Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings

Welcome

Welcome to this module, *Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings.* This is the second in a three-module series about implementing evidence-based programs (EBPs).

The next module in this series is Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings.

To advance to the next slide, click the "next" button in the bottom-right corner of each slide.

Credits

The authors of *Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings* are Allison Dymnicki, Ph.D., Kimberly D. Becker, Ph.D., Dana L. Cunningham, Ph.D., and Kellie L. Anderson, M.P.H.

Gwendolyn Willis-Darpoh, Ph.D., Jean Synodinos, B.A., and Emily Bockh, M.I.D. also contributed to this module.

Modules in This Series

The modules in this series are as follows:

Module 1: *Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for School Settings*, which covers using data to inform evidence-based program (EBP) selection, engaging stakeholders, assessing and building readiness, and reviewing and selecting EBPs.

Module 2: *Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings*, which covers creating an implementation plan and team, understanding fidelity and adaptations, building staff and organizational competencies, and scheduling implementation.

Module 3: *Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings*, which covers executing implementation, collecting data and monitoring progress, overcoming barriers and challenges, and planning for sustainability.

Introduction: Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings

This module offers strategies and tools for preparing to implement EBPs in your school.

Module 1 in this series addressed how to select EBPs to address the needs of your population of focus. If you haven't already reviewed Module 1, we strongly recommend that you do so before beginning this module.

Overview of This Module

In this module, we will review the steps that you should take to prepare for implementing the EBPs you have selected:

- Negotiating partner roles and expectations, including how to make decisions with partners

- Developing a logic model that maps out how you will achieve your intended outcomes

- Understanding the importance of fidelity and how to make EBP adaptations

- Establishing an implementation team that is responsible for guiding EBP implementation, and finding champions who can promote your EBPs

- Reviewing, revising, and adding new policies and procedures to support EBPs

- Building staff and organizational competencies to implement EBPs successfully

- Communicating with everyone who is involved in supporting, delivering, and receiving your EBP

- Preparing for data collection to measure fidelity of implementation and the impact of your EBPs

- Creating an implementation schedule to ensure that staff are implementing the EBPs as planned and with the full support of administrators, and planning for EBP sustainability

Take Time to Prepare

While it may be tempting to move directly from selecting to implementing EBPs, taking the time to prepare maximizes the chances that you will reach your desired outcomes. Now is the time to:

- Create the organizational and programmatic systems, practices, and supports needed for successful implementation

- Rally your stakeholders to support your EBPs and maintain their commitment throughout implementation

- Involve students, because incorporating the voice of youth in preparing for and implementing EBPs is a critical key to success

- Prepare staff who will be implementing EBPs so that they know what is expected of them

Case Example: The Alton (Illinois) School District's Experience Preparing to Implement EBPs

You will recall in module 1 of this series that we heard from Sandy Crawford, the former project Director of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative for the Alton School District in Alton, Illinois, about her school district's experience selecting EBPs. We will once again use Alton as a case study. Throughout this module, Sandy will describe Alton's work with long-standing partners—the local chief of police and the Director of the Drug-free Coalition—preparing to implement two EBPs, Project Alert and LifeSkills, with the goal of preventing substance abuse among Alton's large population of middle school students.

Establish Partner Roles

Let's begin by discussing the importance of establishing partner roles as a first step in preparing to implement EBPs. Your partners may include staff from community-based agencies who participate in EBP implementation, school staff and faculty, and families.

You should work with your partners to determine what roles they will have in implementation. Negotiating partner roles before you begin implementation:

- Contributes to better EBP implementation

- Helps understand and address challenges and concerns

- Ensures everyone is in agreement about roles and responsibilities

- Establishes the benefits of the partnership for everyone, which will help to ensure partners' continued involvement

Facilitate Shared Decision-Making

Once you determine partners and roles, you need to decide how you will work together to make decisions before and during implementation. Creating a structure for shared decision making:

- Encourages every individual to contribute information from his or her perspective, which increases understanding of the issues and leads to more inclusive, better informed decisions

- Helps everyone feel engaged in implementing EBPs

- Makes it easier to secure group members' commitment to decisions

- Creates structure and guidelines for how decisions will be made during implementation

Develop a Logic Model

Now let's talk about developing a logic model. Your project team should work with partners to develop a logic model that illustrates the relationship between your population's needs and your stated goals, objectives, and the activities of your EBPs.

