

Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for School Settings

Welcome

Welcome to this module, *Selecting Evidence-based Programs for School Settings*. This is the first in a three-module series about implementing evidence-based programs.

The next two modules in this series are *Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings* and *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 *Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for 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., Juliette-Marie deSousa, M.A., and Wehmah C. Jones, Ph.D. also contributed to this module.

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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: Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for School Settings

This module offers strategies and tools for identifying and selecting evidence-based programs (also known as EBPs). The module also discusses how to integrate into your selection process the needs of your population of focus, your school and community, the stakeholders who can serve as valuable partners, and the resources available to your school.

Overview of This Module

In this module, we discuss:

- What an EBP is, and the benefits of using EBPs in your programming
- Using data to help identify and understand the risk and protective factors present in your population of focus
- The importance of engaging stakeholders in selecting EBPs and keeping them informed about the EBP selection process
- Assessing your school's readiness to implement EBPs
- Identifying and assessing existing programs in your school and community that target the need you have identified
- Reviewing national registries that describe EBPs
- Exploring EBPs to learn as much as possible about each EBP you are considering implementing
- Determining whether a specific EBP is appropriate for your school and the students you serve

What is an EBP?

Let's begin with a definition. EBPs are prevention or intervention programs based in theory that have been shown, through rigorous evaluation, to be effective.

Randomized controlled trials (where participants are randomly assigned to one of two or more conditions) are typically viewed as the highest standard for evaluating an EBP.

Many government agencies require that organizations receiving federal or state funding implement EBPs. This emphasis on EBPs often comes from a desire to enhance the potential for positive results and to ensure responsible use of limited resources.

EBPs can be an efficient and effective way to address the needs you identify in your school.

The Benefits of Using EBPs

There are many advantages to implementing EBPs:

- Adopting a program with a proven record of success for the needs you have identified and with a similar population increases the likelihood that the program will result in positive outcomes in your setting.
- EBPs often come with clearly defined implementation, training, evaluation, and technical assistance materials, which decreases the amount of time staff have to spend developing materials and increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.
- It can be more efficient to implement a program that has been proven to work rather than developing a new program or implementing a program without knowing about its effectiveness.
- The evidence of effectiveness that EBPs bring can help in securing buy-in and support from some stakeholders. (Later on in this module, we discuss involving stakeholders in selecting EBPs.)
- Finally, selecting a program with a proven track record can help to provide justification for funding or additional resources. Funders are more likely to support a program with demonstrated effectiveness because it increases the likelihood of a positive return on investment.

A Careful Approach to Selecting EBPs

In this module, we suggest an approach for selecting EBPs that is based on careful analysis and collaboration. The time and resources it takes to identify needs and risk and protective factors, engage stakeholders, and select EBPs will save time and resources in the long run, and ensure that you are using an appropriate program that is most likely to produce positive outcomes.

If your school already has EBPs in place, be aware that some may not be implemented as intended and some may be designed to address other needs. This module provides strategies for determining if existing EBPs are well-matched to your school's needs and likely to produce the outcomes you seek.

Case Example: The Alton (Illinois) School District's Experience Selecting EBPs

Throughout this module, we will be hearing from Sandy Crawford, the former project Director of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative for the Alton School District in Alton, Illinois.

Crawford and her colleagues had a long-standing partnership with the local chief of police and Director of the Drug-free Coalition. Working together, they wanted to address the growing substance abuse issue in the schools. When Alton was awarded its Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant, it already had in place some substance abuse prevention curricula and activities that were not having the desired impact on students.

With SS/HS funding, the partners embarked on a process to select EBPs that would address substance abuse among the district's students, and enlist the help of their school resource officer. We will use Alton as a case example throughout this module.

Assess and Analyze Data

Looking to data is the first step in selecting EBPs. To choose the most relevant and effective EBPs for your school community, you need a good understanding of your students' needs and risk and protective factors. Along with exploring how to gather data on risk and protective factors, we will discuss how to access qualitative and quantitative data from local, state, and national sources. Then we will talk about what data you may already have access to, and how you can use data to select EBPs.

