

# Walking the Fidelity – Adaptation Tightrope

Strategies for Implementing Evidence-based Programs to  
Meet Community Needs

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Workshop for the Coalition Leadership Institute

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# A common story in prevention...

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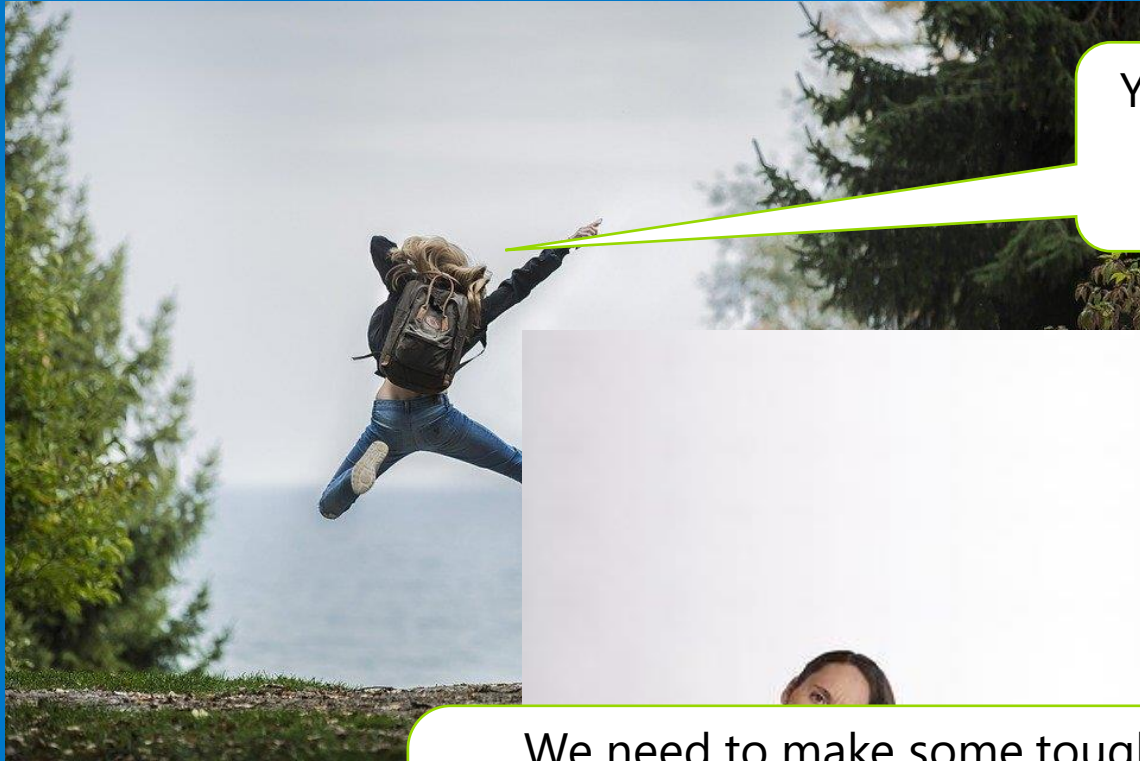


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But wait ... the EBP may need some tweaking to make it work in our community.

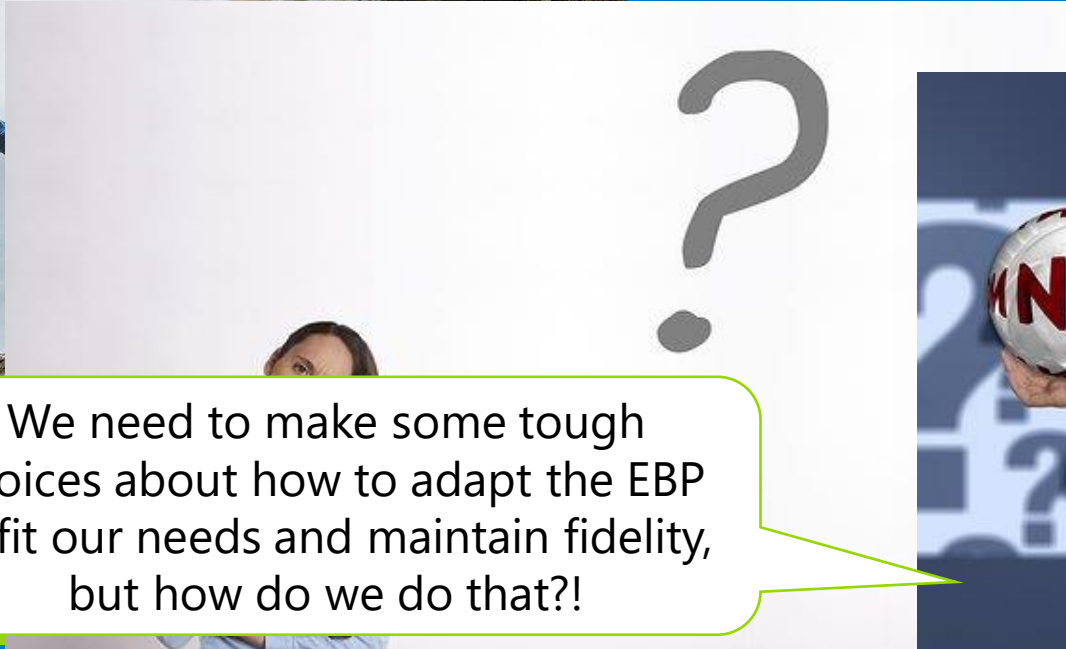


# A common story in prevention...



Yes! We did it! We got the grant to implement an evidence-based program (EBP).