A logic model also defines the roles of partners in EBP implementation.

Your logic model will guide your team's planning, activities, and progress toward achieving short- and long-term outcomes.

It's important to note that your logic model is a dynamic tool that your team should revisit and revise, as needed.

Steps to Develop a Logic Model

There are seven steps to developing a logic model for **each** EBP you want to implement:

1. **Define Goals**

   Define your program's goals—the short- and long-term impacts you want to achieve.

2. **Summarize Baseline Data**

   Reflect on baseline data about needs and risk and protective factors in your population of focus; these likely indicate the underlying needs, problems, or gaps that you are trying to address by implementing the EBP.

3. **Develop Objectives**

   Develop objectives that specify the changes you hope to see—for whom, by when, and by how much.

4. **Name the EBP**

   Name the EBP that you will implement to achieve your goals and objectives, and describe the key EBP components that will be implemented, as well as any related activities, curricula, programs, services, policies, and strategies.

5. **Describe Partners' Roles**

   Describe how each of your program's partners will contribute to EBP implementation.

6. **Specify Process Measures**

   Specify the process measures you will use to document the EBP's implementation.

7. **State Outcome Measures**

   State the outcome measures you will use to determine whether the program is achieving its objectives.

Sample Logic Model

If you would like additional guidance on developing a logic model, the Resources slide at the end of this module has a link to a self-paced, online module that takes you step by step through developing a logic model for each EBP you have selected.

For **a sample logic model** that you can save and edit for your own EBPs, go to:
http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/EBP_Mod_2_Sample_Logic_Model.docx

The Importance of Fidelity

Before you begin to implement EBPs, it is important to understand the importance of fidelity and adaptations. Let's start with fidelity:

- Fidelity refers to the extent to which an EBP is implemented in the way in which it was designed by the EBP developer.

- Fidelity generally means implementing all the core components of the EBP **without major modifications.**

- Implementing an EBP with fidelity improves your chances of replicating with your population of focus the effects that were found in the studies of the EBP.

Consider Adaptations

It's important to maintain the core components of EBPs to help ensure that your EBPs meet their desired outcomes.

However, depending on the specific needs of your population of focus, your setting, and the staff who will implement your EBPs, it isn't always possible or desirable to implement EBPs exactly as they're developed. In these cases, you may need to adapt an EBP.

Most adaptations to EBPs focus on either modifying or adding program content or modifying the method of delivery.

Reasons to Adapt EBPs

Reasons why you may want to adapt EBPs include the following:

- **Population of focus.** You may need to adapt an EBP to better meet the needs of your population of focus, such as making the EBP more culturally relevant to a specific subgroup of students.

- **Resource challenges.** You may need to adapt EBPs as a result of resource challenges—for example, if your school does not have enough staff time or money to deliver a specific intervention component.

- **Low motivational readiness.** In addition, as we discussed in Module 1, staff may not be convinced of the usefulness or value of EBPs, so you may need to adapt the way the EBP is delivered. For example, you may decide that in the first year of implementation, only those teachers who are enthusiastic about using the program will implement it in their classes. Then these teachers can convey the value of the EBP to their colleagues, so that other teachers will be more willing to begin implementation in subsequent years.

Adapting EBPs

While adaptations are sometimes necessary, they can negatively affect EBP outcomes, resulting in undesired or unintended outcomes. To adapt EBPs while maintaining fidelity:

- Consult with the EBP developer and other sites that have implemented the EBP to describe your school community's needs, learn about the adaptations they made, and ask for guidance about the best way to adapt the EBP while implementing as many of the core components as possible.

- Be sure to document the adaptations you make; this will help you understand how adaptations affect your outcomes.

- If you would like additional guidance on how to strike a balance between fidelity of implementation and adaptation, please see the Resources slide at the end of this module where you will find a link to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Finding the Balance Guide."

