



Military Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (m-NEAT) Webinar Presentation: Speaker Notes

These speaker notes are provided to give a clear explanation of the content of each slide for the webinar that was presented on 11 December 2013.

Slide 0 (Title slide)

This is the title of today's webinar.

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Please note the advisory statement included on the slide.

Slide 1

These are the objectives for the webinar.

Slide 2

This webinar was scheduled because of the multitude of questions that we have received regarding the m-NEAT, such as those that are listed on the slide.

Throughout the agenda for the webinar, the questions on the slide are answered, with additional information provided, if needed. There will be time for Q & A at the end of the session so that by the end of the 1 ½ hours, you will feel confident that all of your questions have been answered.

Slide 3

m-NEAT is a joint service assessment tool designed to assist health promotion professionals, food operators, commanding officers, and other stakeholders in assessing their environment and how well it supports healthy eating.

m-NEAT is designed to assess the community eating environment across multiple venues (Community Programs, Dining Facilities (DFACs), Fitness Centers, Fast-food and Sit-Down Restaurants, Billeting/Lodging Snack Shops, Convenience Stores, Commissaries, Vending (both Refrigerated and Non-refrigerated) and Worksites.

Slide 4



These are some of the benefits of using a Nutrition Environmental Assessment Tool in a community.

Slide 5

This is the definition of a healthy food environment provided by the Michigan Dept. of Community Health, who were pioneers in looking at the food environment. The development of the m-NEAT was based upon their work in developing criteria for a healthy food environment.

Slide 6

This slide shows the evolution of the development of the m-NEAT. Initially, each branch of service had its own tool. The Navy had the CHOW, the Air Force the DINE and the Army the EATS. However, members of the DoD Nutritional Aspects of Health Promotion Working Group decided that one tool with one name would be used throughout the military community. That tool is now called the Military Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool or m-NEAT.

This is the current logo for the m-NEAT.

Slide 7

Criteria for the m-NEAT are based upon nationally recognized or DoD Nutrition and Menu Standards. The list of standards or criteria used in the development of the m-NEAT are listed in the References tab of the tool.

The m-NEAT criteria has a section or tab that looks at all of the areas listed on the slide. The individual completing the m-NEAT only completes those sections of the criteria that pertain to their community environment. For example, if their command had no dining facility, they would skip that section of the criteria.

Slide 8

These are the list of support materials available to assist you in effectively using the m-NEAT. All of these will be discussed during this webinar.

Slide 9

All materials and resources for the m-NEAT are posted on the NMCPHC website at the link listed on the slide. You can also Google m-NEAT and that will bring you to the website as well.

Slide 10

There are three phases involved in effectively implementing the m-NEAT:

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Data collection
- 3) Creating a Local Action Plan



So let's take a look at each phase.

Slide 11

Phase I is Preparation – which is an important step with any project or activity you are planning to conduct.

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You will want to refer to the Facilitator Instruction Guide in preparing to complete the m-NEAT.

Next, assemble a coalition team of vested stakeholders. Specific team members may vary by branch of service – but basically, these are individuals from the installation that have a vested interest in the assessment – Installation/Base Food Service Managers, Registered Dietitians, Nutrition Techs/Nutrition Care Specialists, Food Service Managers from AAFES/NEX, MWR, and the Commissaries, Army CHPHC WG members, etc.

Determine areas to assess – basically, if your installation/base has it, then it must be included in the assessment. With the exception of vending, assess 3 sites – If you have more than three locations, select sites with a high volume of traffic or head count.

Assign team members with specific areas to assess – ideally, you would have “disinterested parties” assess – for example, the RD would assess the DFACs and Vending. However, during these times when manpower and resources are constrained - it is okay to have the Commissary Manager assign a commissary employee to conduct the assessment. This is when the worksheets are essential – it is important that each team member and assessor read and understand the worksheets that pertain to them.

And lastly, disinterested parties must contact the appropriate Point of contact (POC) prior to their site visit to let them know of the purpose of the visit. Ideally, the manager or director of the establishment is part of the coalition team and has briefed their staff on the assessment. Often this is not the case and you do not want to surprise the sites by putting them in a panic mode when showing up unexpectedly. In addition, it is also essential to let them know that you are NOT a food inspector!

Slide 13

The Facilitator Instruction Guide provides information to assist in preparing to conduct the m-NEAT, giving instructions on how to use the EXCEL Scoring Tool and guidance on developing a Local Action Plan.

Slide 14

Phase II is the data collection and assessment deployment which begins with using the section worksheets.



Slide 15

The worksheets must be used in completing the m-NEAT assessment. You will need to print the worksheets and copy additional ones for EACH facility you assess.

The worksheets are used for data collection. They also provide specific instructions and definitions for each site assessed. For example – the worksheet will describe exactly what a “healthy” yogurt or entrée. In addition, using the worksheets will ensure consistency with each assessment regardless of who is doing it and remove the element of subjective answers.

There are nine worksheets, one for each section of the m-NEAT. At this time several sections (for example the Restaurant for both Fast-food and Sit-down) are combined.

