

Sample Scenarios and Answers

General Family and Consumer Sciences Scenarios

- You're at the grocery store and you run into a neighbor who recently moved into the house beside you. The two of you start getting to know each other and she asks you, "**What do you do?**"

Answer: *I am a dietician, as well as a member of the family and consumer sciences field. I work to help individuals and families understand and plan their eating habits in order to get or maintain a healthy weight, which leads them to live a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.*

- AAFCS has a lead on a story and contacts you to discuss a topic with a reporter. You're on a conference call with the reporter and she asks you to explain, "**What is family and consumer sciences?**"

Answer: *Family and consumer sciences is the comprehensive body of skills, research, and knowledge that helps people make informed decisions about their well-being, relationships, and resources to achieve optimal quality of life. The field represents many areas, including human development, personal and family finance, housing and interior design, food science, nutrition, and wellness, textiles and apparel, and consumer issues.*

- You're at an FCS-related conference and a member of the national media tells you they want to ask you a few questions. The reporter has attended a few sessions of the conference but wants some clarification. She asks you, "**What is the difference between family and consumer sciences and the home economics classes I took in school?**"

Answer: *Home economics has transformed into FCS due to the complex social and economic issues that individuals, families, and communities face today. Like any other applied science, family and consumer sciences has evolved with society and technology. Our emphasis is on issues relevant to today's individuals and families and skills critical to successful living and working in the 21st century global society. Our classes cover topics like personal and family finance, nutrition, responsible parenting, and peaceful conflict resolution.*

Obesity Scenarios

- **Disney junk food ad ban:** Disney recently announced that they will stop showing advertisements for unhealthy foods and drinks on their networks. How do you think this will affect childhood obesity?

Answer: *I think this could really improve the state of childhood obesity. Right now, 30 percent of children aged 2 to 19 are considered overweight or obese. Much of this can be attributed to eating and exercise habits. Currently, the most popular children's snacks are candy and cookies, and the consumption of fresh fruit for snacks has significantly declined. If food ads change to be healthier ones, children may come to expect those as normal snacks. If we feed them healthier snacks, they are more likely to be at a healthy weight and lead healthy lifestyles.*

- Can you speak to the relationship between media, children, and obesity?

Answer: *It's no surprise that the most popular children's snacks are cookies, candy, and salty snacks when those are the foods that are most heavily advertised. The ads are directed right at children because they are aired during children's shows on popular kids' networks. Children expect what they see on the television to be a reality, so when they see children snacking on cookies and loving them, they expect to eat cookies as well. If the media changes their tune and promotes healthy snacks, children will see these and not be constantly reminded about calorie-laden, unhealthy foods.*

- **Obesity epidemic:** What is family and consumer sciences actively doing to fight America's obesity epidemic?

Answer: *Family and consumer sciences professionals offer educational webinars and workshops about nutrition and health, such as "Nutrition and Hydration for Physical Performance: Guidelines for Teens and Adults" and "Food Psychology: Why We Eat More Than We Think"*

- *Family and consumer sciences professionals are often published in magazines, newspapers, and research periodicals regarding studies they have completed.*
- *Family and consumer sciences professionals across the nation are working to promote active lifestyles and healthy eating through programs like SNAP-Ed, Fuel Up and Play 60, and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, which is through the US Department of Agriculture and assists limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior necessary for developing nutritionally sound diets.*

- **Rising healthcare costs:** How are FCS professionals and programs helping to reduce healthcare costs related to the obesity epidemic?

Answer: (Example of the *Satisfy and Steer* media tactic if not sure how to specifically answer the question.) *Family and consumer sciences knows and agrees that this is an important issue facing Americans and the healthcare costs continue to rise. To combat obesity, family and consumer sciences professionals offer programs and presentations that provide ideas to make healthy eating easier. For example, Brian Wansink, a family and consumer sciences professional, created the Smarter Lunchroom Movement, which is an inexpensive way of increasing healthy eating in lunchrooms by moving healthy foods like skim milk, fruit, and salad to the front, closer to children's reach, and putting fatty foods like pizza toward the back. To help individuals and families cope with rising costs, family and consumer sciences professionals and organizations offer programs and presentations on budgeting and managing finances.*

Economy's Impact on Families & Personal and Family Finance Scenarios

- **Coping with the rising cost of living:** A report recently came out that showed that the cost of raising a child is over \$200,000. How is family and consumer sciences actively helping individuals and families cope with the rising cost of living in this difficult economy?