Knowledge Check: Fidelity and Adaptations

Let's check in and see what you know about fidelity and adaptations. You will be presented with two scenarios. After reviewing each scenario, choose the option that most closely matches what you would do in each situation.

Scenario 1

You are the principal at a middle school that is implementing an EBP to reduce bullying. The teachers have been implementing the EBP as instructed by the EBP designer, without adaptations. After a year of implementation, the data show no reduction in bullying.

What should you do?

1. **Give the EBP more time.** It can take time to see results; if you've implemented the EBP with fidelity, positive results should follow.

2. **Stop using this EBP and look for a new one to implement.** It's a waste of time and money to continue implementing an EBP that isn't working.

3. **Discuss with teachers the successes and challenges of implementation, and consider making EBP adaptations to make the implementation more successful.**

If you chose statement 1: This is risky! You may need to make adaptations to the EPB to make implementation more successful.

If you chose statement 2: This is risky! You may need to make adaptations to the EPB to make implementation more successful.

If you chose statement 3: Good Answer! Now, how would you approach making adaptations?

1. **Ask teachers to adapt the EBP** as they see fit to try and obtain the desired results.

2. **Work with teachers, the EBP developer, and other sites** to discuss possible adaptations.

If you chose statement 1: This is risky! While you should involve teachers in conversations about adapting EBPs, you should also consult with the EBP developer and other sites that have implemented the EBP about how to make adaptations with fidelity.

If you chose statement 2: Good Answer! Ask teachers how they would adapt the EBP to try to obtain the desired results and decide as a group what adaptations teachers should start making. The EBP developer can help you make adaptations while maintaining fidelity. Other sites can discuss adaptations they have made to the EBP and whether the adaptations improved outcomes.

Scenario 2

After reviewing local data and a wide range of potential EBPs, your high school has selected a new substance abuse prevention EBP for health education teachers to implement. Three weeks into implementation, you meet with the teachers and find out that all of them are implementing only two of the three core components of the EBP because they feel they don't have time to implement all three components in addition to the regular health curriculum.

What should you do?

1. **Adapt the EBP** so that it can be more effectively integrated into the existing health education curriculum.

2. **Agree to have teachers implement whichever components they can fit into their curriculum.**

3. **Find another substance abuse prevention EBP** that's shorter and isn't as time-consuming to implement.

If you chose statement 2: This is risky! Eliminating core EBP components could pose a major threat to fidelity. Talk with the teachers about which components they aren't implementing and whether those components are critical to achieving your desired outcomes.

If you chose statement 3: This is risky! You have chosen this EBP carefully. Starting over could waste valuable time and resources.

If you chose statement 1: Good Answer! Now, how would you approach making adaptations?

1. **Allow each teacher to adapt the EBP** in the way that works best for him or her.

2. **Talk with the EBP developer and other sites** about how to make adaptations so that the EBP is less time-consuming to deliver.

If you chose statement 1: This is risky! It is important to agree as a group on the adaptations that are made, and to document the adaptations. Also, making adaptations without speaking to the EBP developer or other sites that have implemented the EBP may compromise fidelity.

If you chose statement 2: Good Answer! The EBP developer may be able to suggest adaptations that save time while maintaining fidelity. Other sites may have strategies for integrating the EBP into their health curriculum.

Implementation Team

Once you have determined how you will implement and adapt EBPs with fidelity, it's time to establish an implementation team. Implementation teams ensure that everyone involved in implementation understands his or her role and is able to carry it out.

The responsibilities of implementation teams include the following:

- Handling **logistics**, such as finding space for implementation, and ordering EBP supplies and equipment

- **Personnel** tasks, like hiring, training, and managing staff

- **Data management**, including data collection, analysis, and reporting, and continuous quality improvement processes

- Building **linkages** with external stakeholders and potential partners, such as community mental health providers

EBP Implementation Team

Implementation teams are typically a core group of three to five staff members who support best practices and widespread implementation of the EBPs your school or district has selected. Each member of the team should be interested in this work and receive training early on, to gain a strong understanding of the EBP. It is important to have a member of the school administration on the implementation team, to ensure that a decision maker in the school building is aware of and able to provide input to EBP planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities. Most implementation teams are comprised of school district and community agency staff.