Risk Factors

Let's begin by exploring how understanding your students' risk and protective factors can help you to identify the needs that your EBPs should address.

Risk factors are characteristics of individuals, families, schools, and communities that are associated with negative outcomes. Things like violence in the home or community, for example, place students at higher risk of poor mental health outcomes. These are the factors you want to prevent to reduce the risk of negative outcomes.

Some risk factors associated with negative outcomes among youth include:

- Victimization
- Bullying
- Aggressive and antisocial behavior
- School and neighborhood violence and crime
- Teen pregnancy
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Low attachment to school
- Academic failure
- High-poverty neighborhoods
- Family conflict
- Child abuse and maltreatment

Protective Factors

Conversely, *protective factors* are associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or an increased likelihood of positive outcomes. Positive interpersonal

relationships, for instance, support mental health among youth. Increasing protective factors can help to improve outcomes for youth.

Identifying the protective and risk factors that are present in your school's students can help to guide your EBP selection process. EBPs that focus on preventing risky behaviors and build upon or strengthen protective factors among students can prevent negative outcomes and increase positive outcomes.

Some protective factors associated with reduced negative outcomes or increased positive outcomes among youth include:

- Strong academic skills
- Individual emotional resilience
- Positive, supportive relationships with peers, adults, and family
- Adequate social supports
- Access to mentors
- Supports for early learning
- Feeling safe in the neighborhood and at school
- Healthy social and economic environments

Quantitative and Qualitative Data

There are two kinds of local data that will help you gain a clear understanding of your students' needs and risk and protective factors, which will inform your EBP selection.

The first kind, *quantitative* data, provides information about risk and protective factors through the use of numbers, rates, and statistics. Quantitative data can be measured. The percentage of students in a school who report being bullied is an example of quantitative data.

The second kind, *qualitative* data, provides information on risk and protective factors through focus groups, interviews, and observations. Qualitative data can provide valuable descriptive information. For example, a student response during a focus group on why bullying is a problem in his or her school can help you to better understand this issue.

Using Quantitative Data on Risk and Protective Factors to Identify Needs

Quantitative data include psychosocial indicators, academic outcomes, and behavioral outcomes.

- Examples of psychosocial indicators include: scores on depression questionnaire, and the percent of youth who report being bullied in past month.

- Examples of academic outcomes include: grades, achievement test scores, and reading grade levels.
- Examples of behavioral outcomes include: attendance rates, suspension rates, and graduation rates.

Using *Qualitative* Data on Risk and Protective Factors to Identify Needs

Qualitative data also include psychosocial indicators, academic outcomes, and behavioral outcomes.

- An example of a psychosocial indicator would be student perspectives on bullying and what would help to prevent bullying in the school.
- An example of an academic outcome would be teacher perspectives on how their students do on achievement tests relative to student abilities.
- An example of a behavioral outcome would be classroom observations of students' disruptive behavior.

Is it Quantitative or Qualitative?

Think about whether each of the following items is likely to yield qualitative or quantitative data.

Example 1: Surveys and Questionnaires: Are they likely to yield quantitative or qualitative data?

Example 2: Review of Existing Documents and Records: Are they likely to yield quantitative or qualitative data?

Example 3: Focus Groups: Are they likely to yield quantitative or qualitative data?

Example 4: Interviews: Are they likely to yield quantitative or qualitative data?

For Example 1, Surveys and Questionnaires, if you chose **quantitative**, you're right! Surveys and questionnaires are **quantitative** because they provide numerical, measurable data about behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes in a population. Examples include student surveys. If you chose **qualitative**, sorry, you're incorrect. Surveys and questionnaires are **quantitative** because they provide numerical, measurable data about behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes in a population. Examples include student surveys.