Answer: *The American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences offers a certification in personal and family finance education that validates an educator's knowledge and skills to effectively teach personal finance education to America's youth and young adults. The certification provides parents and students assurance of the educator's competence. Family and consumer sciences professionals offer webinars and workshops on financial management and budgeting to help people cope with increased costs.*

- **Credit card debt:** Credit card debt is a severe problem in this country. How can family and consumer sciences help with this issue?

Answer: *Family and consumer sciences offers multiple financial education and money management resources. Family and consumer sciences professionals offer webinars and*

workshops on budgeting and debt management and tips for achieving financial security. Financial education programs like the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy can help individuals learn how to manage their financial resources and avoid further debt. Other programs are being created by FCS professionals to help young people learn about money and aim to prevent credit card debt, such as Junior Achievement and the National Financial Capability Challenge.

- **Families coping with harsh economy:** Families are really hurting in this economy and don't know how to plan for expenses. How can family and consumer sciences help?

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- *Linda Simpson, family and consumer sciences professional, selected to serve on Financial Education Advisory Committee by state of Illinois.*
- *Many family and consumer sciences professionals are certified to teach personal finance classes.*

- **Obama's Financial Literacy campaign:** Obama recently announced his financial literacy campaign. We understand you have some programs that can assist in this initiative. Can you tell me more about that?

Answer: The American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences offers a certification in personal and family finance education that validates an educator's knowledge and skills to effectively teach personal finance education to America's youth and young adults. The certification provides parents and students assurance of the educator's competence. Family and consumer sciences professionals offer webinars and workshops on financial management and budgeting to help people cope with increased costs.

- *Linda Simpson, family and consumer sciences professional, selected to serve on Financial Education Advisory Committee by state of Illinois.*
- *Many family and consumer sciences professionals are certified to teach personal finance classes.*
- *AAFCS Teacher of the Year Lois Lewis led her students to place in the top 20 percent in a National Financial Capability Program.*

Military Families Scenarios

- **Vet-Friendly campuses:** There's been a recent push for higher education to establish "vet-friendly" campuses. What can you tell us about what this means and how family and consumer sciences can fit into this process?

Answer: More than half a million soldiers or vets and their dependents are taking post-secondary courses, but many struggle to succeed in college because of factors like rusty academic skills, family responsibilities, and a feeling of alienation from younger classmates on campus. Vet-friendly campuses are those that provide services to veterans to help them navigate college life, and help with military benefits and career planning. Family and consumer sciences programs offer educators helpful classes that teach how to handle diversity among students.

- **Domestic violence and PTSD:** Domestic violence is a common result of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which has seen a significant increase in military veterans. How can family and consumer sciences help individuals and families affected by domestic violence from a veteran?

Answer: *50 percent of veterans with PTSD commit wife-battering and family violence, so it's important that families who see any symptoms of PTSD in their veteran have them checked out by a doctor so they can hopefully begin to manage it before abuse starts. Evidence shows that therapy is helpful in the recovery from PTSD by helping to manage and cope with emotions of aggression, anger, and violence. Counseling, which is a component of the family and consumer sciences field, can be very helpful for families affected by domestic violence.*

- **Vet Unemployment:** Nearly one-third of veterans who return from Iraq and Afghanistan are unemployed or underemployed, and thus suffer from debt and financial problems. What can family and consumer sciences do to help address and solve these issues?