We recommend that a school administrator or school-based champion (which we'll talk about in more detail shortly) leads the implementation team. Some teams are also facilitated or overseen by staff from the EBP developer.

A Case Example: The Alton's School District's Experience Establishing an Implementation Team

Next, Sandy Crawford will discuss Alton's work establishing an EBP implementation team.

"We had assistant principals, one in particular who was administratively over the health department. And she was a critical person because she met with the health team on a monthly basis—she was a former health teacher herself, so she was familiar with the type of instruction that they were doing. And she was able to assist and our evaluator was part of that as well because she provided some of the fidelity checks that that assistant principal could then go over when she's meeting with the health teachers to ensure that they have taught all the lessons and used the components and could even use some of those in the teacher evaluation process as she's observing in the classroom."

EBP Champions

In addition to your EBP implementation team, you will need champions—cheerleaders who help to promote your EBPs. Champions may be students, school staff, family members, or staff in the community agencies you partner with who will advocate for the implementation of EBPs in your school.

EBP champions are either part of your implementation team or work alongside your implementation team to help identify and resolve problems; enhance the engagement of students, parents, administrators, and community leaders; and help ensure implementation success.

Identify Champions

Look for champions who are key players among your population of focus, in your schools, and in your community, as well as those who are committed to the EBPs you've selected and to positive outcomes. Champions can include students and families, school staff and administrators, partners from community-based organizations, and stakeholders who have participated in the EBP selection process.

As you identify potential EBP champions, consider individuals in the following groups:

- **Youth:** Which students are well-respected among their peers and can contribute to your efforts? Also consider youth who may have faced challenges in school and would benefit from the opportunity to serve as leaders.

- **School-based adult champions:** It's a good idea to have several school-based adult champions who are committed to your EBP efforts, so that if one champion leaves, there is someone else to continue the work.

- **Community champions:** Who from the community can complement and promote your efforts?

Who Are Your *CURRENT* Champions?

Take a moment to think about who your current champions are. Have you identified someone from each of the following stakeholder groups to participate in your EBP implementation process? Identify at least one person for each of the following categories:

- Students

- Family members

- School administrators and leaders

- Community leaders or staff at community-based organizations

Who Are Your *FUTURE* Champions?

Think about others you should engage as EBP champions. Are there student groups or community agencies who can support and promote your EBPs? Identify at least one future champion for each of the following categories:

- Students

- Family members

- School administrators and leaders

- Community leaders or staff at community-based organizations

A Case Example: The Alton's School District's Experience Engaging Champions

Next, Sandy Crawford will talk about how champions helped Alton promote their efforts while they were preparing to implement EBPs.

"I'd have to say one of our biggest promoters actually was our chief of police. He, because he really had strong buy-in for the Project ALERT program, and the school resource officer that we had at the middle school. And he is still there six, almost seven years after our grant started. He's just the right person for that position.

"Our chief of police took a truck that had been seized as part of a drug raid and they repainted the truck with the Project ALERT logo and used it in parades and school events so we got a lot of visibility about the program. Our school resource officer also met with the parent group at the middle school and was able to explain his role and the curriculum so we really had a nice way to present that to parents as well."

Develop Policies and Procedures: Initial Implementation

Let's move on to discussing the role of policies and procedures in EBP implementation.

Think about how your school's existing policies and procedures might support the initial implementation of EBPs, and how the policies and procedures could be refined. Also consider new policies and procedures that you will need to create to support implementation.

Policies and procedures you may need to revise or create include the following:

- Hiring and staffing policies related to bringing new staff onboard and training existing staff

- Financial policies related to purchasing and maintaining equipment and supplies, and budgeting for start-up

- Administrative procedures, including providing time for staff training, scheduling when EBPs will be implemented during the school day or in outside-of-school time, and time for staff to receive support and coaching during implementation

- Facility considerations, such as space for training and implementation

- Procedures for referring students to community-based service providers

Develop Policies and Procedures: Long-Term Implementation and Sustainability

You'll also need to create policies and procedures that facilitate long-term EBP implementation and sustainability. Among these are policies and procedures related to collaborative planning, ongoing training, and staff coaching and mentoring. All support best practices in EBP implementation, facilitate problem solving, allow time for staff to share lessons learned, and support the overall institutionalization of EBPs.