For Example 2, Review of Existing Documents and Records, if you chose **quantitative**, you're right! Existing documents and records are **quantitative** because they can provide data on risk and protective factors among students. This may include things like school records on student attendance or test scores or healthcare provider records for students treated for mental health issues. If you chose **qualitative**, sorry, you're

incorrect. Surveys and questionnaires are **quantitative** because they provide numerical, measurable data about behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes in a population. Examples include student surveys.

For Example 3, Focus Groups, if you chose **quantitative**, sorry, you're incorrect. Focus groups are **qualitative** because they gather insights and interactions from small groups of individuals to understand their perspectives, attitudes, and experiences, as well as cultural norms about a specific issue. If you chose **quantitative**, you're right! Focus groups are **qualitative** because they gather insights and interactions from small groups of individuals to understand their perspectives, attitudes, and experiences, as well as cultural norms about a specific issue.

For Example 4, Interviews, if you chose **quantitative**, sorry, you're incorrect. Interviews are **qualitative** because they provide in-depth insight into individuals' histories, perspectives, attitudes, and experiences. If you chose **quantitative**, you're right! Interviews are **qualitative** because they provide in-depth insight into individuals' histories, perspectives, attitudes, and experiences.

Accessing Existing Data Sources

Before spending time and money collecting data, be sure to look into existing sources of national, state, and local data.

Explore existing sources of data from:

- Government agencies
- Local sources
- National organizations

Although accessing data from these sources can help to eliminate the need to collect new data, keep in mind that you will need to budget adequate time to understand each data source, access the data, run data analyses, and report on the data in a way that is meaningful to your stakeholders.

Accessing Existing Data Sources

Government agencies, local sources, and national organizations offer a wealth of data to aid you in your EBP selection process.

Government agencies that provide relevant data sources include: the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Education. Local sources of relevant data include schools, mental health agencies, law enforcement agencies, and public health departments. National organizations that

provide relevant data sources include the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care.

These sources can provide you with local, statewide, and national data on key indicators of social, economic, and physical risk and protective factors among young people. You may need an information-sharing agreement with certain agencies to access their data, but these data can be critical to understanding students' needs and selecting EBPs.

Some Relevant Data Sources

For a **handout** that provides a list of potential data sources for risk and protective factors, go to: http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/DataSources_Select_EBPs_508.docx

Approaching Data Gatekeepers

Even when you know where local and state data can be found, you may not know how to access it. As you're getting ready to approach the gatekeepers of local and state data, keep these points in mind:

- Explore whether some of the stakeholders working with you on EBP selection have access to relevant data or have relationships with data gatekeepers.
- You may find that some of your stakeholders can connect you to the right people to request access to data. They may also be able to describe what a given data source can tell you about your population of focus and explain confidentiality or privacy issues related to sharing the data.
- When you talk with data gatekeepers, explain to them how sharing data with you will benefit their organization, as well as the school and the community. For example, gatekeepers may want to share with their board of directors the reports that you generate using their data.

Engaging data gatekeepers and gaining access to their data sets can take several months. It may involve developing data-sharing agreements or meeting other protocols required by Institutional Review Boards, which oversee human protections in research and data collection. Accessing others' data typically requires a lot of work up front, but once a system is in place for accessing the data, it is likely you will be able to access the data much more quickly the next time around.

Compiling Existing and New Data on Risk and Protective Factors

It is best to use several types of data to learn more about the needs of your population of focus. The more types and sources of relevant data you review, the stronger the conclusions you can draw about the needs your EBPs should address.

Used together, quantitative and qualitative data provide a rich foundation for making critical decisions related to EBPs.

Compiling data from multiple sources is recommended because each data set has unique strengths and limitations. Be sure to gather data from multiple informants, including young people. A range of informants will provide diverse perspectives on needs.

Collecting Risk and Protective Data

Sometimes you may not have access to the data you need for your EBP selection process, or the data you have may be outdated or incomplete. In this case, if you have sufficient time and resources, you may need to collect new data.

Begin by discussing with your stakeholders the information you need to collect. For instance, do you need to know the percentage of students in the school who have experienced or witnessed bullying? Once you know the information you need to collect, decide how to gather the data. As noted earlier, surveys are a good way to collect quantitative data, while interviews and focus groups are good qualitative data collection methods.

