.) with time constraints?	All of this can be done within a reasonable length of time. Occasionally, short-cuts may have to be taken, in which case you still need to make sure to meet requirements.
	Approximately how much time should we be spending with the participant on VENA (re: 1 cert, 2 certs, etc., per family)?	The length of time needed varies by participant type, complexity, clinic flow, etc. VENA will save time, as the certifications will be more efficient and effective.
Other	When are we implementing VENA?	Now. The required WIC Project Nutrition Education Plans that focus on VENA are due on 3/31/09. While USDA is requiring States to implement VENA by 9/30/09, we determined what we could implement by then. There are many good parts of VENA that will be on-going.
	How do we present this change of approach to the participant?	You can inform participants that you will be doing some things differently in order to better meet their needs.