Answer: (Example of *Satisfy and Steer* media tactic if not sure how to specifically answer the question.) *Family and consumer sciences knows and agrees that this is an important issue facing military veterans. The family and consumer sciences field can be a source of unfilled jobs and offer a place where veterans could possibly find work. Family and consumer sciences also has programs and presentations on budgeting and managing finances that will help military families cope with unemployment and financial concerns.*

- **Utilizing skills of vets in the workforce:** How can the skills sets and experiences of veterans be utilized in today's workplace? What skills translate to jobs at home? How is family and consumer sciences helping veterans make the most of their skills?

Answer: *Veterans offer expertise that can easily and positively transfer to the civilian workforce. These include loyalty, leadership ability, respect, integrity, reliability and teamwork skills. Veterans also have the ability to develop and perfect new skills. Family and consumer sciences professionals, such as career counselors, can help veterans translate the military language on their resumes into more civilian-like terminology. This will help potential employers better understand what the veterans can provide to their company, resulting in an increased likelihood of hiring.*

Emotionally Healthy Families

- **Young Facebook users:** Facebook announced that it was considering allowing children under the age of 13 to be members on site. Can you speak to the potential effects this could have on families? What about the effects social media already has on families?

Answer: *Social media puts children and teens at an increased risk for cyber bullying and sexual experimentation because they have a limited capacity for self-regulation and are highly susceptible to peer pressure. More than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day, which amounts to quite a bit of time online where parents may not be monitoring, as well as a significant amount of time away from family. As a result, familial relationships can suffer. Many parents are unaware of what their children are doing online, which allows children on social media sites to be vulnerable to sexual predators or bullies. Social media has already been linked to many suicides caused by bullying on social media sites. In order to combat this, parents should take part in social media education webinars and other online safety programs offered by family and consumer sciences.*

- **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying has been in the news pretty consistently over the past couple of years as we have seen several suicides that are attributed to it. What do families need to know about cyberbullying and how to be sure their children don't fall victim to or take part in it?

Answer: *Families should know that cyberbullying is very common, with more than half of adolescents having been bullied online. Parents need to be aware and pay attention to their children's behavior because roughly a third of those who are bullied online do not tell their parents about it. Cyberbullying can be emotionally, psychologically, and physically detrimental to victims. Cyberbullying victims are nearly twice as likely to commit suicide than those who have*

not been bullied, so parents should be aware that this is a serious issue. The best way for parents to ensure that their children are not affected by cyberbullying is by monitoring their online accounts and talking often with their children.

- How can family and consumer sciences help with cyberbullying?

Answer: *Family and consumer sciences offers programs that educate parents about social media in order to prevent cyberbullying and other online hazards. Family and consumer sciences programs like MASK (Mothers Awareness on School Aged Kids) and CHW (Cyber Hood Watch) also promote online safety and awareness.*

- **Sandwich generation:** Many adults are struggling to cope with what is called the “sandwich generation” wherein they are stuck in the middle of two generations, taking care of their parents and their children. What kind of an effect does a situation like this have on families?

Answer: *A situation like this can cause a lot of tension in a household because the family must readjust to a new family dynamic. Having elderly parents move into the home can especially take an emotional toll because space and financial resources are decreased. The positive side is that families can also become closer as a result of pushing through challenges. It also gives children an opportunity to get to know their grandparents better if they are living in the home with them.*

- What advice can you give adults or families that are in this situation?

Answer: *The best way to handle a situation like this is through lots of communication and flexibility. The family dynamic is going to shift and change but as long as everyone communicates their needs and is flexible with the changes, the situation is likely to at least become a little less tense.*

- How can family and consumer sciences help to manage a situation like this?

Answer: *Family and consumer sciences can help with this transition through literature and programs about families in regards to finances and stress.*

- *Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head, Barbara O'Neill, Beth Bell, Pamela Schulze teach courses in and/or study Family Resource Management and Foundations in Financial Management, families and financial issues, family economics, American families in poverty, family struggles in economically challenging times, etc.*
- *Catherine Coccia wrote "Women in Midlife: stress, health and life satisfaction"*