The key here is strong school leaders who are willing and able to introduce the necessary changes to the school setting to support these policies and procedures.

Key Leadership Qualities

Leaders must believe that EBPs can result in widespread positive change in schools, and must support and value the desired outcomes your EBPs aim to bring about. Leaders also need to help promote this vision to EBP recipients, implementers, and partners. Finally, school leaders have to provide time, resources, and support for staff EBP training and delivery. It's critical that leaders remain committed throughout the EBP planning and implementation process.

If your school's leaders do not initially support these processes, your EBP implementation team and EBP champions can work to convince them of the value of implementing the selected EBPs. As we reviewed in Module 1 of this series, enhancing readiness among school leaders may be an important part of preparing to implement EBPs in your school.

Strategies for Building Staff and Organizational Competencies

The next step in preparing to implement EBPs is to build staff and organizational competencies so that they have the necessary skills to implement EBPs.

Activities to build competencies include the following:

- Provide training in the EBPs to staff who will implement them.

- Provide staff with ongoing coaching and mentoring.

- Arrange EBP booster sessions to reinforce implementation strategies.

- Schedule time for staff to discuss implementation challenges and successes.

- Make available adequate organizational supports for all these activities, including budgeting for substitute teachers so that staff may attend training, funds for coaches, and time for staff discussion.

- Communicate implementation processes to stakeholders, implementers, and champions.

Staff Training

Staff training is an essential element in preparing to implement EBPs.

- Start by making sure you have support from school leaders to acquire the staff time, space, and materials for EBP training.

- Identify seasoned trainers who are very familiar with your EBPs to conduct training sessions. For some EBPs, the length of training and the selection of trainers are determined by the EBP developer, while other EBPs are more flexible.

- Determine who will be trained. It is important to be thoughtful about who will be trained. If possible, select staff who have worked in your school for several years and are likely to stay. Also consider staff who are most likely to work with your population of focus. For example, if an EBP will be implemented in health class, select health teachers for the training. Also determine whether all implementers need to be trained in the entire program or if staff should be trained on only those program components they will implement.

Staff Training Logistics

Once you have your trainers and staff to be trained, it's time to schedule the EBP implementation trainings.

- Consider using a train-the-trainer model, in which EBP staff learn the skills to train new staff in EBP implementation, saving resources and enhancing long-term sustainability.

- Next, schedule the days and times for training.

- Finally, communicate the training schedule to staff, and don't forget to also let administrators know so they can support staff time out of the classroom.

Importance of Staff Coaching

In addition to initial staff training, it's critical to provide ongoing coaching and mentoring for staff as they implement EBPs. The work of researchers Joyce and Showers (2002) illustrates the importance of ongoing staff coaching when new programs and practices are introduced in schools.

The research of Joyce and Showers research shows that training increases staff knowledge and skills demonstration by a small amount but doesn't change teachers' practice in the classroom. Additional gains can be made by having the trainer

demonstrate new skills, having training participants practice the skills during the training, and providing expert feedback during training, but this still has little impact on what teachers subsequently do in the classroom.

Adding coaching into the mix is most likely to result in changes in teacher behavior. Combining practice, feedback, **and** coaching has a major impact on teacher practice in the classroom. Encouraging staff to practice new skills repeatedly and supporting them over a period of time allows them to refine their implementation practices, receive ongoing feedback from mentors and coaches, and observe others demonstrating the desired practices.

Ongoing Staff Coaching and Mentoring
Plan for how you will provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to EBP implementers.

Coaching and mentoring activities may include the following:

- Having others demonstrate the skills needed to implement the EBPs

- Providing opportunities for staff to practice new skills in practice settings (such as small groups during a staff meeting) and in the classroom

- Providing staff opportunities for guided reflection related to the new skills they're using, with staff discussing what is working well, what is not, and how they can improve their practice

- Observing coaches and mentors demonstrating the desired skills in the classroom, either via video or in person—especially helpful if staff members are struggling with a certain aspect of the program and need focused feedback and support

Staff Coaching and Mentoring Considerations
Also think about the following questions:

- **Who** will coordinate and facilitate staff coaching and mentoring in the EBPs?