Because every data set has limitations, it is best to draw from multiple data sources. For example, a survey can clarify the percentage of students being bullied, while student interviews can provide in-depth student perspectives on what can be done to prevent bullying.

For a series of briefs from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on data collection methods that are relevant for school-based programs, go to the following webpage: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/data.htm>

Now, let's turn our attention to how to make sense of the data you've compiled.

Making Sense of Quantitative Data to Identify Needs

To better understand your quantitative data, you can compare your numbers, scores, or rates with benchmark data. Benchmark data are external data that generally have been normed with a state or nationally representative sample. This means that the data set can provide a sense of how your data compare to state or national rates. Large differences between your data and benchmark data help you understand critical risk and protective factors and needs in your population of focus. As an example, to understand whether out-of-school suspension is a problem in a particular school in your district, you can compare suspension rates in that school with benchmark data on suspension from all schools in the district, or all schools in the state.

In addition to comparing your data with benchmarks, it is important to review data across subpopulations such as age, gender, ethnicity, or disability or poverty status.

This is called *disaggregating data*. It enables you to see if specific subgroups are at greater risk for negative outcomes than the population as a whole.

It can be helpful to share the results of your quantitative data in multiple formats (such as PowerPoint Slides and brief reports) and in a range of venues like meetings of school staff, the Parent Teacher Organization, or the School Improvement Team. You can also discuss your results in focus groups with stakeholders to help provide a context for the results.

Making Sense of Qualitative Data to Identify Needs

To interpret qualitative data, first look for trends or patterns of similarities. For example, in focus groups and interviews, on which points do most people agree? Are there similar findings for behavioral observations across individuals or groups of individuals?

Then consider where there are outliers or points where perspectives diverge. For example, members of one focus group have a different point of view than members of the other focus groups. Or perhaps data from behavioral observations suggest that classrooms at one grade level behave differently than most other classrooms. In these instances, think about whether there are things that explain the divergence that should be taken into account.

When Data Sets Differ

You may find that some of your data sets give you what seems like markedly different results. This is normal, because different methods provide different types of information, and each informant has his or her own perspective. When data sets differ, consider the following:

First, think about your data:

- Are you using data sets from multiple informants?
- Are you using data from the same informant but different data collection methods (for example surveys versus focus groups)?
- Should you similarly weight all evidence, or do certain data suggest more consistent findings than others?
- What about your sample size? Data from small samples are more strongly influenced by the responses of one individual than are data from large samples.
- Are there any variables that might have affected data collection, such as unclear survey items or the time of day the data were collected?

Second, monitor the trend over time. Data collected from the same group at multiple points in time will indicate if the patterns stand the test of time.

Third, if possible, consider collecting additional data. Collect new data using different methods or from different informants to see if the new data support existing data.

Engaging Stakeholders

It's critical to engage stakeholders in the EBP selection process. A stakeholder is anyone who is impacted by your program and anyone who can affect the success of your program. Each group of stakeholders has a unique and valuable perspective that should be recognized. You should ensure that your stakeholders are representative of your school community.

Students: Students can provide both quantitative and qualitative data on needs and risk and protective factors, help to test out EBP components, and garner support for **EBPs among peers.**

School and district administrators: Understanding administrators' perspectives and engaging them in selecting EBPs can help to enhance their support as you prepare to implement EBPs.

Community-based organizations and service providers: These partners provide valuable perspectives on youth risk and protective factors and needs and can help you identify and understand existing relevant programs.

Families: Families can provide data on strengths and needs, garner support for EBPs among their children and fellow parents, and reinforce the skills taught in EBPs.

School staff: Staff can provide data on strengths and needs at their school, identify how a new EBP could fit into the school schedule, and make recommendations regarding adaptations.

Community leaders (including leaders of faith-based organizations): Understanding the values of community leaders (including leaders of faith-based organizations) can help identify students' strengths and needs, guide the selection of EBPs, and help to garner support for EBPs.

