

Carefully selecting a program that fits the target population and that is feasible based on one's organizational and community capacity is a critical step in making a difference.

DETERMINING NEED

Program selection should be data-driven and aligned with the needs of the targeted local community. Reviewing local community indicators, identifying risk factors, and assessing rates of problem behaviors are important parts of the process. Once a need has been recognized (e.g., elevated rates of substance use), select a program that has demonstrated effects on the desired outcomes.

When determining need, consider these questions:

- What baseline data does one have to demonstrate to determine that the problem exists?
- Can the impact on the problem be measured using tools that the program developer or others have created?
- Has the program research demonstrated an impact on the risk factors (underlying causes) that are elevated in the target community?
- Has the program research demonstrated an impact on the protective factors that are lacking in the target community?

Below are a few resources that may be helpful in assessing the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of the target community:

- The Hexagon Tool- Exploring Context - <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/hexagon-tool-exploring-context>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) - <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>
- FedStats - <https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/resources-standards/>
- U.S. Census Bureau - <http://www.census.gov/>

ASSESSING READINESS

When selecting a program, consider the program's **fit**, which consists of how well the program aligns with the community's, target audience's, organization's, and stakeholder's requirements. Assess whether it is **feasible** to implement the program. Selecting a program that meets the criteria of the above factors will increase the chances of reaching high quality program delivery, which will improve the likelihood of achieving positive program outcomes.

The following should be considered when assessing program fit:

- Has the research on the program demonstrated effects for the target population (e.g., age, school grade, gender, race, rural vs. urban, and level of risk)?
- Is the program appropriate for the developmental stage of the intended population (e.g., the curriculum is age appropriate)?
- Has the program been researched in and recommended for the target setting (e.g., school, community, or after-school)?
- Does the program address the risk and protective factors identified as priorities for the community?
- Has the research on the program demonstrated significant impacts on the short- and long-term target outcomes?
- Does the program fit with the culture and values of the organization, community, stakeholders, and target population?

The following should be considered when assessing whether program implementation is feasible:

- Is the appropriate population accessible?
- Can the program be implemented as designed and with sufficient quality?
- Will key gatekeepers promote the program (e.g., the support of school administrators and teachers is necessary when implementing a classroom-based program)?
- How will the program be monitored and evaluated for fidelity?
- How will participants be referred and recruited?
- Can financial support be generated and can the program be sustained?
- Can ample staff be trained as recommended by the developer?

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

Planning for and managing challenges that may occur during program implementation is an important preparation step. Technical Assistance (TA) providers can provide support to practitioners during this process by offering feedback and support before, during, and after program implementation. Some examples of how TA providers assist practitioners include:

- Offer informative materials;
- Develop summative documents;
- Host overview workshops; and
- Create tools that support quality program implementation.



If Military Families are a primary focus audience, we have Technical Assistance providers who are prepared to assist you through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation process. Please contact us for more information!

Planning & Implementation Resources

- The Community Tool Box - <http://ctb.ku.edu/>
- NREPP Implementation Strategies - <https://nrepp-learning.samhsa.gov/implement-program>

Coalition Building & Social Outreach

- CADCA - <http://www.cadca.org/>

Creating A Logic Model

- CYFERnet - <https://cyfar.org/home>

REFERENCES

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- Rabin, B. A. (2008). A glossary for dissemination and implementation research in health. *Public Health Management & Practice*, 14 (2): 117-123.

The Clearinghouse has Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists who are available to help by offering support and guidance through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation process. These TA Specialists are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT Monday through Friday. Use the information below to contact the Clearinghouse!

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