The worksheets are very detailed and are designed to not only help you collect the data required to answer each question objectively, but are also useful in developing your Local Action Plan. Each section worksheet will vary from each other and may include work prior to the site visit and directly after.

Slide 16

This is the worksheet for the DFAC section. You will note that the worksheet includes detailed instructions on how to answer the questions. It also includes additional information that may be helpful for you if you need to contact the POC, developing your Local Action Plan, and will be helpful with the next annual assessment.

Slide 17

And this is the worksheet for the Snack Shop section. You will note the specific definition for a “healthier cereal” to assist you with answering questions objectively.

Once the data collection is completed, it is time to input the data into the EXCEL Scoring Tool.

Slide 18

It is best to have one person (the Facilitator) collect all the worksheets and enter the data into the EXCEL Scoring Tool.

The EXCEL Scoring Tool is designed to score the assessment after you have collected and entered your data. It was not meant to print out and be used as a checklist when you conduct your on-site assessments. There is not enough information on the Scoring Tool to help you provide objective and consistent answers. Thus use the worksheets!

The EXCEL Scoring Tool is self-scoring and will calculate your scores for each section and eventually give you an Overall Rating.



This slide shows a screenshot of the title page of the Scoring Tool – access each of the sections via the Tabs located on the bottom (as annotated by a red circle). You can access each of the sections by horizontally scrolling through the entire spreadsheets – please note that there are a total of 17 Tabs.

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Many of the sections are long (i.e. DFAC) – the EXCEL Scoring Tool is designed so that you can vertically scroll through the tool for ease of data entry.

It is important to read the question and any specific instructions that are highlighted in another color – Not following instructions and entering an inappropriate answer may skew your score (even if the Error Alert is GREEN).

For example...Q16 has additional instructions in blue – If the answer is “NO” then answer Q17 and Q18 with “N/A” – you will notice in this example that in the Site 2 Column - Q18 was incorrectly answered with an “N/A”.

Slide 20

When entering your answers into the EXCEL Scoring Tool, you will click on the appropriate cell that corresponds with the site and question. A drop down box will pop up with available answers.

As you will note in the screenshot, some answer options are more than YES or NO.

You can also input your data by typing them into the cell; however, if you type in an answer that is “invalid”, for example, you type in “unhealthy” instead of one of the available answers of “yes” or “no”, an “Invalid Answer” pop up will alert you to the error.

Slide 21

In addition to “invalid answer alerts”, the EXCEL Scoring Tool has an error alert to help you input data correctly.

A “RED” error alert indicates an answer may be missing as demonstrated in the Site 2 Column for Q2 and Q3. If you enter an answer that is not an option, the error alert will remain RED and you will receive an “Invalid Answer” pop up.

A “GREEN” error alert does NOT mean you have a “Correct” answer. It only indicates your answer was accepted. The error alert may also be GREEN if an answer is not required. For instance, if you notice, the vending surveyed for site 1 was Beverage only. Q2 and Q3 refer to “Refrigerated Foods” and thus it is not necessary to answer. The error alert for these 2 questions will turn GREEN once Beverage is selected. You may have to scroll to the bottom of the section and back up if the error alert doesn’t completely turn GREEN.



Slide 22

As mentioned earlier, the m-NEAT Scoring Tool is self-scoring. As you enter your responses, the points will automatically tally at the bottom of the spreadsheet.

Each completed assessed site will display a total number of points and a maximum number of possible points. This provides the “%” score for each site and an overall score. Please note that although you might have an OVERALL SCORE, you may not have a site score until all the questions are answered (you may need to scroll thru the entire section to ensure the Error Alerts are GREEN.)

In the screenshot you will notice that both sites 1 and 2 have complete scores. Site 3, however, has a “#N/A” which may indicate three possibilities: The site has unanswered questions, an incorrectly answered question OR the installation/base only completed two site assessments. If you have three site assessments, I recommend you scroll thru to make sure all questions have been answered (green). This particular assessment only included data for two sites. I know this without scrolling through because each site has a title at the top of each column as you can see by the screenshot – Site 1: is the Club and Site 2: is the Top of the Bay.

If you still have problems, contact your representative for your Branch of Service.

Slide 23

As mentioned earlier, for each site surveyed, the spreadsheet will display the total number of points and a maximum possible number of points. Some sections may have a different “maximum number of points” annotated for each site. This is based on what specific areas are included in the assessment. You can see that demonstrated in the Refrigerated Vending screenshot.

The questions are weighted and it is possible to lose points as depicted in the screenshot - you will see that site 3 has a negative one point which resulted in a 0% score.

An overall support rating score (percentage) of all the sites for the section is also generated. It is very important to understand that the overall score is not calculated by averaging the score for each site assessed, but instead is calculated by using the TOTAL number of points and Maximum possible points from each site.

Slide 24

DFAC questions are not weighted. Ideally, the standard is 100%, as the questions are based on DoD Nutrition and Menu Standards.

There are several questions in both the Permanent Party and Training DFACs that are non-scored. These are not part of the DoD Nutrition and Menu Standards; however, military



nutrition experts felt they were important to further enhance the nutritional menu when feasible. These questions are italicized in bold purple font. Q55 in the screenshot is an example of a non-scored question.