Policymakers: Involving policymakers in discussions about EBP selection and implementation and sharing EBP process and outcome data with them can help shape policies that support EBPs in schools.

Who Are Your Stakeholders?

Take a moment to think about who your stakeholders are. Have you identified someone from each of the following stakeholder groups to participate in your EBP selection process?

- Students
- School and district administrators

- Community-based organizations and service providers
- Families
- School staff
- Community leaders
- Policymakers
- Other

When thinking about your stakeholders, consider: Who are some of the people who have a vested interest in addressing needs among your population of focus?

Who Are Your Stakeholders?

If you have a stakeholder from each group, great work! It is important to have diverse stakeholders engaged in the process of selecting EBPs. Continue to engage with your stakeholders during EBP preparation and implementation. You can also continue to add new stakeholders as you move ahead.

If you are missing a stakeholder from one or more groups, think of ways you can engage someone from each group.

Additional questions to consider include:

- Do you already have buy-in from some of your stakeholders? Why or why not?
- Is there someone you need to collaborate with who is not at the table?
- How can you connect with additional stakeholder groups?

Benefits to Engaging Stakeholders in Selecting EBPs

Once you have identified stakeholders, the next critical step is engaging them. There are many benefits of engaging your stakeholders in the EBP selection process:

- Stakeholders can provide critical feedback and support for your program.
- Stakeholders also bring valuable perspectives on the needs of youth and the community and strategies for addressing those needs.
- Involving stakeholders in the EBP selection process demonstrates that you value them. When stakeholders are valued, it is easier to garner their support and commitment. They are then more likely to have a sense of ownership of the process and to champion your program.

Engaging Stakeholders

There are many methods for engaging stakeholders and obtaining their input during the EBP selection process. You can conduct a survey or an online poll, facilitate focus

groups, or engage in joint planning efforts with stakeholders. As you engage with stakeholders, consider asking for their input by:

- Sharing their understanding of the needs of your school's students, the school, and the community and soliciting suggestions about how to address these needs.
- Reviewing the EBPs that you are considering to see if they think they are a good match for the needs of your school and community.
- Asking stakeholders to participate in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the EBPs being considered.
- Asking them to provide their thoughts about how the EBPs under consideration might impact learning, the school environment, families, and the larger community.

Keep Stakeholders Informed

It's important to keep stakeholders informed and invested as you select EBPs. Communicate regularly (e.g., biweekly) with stakeholders and solicit their input

You will want to find ways to acknowledge and appreciate stakeholders for their contributions throughout the process.

Keeping stakeholders engaged helps to ensure their ongoing support for the next critical stages, which are preparing to implement EBPs and implementing EBPs.

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

Here, Sandy Crawford from the Alton School district describes how they engaged stakeholders in their EBP selection process once they received their Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant.

"When we received the grant, and we pulled together our Core Management Team, we were doing a great deal of planning in that initial year and developing the, kind of the, timeline. It was really, it was kind of a fortunate series of events. Our local police chief was of course a member of the Core Management Team as was the director of the drug-free coalition and our community had received a Drug-Free Communities Grant, so we already had a partnership with the coalition. And our police chief at that time, we were really fortunate that he had I think a good vision for what a school resource officer could be and should be.

"At the same time, our Alton Police Department had implemented the D.A.R.E program for a number of years in the elementary schools in fifth grade, and the police chief at that time had learned that the outcomes for the D.A.R.E program were not as good as

they had hoped. And so he was already thinking in terms of what could they do to replace D.A.R.E. Something that would be evidence-based.

“And so we discussed that in the Core Management Team and he had learned of a program called Project ALERT, and it was on the evidence-based list. So we did kind of do some investigation around that curriculum. And at the same time, our drug-free coalition had some staff members who had been trained in Life Skills. So we looked at the possibility of changing the curriculum that was initially planned to something at our middle school. And that was the grade level that we were targeting; in particular with middle school to do some early intervention.