- **When, where, and how often** will coaching and mentoring occur?

- Will coaching and mentoring be provided to **groups of staff, individuals, or both**?

- **What if** implementation strays too far from the original EBP?

If observations reveal that an EBP is not implemented with fidelity, you may need to develop a multifaceted plan that includes coaching and mentoring for all implementers. In addition, you may need more specialized coaching or mentoring for staff who are struggling with specific aspects of implementation.

EBP Booster Sessions
While training staff in the EBP prior to implementation is important, you also need to plan for periodic booster sessions for EBP implementers. Booster sessions can build staff competencies, especially when challenges emerge during EBP implementation, as

they often do. For instance, booster sessions can train implementers how to institutionalize EBPs in their teaching practices. These sessions also provide opportunities for staff to problem-solve collaboratively and can help bring new staff up to speed.

The developers of your EBPs or your EBP trainer may provide booster sessions for a fee. Perhaps you can draw on staff in your district who are knowledgeable about the EBP to lead booster sessions. Or you may be able to bring in staff from a district that has a lot of experience with the EBP you're using, to facilitate booster sessions in your school.

A Case Example: The Alton's School District's Experience Building Staff Capacity

Next, Sandy Crawford will discuss how Alton built staff capacity while preparing to implement their EBPs.

"Having the assistant principal, who met with those health teachers on a monthly basis, was instrumental throughout the grant to ensure that they were continuing to teach with fidelity. Having the school resource officer trained along with them and being in the classrooms ensured kind of a 'double-check' because that was clearly his role, his designated role by the chief of police, so they both supported each other. Although the health teacher was the primary instructor, he played an active role in the classroom as well.

"We also had had, basically, some modeling of the LifeSkills program through our local provider because they had been in the classrooms during that first year through another grant providing a modified LifeSkills program. We actually implemented Project ALERT the first year and then the second year shifted to the training for LifeSkills and the teachers teaching that in seventh and eighth grade. So we had the advantage of our prevention provider having been in the classrooms and teaching the LifeSkills curriculum kind of in a modeling role, really, for those teachers."

Prepare for and Discuss Challenges

Expect and prepare for challenges as you're getting ready to implement new EBPs. There are many reasons why staff may be hesitant or resistant to EBP implementation. Here we will present three common challenges with your staff that you may face at this stage. Choose the option that you think is the best way to address each staff member's concern.

Challenge 1

A staff member tells you, "I don't have time to add this new program to what I'm already teaching!"

How do you respond?

1. "Our school district's leaders have determined that we need to implement this EBP. You'll have to find a way to incorporate it into your curriculum."

2. "We have scheduled a training that includes strategies for integrating the EBP into your curriculum. We have also set up time for teachers implementing the EBP to try out activities before you start using the program in your classroom."

If you chose statement 1: That's not a good choice. Telling staff that they don't have a choice is not going to motivate them to become engaged in EBP implementation. Instead, help them devise ways to incorporate the EBP into their existing curriculum.

If you chose statement 2: Good Choice! Staff may need help finding ways to integrate the EBP into what they're currently teaching, as well as time to practice new activities/skills in order to feel confident implementing the EBP. You can also have coaches come into the classroom to model ways to integrate the EBP into the curriculum.

Challenge 2

A staff member asks during an implementation planning meeting, "Haven't we tried this before?"

How do you respond?

1. "This is different from the other EBPs we have implemented, and it's a very popular program in schools across the country."

2. "At our next meeting we'll talk about how this EBP was chosen based on data on our students and our school's needs and strengths. We will also discuss implementation challenges and brainstorm ways to address challenges."

If you chose statement 1: That's not a good choice. Staff aren't likely to feel invested in implementing another new program if you can't articulate why the EBP is likely to be effective with the students they teach.

If you chose statement 2: Good Choice! You can increase staff motivation by explaining the data-informed process your school used to select the EBP. Remember to keep staff engaged over time by updating them on implementation progress and early outcomes.