Slide 25

As you complete each section the “Final Score” Tab, also known as the m-NEAT Community Appraisal – Overall Rating will automatically populate.

This slide shows a screenshot of a sample m-NEAT community assessment Overall Rating. It includes the total number of categories scored and the average of all scores. In this example 9 sites were assessed out of 12 possible.

You will also note that the average m-NEAT score is color coded with a range for the Overall Rating (i.e. Fully, Mostly, Partially or Not Supportive). For this example the average score was 45% and color coded RED, meaning this installation/base is not supportive of a healthy eating environment.

Slide 26

So far, we have talked about planning and conducting the m-NEAT assessment. So now what? How do you use the results to change the environment to make healthier food and beverage options available in your community?

Phase III, Creating and Implementing a Local Action Plan may be the most important phase in the m-NEAT assessment process

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The next few slides outline the 6 steps you will want to follow in developing your Local Action Plan.

Share the results of your m-NEAT Appraisal with the members of your m-NEAT committee in advance of your action planning meeting. This is a great opportunity to also share the results with the management of each of the locations that you have surveyed, if they are not members of your committee. The facility managers for the survey locations are great resources and whenever possible should be recruited for your committee. If they are not on the committee, it is very useful to invite them to attend the action planning meeting so that they can provide input and direction on items for improvement in your plan.

Each step will be discussed on the following slides.

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Step 1: Share the results of your m-NEAT Appraisal with the members of your m-NEAT Committee and others who are interested in this initiative. Using the worksheets and the scores, identify those areas that need improvement or could be enhanced in your community. Typically these will be your lowest scoring areas/items. Using the m-NEAT Action Plan located on the m-NEAT assessment tool Tab, list your recommended actions and identify the associated m-NEAT survey that the action item impacts. Using the example on the slide, your committee might identify Community Programs, DFAC and Fitness Centers as areas needing improvement. You would then list those areas and the action needed on the m-NEAT Action Plan. You may have more than one action item per survey area. Your completed worksheets will be your best source in identifying the areas that are currently not meeting the supportive rating.

Step 2: Rank each recommended action you listed on cost, time, support, and importance. Use the three-point scale in the m-NEAT Action Plan chart to help you identify barriers and prioritize the actions you listed.

- **Cost:** How expensive would it be to plan and implement the action? (Use subjective Measures)
- **Time:** How much time would it take to plan and implement the action? (Long Term = >6 months; Moderate = >30 days; Brief = ≤30days)
- **Support:** How much support exists to plan and implement the action? How enthusiastic would the community be about implementing this action?
- **Importance:** How important is it to implement the action? What impact would it have on the community?

Once you have finished completing this process for all recommended actions, this worksheet calculates the total points across the chart to indicate a Total Points score for each action.

The lowest possible total points for an action is 4, which indicates it is very costly, will take a long time to accomplish, has little support to implement, and is low in importance.

Step 3: Prioritize your recommended actions as either low or high priority. High priority actions are those that you plan to work on first. High priority actions might be areas of great need or where even a small improvement means a big impact. Your high priority actions will generally be those recommended actions that scored the highest on your m-NEAT Action Plan.

Slide 29

Once the committee has determined the priorities, then the next step would be to list each action item that will be worked, assign the action items to individuals and set deadlines for when each is to be accomplished, similar to the example on the slide. This form is not part of the tool and was created locally.

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These are the final steps in the m-NEAT appraisal process.



Your leadership should be briefed on the results of your m-NEAT assessment and action plan. Once action items have been completed, these accomplishments can be added to the briefing (based on the frequency of briefing). If annually, completed action items from previous action sheets should be discussed. This is a great opportunity to identify successes and challenges with implementation of the action items.

Frequency of completing or repeating the m-NEAT is branch of service specific.

Slide 31

One of the final Tabs that you will find at the bottom of the m-NEAT Scoring Tool is the Feedback Tab.

Please take the time to complete this Tab once you have completed the m-NEAT.

Slide 32

You will notice there is a place on the m-NEAT website for each branch of service to E-mail their m-NEAT results. Please do so as until the web-based version of the m-NEAT is available as that is the only way we have of tracking the results using this tool.

The POC to send your completed m-NEAT is listed on the slide for each branch of service.

Slide 33

We have just posted on the m-NEAT website three Toolkits to help you in developing your Local Action Plan. Right now there is a Toolkit for Convenience Stores, Vending and Snack Shops. The toolkits give you ideas on strategies that you might try in your community to make improvements in food and beverages in each of these three areas and the step-by-step process in implementing those strategies.

One of the resources included in each of the Toolkits that you might find helpful is a sample Customer Survey that could be critical in making changes in food and beverage options.

Again, all three of the Toolkits are available on the m-NEAT website.

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N/A

Slide 35

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This webinar was approved for 1 CPEU (Level 1, Learning Need Code 4010, 4020) from the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) for Registered Dietitians (RD) or Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTR).

For the CPEU certificate, e-mail your name and registration number to:

Bethann.cameron.civ@mail.mil

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