“So our police chief wanted the school resource officer, who was placed in the middle school – we have a very large middle school. It has, at that time I think it had right at 1500 students. It was one of the largest middle schools south of Chicago. And he wanted his school resource officer, who’s a very, very strong advocate of community policing. He did not want a resource officer who was just a guard, but someone who actually developed relationships with the students.”

Why Assess Readiness?

Once you have analyzed your data and engaged stakeholders, it is time to assess readiness to implement EBPs.

Readiness, or the state of being prepared to do something, is an important precursor for the successful implementation of an EBP. A school or organization’s readiness level can reveal whether it will be able to successfully implement EBPs.

In settings with high readiness, staff feel motivated to work as a team to implement new initiatives, and the organization supports their efforts through recognition and resources.

In settings with low readiness, staff are not as likely to rally around new EBPs. In addition, implementation might be mandated by leaders who do not seek input from staff or provide adequate support.

Prior to introducing new EBPs, it is important to assess readiness so that you can take steps to identify and reduce barriers that can hinder EBP implementation.

Domains of Readiness

There are three domains of readiness to assess:

Motivational readiness, at both the individual and organizational levels. Motivation is specific to the EBP being implemented. It includes beliefs about and support for the EBP, such as collective expectations, anticipated outcomes of the EBP, pressures for change, and emotional responses.

General organizational capacity refers to the functioning of a school or organization, which includes such issues as staffing and leadership. General organizational capacity readiness includes context, culture, current infrastructure, and organizational processes of the school or organization where the EBP will be implemented.

Intervention-specific capacity refers to the human, technical, and fiscal capabilities that are needed to successfully implement a specific EBP. Keep in mind that you probably will not be able to measure intervention-specific capacity until you have determined the EBPs that your school will implement.

Knowledge Check: Readiness

Let's check in and see what you know about readiness. For each of the following statements select the correct domain of readiness.

1. A school whose leaders enable staff to attend training to learn how to implement a new EBP represents a high level of:
 - A. Motivational readiness
 - B. General organizational capacity.
 - C. Intervention-specific capacity
2. A school whose staff believe implementing a new EBP will be too much work represents a low level of:
 - A. Motivational readiness
 - B. General organizational capacity
 - C. Intervention-specific capacity
3. A school whose culture and climate welcome change represents a high level of:
 - A. Motivational readiness
 - B. General organizational capacity
 - C. Intervention-specific capacity

For Statement #1, if you chose C, you're right! School leaders can support staff to effectively implement a new EBP to increase their intervention-specific capacity.

For Statement #2, if you chose A, you're right! If staff don't believe in and support an EBP, motivational readiness should be improved before the EBP is implemented.

For Statement #3, if you chose B, you're right! A school's openness to new programs is an example of strong general capacity to support new EBPs.

Measures for Assessing Readiness

Here are two instruments that can help you assess readiness to implement EBPs:

- The *Show Me Am I Ready Scale* emphasizes 10 items related to readiness to implement an intervention and action steps to enhance readiness. This scale is typically completed by a team. After completing the scale, teams enter their scores into the scale's website and receive feedback. The *Show Me Am I Ready Scale* can be found at this website:
<http://health.mo.gov/data/interventionmica/ReadinessPreparation.html>
- The *Organizational Readiness for Change* (or *ORC Scale*) is a more thorough assessment. There is one version of the scale designed for intervention staff and another for supervisors. Both versions, which take about 25 minutes to complete, assess motivational factors, staff attributes, program resources, and organizational climate. The *ORC Scale* can be found at this website:
<http://ibr.tcu.edu/forms/organizational-staff-assessments/>

Using the Findings from Readiness Assessment

After completing a readiness assessment, look closely at the domains that indicate low readiness. Share the findings with relevant stakeholders to see if they align with their perceptions of the school's readiness to implement new EBPs. Be sure to discuss with school leaders what is required from an organizational perspective to make EBP implementation a success. And find out more about prior efforts to implement new EBPs in the school in terms of what worked and did not work well.