Challenge 3

You overhear a staff member say to a colleague, "This is just going to disappear like the other new programs we've tried in the last few years. Our district just doesn't have the resources to support programs like this over time."

How do you respond?

1. "We are preparing some of our staff to be trainers on this EBP so they can teach other staff how to implement it. We are also considering ways to institutionalize parts of the EBP in our school's curriculum."

2. "We're really hopeful that we will find ongoing funding for the EBP after the current funding for it ends."

If you chose statement 1: That's not a good choice. Not having a sustainability plan in place can reinforce staff fears that the EBP is another 'flavor of the week' and not worth their investment of time and energy.

If you chose statement 2: Good Choice! Both of these strategies can help sustain the EBP into the future. Planning for sustainability early–and communicating the plan to staff–can increase staff confidence that the EBP has staying power and that their implementation efforts are an investment in the future.

With Whom Do We Need to Communicate?
In EBP Module 1, we discuss communicating with stakeholders and partners to obtain buy-in and support for your EBPs. We are sure you have been updating these stakeholders and partners on the progress. However, as you get closer to the implementation phase, it is time to communicate the specifics of what's about to happen.

Consider the following list of just a few potential audiences, and imagine that you're about to roll out a new antibullying EBP in your elementary schools:

- Implementation teams

- Champions

- School leaders and staff

- Students and families

- Partners

- Stakeholders

- Others?

Are your teachers ready to do what will be asked of them? Do they know what is expected of them and the time lines they'll need to follow? Have you answered any outstanding questions? What about principals and school counselors, or bus drivers and lunch room staff? Have you told parents that you're excited about the program's start and you look forward to sharing success with them?

Identify What Your Audience Needs to Hear
It is possible that some of your audiences who were initially enthusiastic about your EBP may no longer be so excited. Consider the teacher who was initially happy to get

on board but now can't imagine having the time (or energy) to actually teach your curriculum. This is one reason why establishing a healthy communication loop is so important.

This is a good time to remember how your EBP will benefit each of your audiences, as well as what some of the real and perceived barriers to implementing the EBPs are. For example, benefits may include:

- Calmer classrooms and fewer disciplinary referrals

- Better student outcomes

- Safer, healthier schools

Barriers may include:

- Time taken away from teaching

- Any out of pocket costs

- Resistance to change

- This is "just another program" that won't work

Encouraging staff to talk about their concerns can help you address potential problems before implementation. This can also help staff to feel engaged in shaping implementation practices.

Think about what your audiences need and *want* to know, as well as when they need to know it.

Communicate Often, in Many Ways

Now that you know **whom** you need to communicate with and **what** you need to communicate, it's time to think about **how** you will communicate it.

You can reach your audiences in a number of ways. You may have to communicate in more than one way, over time, to each audience. How you choose to share your messages should depend on where you'll find your audience most receptive to receiving your messages and information.

A **communication channel** is a path through which a message or information can be delivered. Channels can generally be categorized as people, places, and things— **people** like you or like members of your implementation team, champions, or peers; **places** like a teachers' lounge; and **things** like a website.

Examples of communication channels (people, places, and things):

- Implementation team

- Champions

- Peers

- Faculty lounge

- Email

- Website

- Text messages

Communication **activities** include meetings and presentations, as well as **events** like an annual Family Fun Day at school.

Examples of communication activities and events:

- School Board meetings

- PTA meetings

- Teacher in-service training days

- School assemblies

- School sporting events

- Back-to-school events

- Parent-teacher conferences

Materials include everything from PowerPoints to fact sheets, t-shirts, and newsletters.

Examples of materials:

- Flyers for students and parents

- PowerPoint presentations

- Newsletters

- Fact sheets

- Brochures

- Refrigerator magnets

- Full reports

- Videos

Prepare for Data Collection

The next important step in preparing to implement EBPs is to plan for how you will collect data. You will need to collect two kinds of data—*process data* and *outcome data* (which is also called impact data).

Process data can measure implementation and fidelity. Outcome data can measure EBP impacts.