Enhancing Readiness

If you find low readiness in one or more domains, consider the following strategies for increasing readiness:

- Identify school and community agency staff to serve as champions to promote the EBPs. Champions are individuals who are highly regarded by their peers and who will encourage and motivate others to implement the EBPs.
- Provide an in-depth explanation of the EBPs to staff, students, and families. Provide progress reports about the EBPs as it is implemented and give everyone opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback.
- Have proposed implementers try out the EBPs. After the trial period, bring implementers together to discuss their successes and challenges. Provide them with reinforcement and recognition for their efforts.
- Provide staff with supports for steps toward implementing the EBPs. Examples include praise, recognition, and incentives for participating in implementation discussions.

- Engage school administrators in implementation, and suggest strategies for acknowledging staff who work hard to implement the EBPs (for example, publically recognizing specific staff or providing small incentives, such as a prime parking spot, to reward implementation).

Assess Existing Programs

As the next step in EBP selection, you need to identify and assess the programs that are already being implemented in your school and community to address the issues that emerged in your data analysis process. For each existing program you identify, determine if it targets students at the universal, selective, or indicated tier of services. Universal programs are meant to reach all students within a school or district, selective programs are provided for at-risk students, and indicated programs are provided for those students who have already demonstrated concerns or problems.

Resource Mapping Tool

For a tool that will help you assess existing programs at each of the tiers, go to: http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/ResourceMappingTool_508.docx

This tool will help you determine how the EBPs you select can complement existing services and avoid duplicating programs.

As you complete this tool, consider if there are one or more programs that could be removed to free up time and resources for the new EBPs. Staff in many schools are overwhelmed by the new programs they are asked to implement each year. Try to anticipate how the new EBPs will align with, replace aspects of, or conflict with existing programs.

Review EBP Registries

It is now time to search for EBPs that address the needs and risk and protective factors you identified in your data analysis. These should be programs that either complement or can replace the existing programs you identified with the Resource Mapping Tool.

With hundreds of EBPs available, it may seem daunting to locate those that are right for your school community. Fortunately, there are online registries that provide detailed information about the evidence base, features, training requirements, and costs of a wide range of EBPs.

- The first registry to review is SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, or NREPP, which focuses on mental health and substance abuse interventions. You can find NREPP at the following website: <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov>

- Blueprints for Healthy Development from the University of Colorado-Boulder’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence includes interventions in the fields of behavior, education, emotional wellness, positive social relationships, and health. You can find Blueprints for Healthy Development at the following website: <http://www.blueprintsprograms.com>
- The Model Programs Guide from the U.S. Department of Justice features programs designed to reduce substance abuse, violence, and other risk behaviors. You can find the Model Programs Guide at the following website: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg>
- The What Works Clearinghouse from the U.S. Department of Education focuses on academic, [emotional, and behavioral interventions. You can find the What Works Clearinghouse at the following website: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

As you explore all four of these registries, use search criteria related to your population of focus, the needs and risk and protective factors you’ve identified through data analysis, and the setting or settings in which the EBPs will be delivered.

Gathering Information about EBPs

Learn as much as possible about each EBP you’re considering to see if it’s appropriate for the students in your school community.

The following sources may provide useful information about the EBPs you’re considering:

- **EPB registries** provide information about the EBP’s evidence base, features, training requirements, and cost.
- **Research literature/published studies** describe how the program has been tested and the outcomes it has demonstrated.
- **EBP developers** can describe available implementation supports, how to monitor fidelity of implementation, the feasibility of adaptations, and solutions to implementation challenges.
- **Other schools and communities implementing the EBP** can describe their experience with implementation and, if relevant, adaptations to the EBP you will need to make for your population of focus.

A Case Example: The Alton’s School District’s Experience Exploring EBPs

Let’s listen to Sandy Crawford discuss Alton’s work exploring potential EBPs for the district.

“We looked at the registry of evidence-based programs and both of those were on the SAMHSA registry. We looked at Project ALERT. It was evidence-based and it

also allowed for a lot of input and feedback from students, so that it lent itself well to discussions. And our school resource officer was trained, along with our health teachers, in Project ALERT and implemented that in sixth grade.