Process data can measure the implementation of core components of the EBP, and findings can be used to improve implementation quality. For example, teacher checklist data could show that a certain program component such as peer-to-peer mentoring is not consistently being implemented, and interviews with teachers could indicate that this is because of scheduling and logistical challenges. Working with a school administrator to resolve these challenges might promote more consistent implementation of the peer-to-peer mentoring component.

Process data can also provide information about adaptations being made to the EBP, such as successes or challenges with using newly developed lessons where curriculum content, images, and examples have been altered to meet the needs of English language learners.

Outcome data can measure change and assess whether the EBPs being implemented are helping you to reach your desired outcomes, as outlined in your logic model. Is your EBP creating positive change in your school? Are you making short- and long-term progress toward reaching the outcomes you want to achieve?

Data Collection

As you begin to think about data collection, start by reviewing your logic model. Which outcomes are you going to measure, and which specific EBP activities should help you to achieve those outcomes? Also revisit the needs and risk and protective factors you want to assess.

Measure Change, Improve Implementation, and Ensure Fidelity

As you plan for data collection, consider the following:

- Who will collect the data, when, how often, and using what methods?

- Who will analyze the data? How will they be analyzed? For what subgroups—for example, English language learners by grade level?

- How will data be reported? Will they highlight current levels of competencies and skills, progress made during a certain time period, or longitudinal changes over several years? How often will the data be reported? With whom will you share results? Will different reports be produced for different audiences?

- What will you do with the results? In some instances, EBP data are used to improve the EBP's delivery. For example, if your data suggest that the program is most successfully implemented during advisory periods, you can make this the norm. Other times, EBP data are used to identify areas where additional staff training is needed—for example, when staff are struggling with programmatic aspects related to cultural competence.

Collecting Data

Many EBPs come with validated data collection measures for tracking implementation and measuring impact. Your first step is to look at the measures available on the EBP developer's website or contact the EBP developer to see if there are other measures that it is willing to share.

It's important to gather data using a variety of data sources, including quantitative data through surveys and qualitative data through interviews and focus groups to understand both what is being implemented and why certain components are or are not being successfully implemented.

To determine which data sources and measures you'll use for the EBPs you've selected, revisit the sources and measures you used when you were determining which EBPs were right for your school, as we discussed in Module 1. Chances are, you may be able to use many of these sources to collect data on outcomes related to your EBPs. (We will revisit data collection issues in Module 3 in this series.)

Depending on the data collection goals and objectives outlined in your logic model—along with your program funding—you may decide to engage an experienced evaluator to oversee the data collection process or to train staff in evaluation methods.

For more information on data collection methods appropriate for school settings, visit the Resources slide at the end of this module for a link to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Data Collection and Analysis resources.

Create an EBP Implementation Schedule

The next step in preparing to implement EBPs is to create an implementation schedule. Often, EBP developers establish guidelines or expectations for implementation, such as the delivery of an intervention lesson twice a week for 30 minutes.

Don't expect school staff to find time to squeeze in EBP implementation. Because staff have many competing demands on their time, it is important to identify dedicated time during the school day when staff will implement the EBP. You also need to make sure that administrators have made appropriate modifications to staff schedules to support implementation.

One strategy is to schedule specific days and times when staff will implement the EBPs, ensuring that time for implementation is included in the staff calendar as a reminder to implementers and school leaders.

Plan for Sustainability

Finally, while it may seem premature to think about sustaining EBPs before you've even begun implementing them, sustainability is a process that can take several years.

It's not too early to begin considering the following:

- How will you sustain each EBP after your current funding ends?

- Can you train staff to teach others how to implement EBPs?

- Are there other funding sources that can be tapped? (Don't forget to seek support from your local philanthropic community.)

- Can existing resources be reallocated to support EBPs? For example, are there funded programs implemented in your school that are not serving their intended function and could be phased out, so that the funding could be redistributed to support your successful EBPs?

- Who are the champions in the school and the broader community who will continue to support your EBPs if your current funding comes to an end?

Coming Up in Module 3

We hope you have enjoyed this module and we encourage you to continue to the next module in this series: Implementing EBPs in School Settings.

In the next module, we provide strategies and tools for implementing the EBPs you've selected for your school.

Resources

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