“We did talk with other school districts that had used those programs, and, in fact, Kelly Wells, my technical assistance specialist, had, in a district she was previously in, had used Project ALERT so we were able to get some good information about how that could be implemented, and in particular, how it could be implemented using a school resource officer as a support with it.”

Exploring EBPs Tool

For a handout that provides a step-by-step review of questions to ask and information to gather for each of the EBPs your school is considering implementing, go to:

http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/Exploring_EBPs_Tool_508.docx

Topics Addressed in the Exploring EBPs Tool

In the Exploring EBPs Tool you will review the following factors about the EBPs you're considering:

- The evidence base for the EBP: Has the program been tested multiple times using a rigorous study design? Is there clear documentation that implementation results in valued outcomes for your population of focus? Your setting?
- Will you need to make adaptations to the EBP? First and foremost, consider whether adaptations to improve cultural relevance will be needed. What about adaptations for your setting and EBP implementers?
- In terms of EBP features and implementation supports, you will want to know how many staff are needed to implement the EBP, the supports the developer provides such as email and phone consultation, and the availability of evaluation tools.
- Do the EBP's features align with your school's existing programs and organizational supports, including the setting, time of day, and frequency with which you can deliver the program? Is the EBP consistent with—and not duplicative of—existing programs in your school?
- Training considerations include how staff will be trained in the EBP and how much initial training and booster sessions cost.
- Additional costs to consider include the cost of implementation consultation, materials, and equipment.
- Finally, if you're using short-term grant funding to implement the EBP, it is important to consider how your school or district will sustain the EBP after the grant period.

Narrowing Down the List of EBPs

Once you have answered the questions on the Exploring EBPs Tool, it is time to meet with your stakeholders to share what you have learned and narrow down the list of EBPs to two or three finalists. Use your completed Exploring EBPs Tool to frame the discussion about the strengths and limitations of each EBP and help you identify the most appropriate EBPs for your school, your population of focus, and your resources.

Determine Fit

Once you've narrowed down EBPs to the leading two or three programs, continue the conversation with your stakeholders to determine the best contextual fit between an EBP and the school community. Contextual fit is the match between the strategies, procedures, and elements of an EBP and the needs, assets, and resources of your school community.

Consider the following issues to determine the best contextual fit:

- Has the EBP demonstrated effectiveness for a population of focus and setting that are similar to yours?
- Does the EBP match the mission and vision of your school community?
- Do the EBP's materials provide sufficient clarity so that implementers will know what is to be done, by whom, when, how, and why?
- Is it administratively feasible to implement the EBP in your school, given existing policies and procedures?
- Is the EBP financially feasible, given costs (time, personnel, money, and materials) associated with adopting, implementing, and maintaining it over time? Is there a willingness to allocate the resources necessary for initial adoption and sustained implementation?
- Is it technically feasible, given staff capabilities and time commitments?
- Can your school afford to implement the EBP now and in the future?
- Does the EBP match the values of the population of focus, those who will implement and manage the program, and school and district leaders?

A Case Example: The Alton's School District's Experience Reviewing and Assessing EBPs

Sandy will now describe how her team reviewed and assessed EBPs to find the right fit for the Alton School District.

"We also had to do a lot of coordinating with our health teachers. There are some limitations on the number of lessons that they could teach; that's where we really

realized how critical the number of lessons became and how it fit into the mandated items that they needed to teach. We found that Project Alert and Life Skills lent themselves well to fitting into the required number of lessons that they had and still left them some opportunity to teach other requirements under health. So I think that in selecting a substance abuse curriculum there needs to be input from certainly those who are going to be teaching it and if there's a way to, like I say, we really benefitted by having that school resource officer in there.

“You know, I certainly suggest that as exploration of programs is being done that those implementers, and particularly if it's going to be taught in health on in a particular subject area, that the actual teachers or someone over that department needs to be in those conversations.”

Coming Up in Module 2

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

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

Resources

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