But wait ... the EBP may need some tweaking to make it work in our community.



We need to make some tough choices about how to adapt the EBP to fit our needs and maintain fidelity, but how do we do that?!



# Today's goal...

I have the tools I need to determine when and how to make thoughtful adaptations while still maintaining fidelity. I am confident I can implement my program with fidelity AND meet my community's needs!



# Today's Objectives

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- ▶ By the end of the workshop, you will:
  - ▶ Increase your understanding of relevant terms and research to apply them in practice.
  - ▶ Learn five best practices for how to balance evidence-based prevention program fidelity and adaptation to achieve positive and sustained outcomes.
  - ▶ Determine how the tools and strategies presented can be used to enhance implementation of evidence-based prevention programs in your local communities.

# Today's Agenda

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- ▶ Part 1: Define core terms and review the research.
- ▶ Part 2: Introduce research-based tools & strategies.
- ▶ Part 3: Provide an example and discuss how to apply these research-based tools & strategies to successfully walk the fidelity-adaptation tightrope.

# Part 1

Define terms & review the research.



# Defining Terms

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- ▶ **Fidelity** is the extent to which the evidence-based program (EBP) was delivered as planned, representing the quality & integrity of the EBP as conceived by the developers.
- ▶ **Adaptation** involves making changes to an EBP to better fit the needs of the population being served without negatively affecting, removing, or changing key or core implementation elements

# Defining Terms

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- ▶ **Cultural adaptation** is the process of adapting interventions to specific cultural groups.
- ▶ **Core program elements** are the essential program components that are believed to make an EBP effective and that should be kept intact to maintain intervention effectiveness

# Think, Pair, Share

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- ▶ 1) Why is it important to implement an EBP with fidelity?
- ▶ 2) Why might you want to adapt an EBP for your local community?

# The Fidelity Argument

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- ▶ Best not to tinker with a proven-effective program.
- ▶ If making changes, cannot be assured to achieve same positive outcomes.
- ▶ Should take advantage of the researchers' expertise about the EBP.

# The Adaptation Argument

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- ▶ In the real-world, adaptations happen!
- ▶ Programs should be adapted to meet the unique conditions and needs of the local community.
- ▶ Practitioners' expertise about local community should inform local implementation of an EBP.

# The Recipe Analogy



FIDELITY

ADAPTATION

# The Recipe Analogy

Think about a program you've implemented recently, what **ingredients** were required and what **variations** did you use?

FIDELITY

## Basic Plain MECSH 'Cake'

**Ingredients** are core components/elements of the program; sites must ensure, in advance, that they have sustainable access to the needed ingredients for the intervention in their local context.

Effective implementation requires prescribed **methods** or actions needed to make the program happen (e.g., home visiting, group activities).

### EQUIPMENT

Each recipe has **equipment** – or the organizational and system capacity necessary for its execution.

The equipment available will vary across contexts, but the mechanisms must be able to achieve the same required result to maintain fidelity.

## Variations

Recipe **variations** maintain or enhance the core program goals and theory.

They give thought to both philosophical (is the variation consistent with the underlying program theory?) and logistical (can the variation be accomplished given organizational and system capacity of the local site?) issues.

ADAPTATION

# Three Important Points

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- ▶ Adaptations can occur within the context of low or high fidelity.
- ▶ Not all adaptations deviate from the programs' original design and theory.
- ▶ Making thoughtful adaptations while maintaining fidelity is possible, but how...



# Part 2

Introduce research-based tools & strategies.

# Guide for Balancing Fidelity & Adaptation

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- ▶ Cooper, B.R., Parker, L. A., & Diaz Martinez, A. (2019). Balancing fidelity & adaptation: A best practices guide for evidence-based program implementation. WSU Publications, retrieved at: <https://hdl.handle.net/2376/16873>





# 1: Select the EBP that best meets your needs

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- ▶ Are targeted outcomes relevant & acceptable?
- ▶ Strong evidence with targeted population?
- ▶ Will content & methods be accessible & appealing to targeted population?
- ▶ Pick a program that will need the least amount of adaptation and one whose developer/trainer is willing to work with you

The **NIRN's Hexagon Tool** can be used by communities to better understand how a new or existing program fits into an implementing site's existing context.  
<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/hexagon-exploration-tool>

## 2: Determine core program elements

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- ▶ Ideally, you can get this info from the program developer/trainer
- ▶ Gather program materials
- ▶ Program goals, summary of underlying theory, facilitator guide
- ▶ Develop program logic model

The **CDC's SELECT, ADAPT, EVALUATE!** offers tools for how to identify the essential elements of your program.

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/adaptation-guidance/>

The **University of Kansas's Community Toolbox** offers excellent resources for developing a program logic model. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

# 3: Assess the need for adaptation

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- ▶ Identify & categorize mismatches
  - ▶ Program goals/objectives
  - ▶ Characteristics of target population
  - ▶ Characteristics of implementing agency
  - ▶ Characteristics of community
- ▶ In consultation with developer & using best-practice guidelines, decide if adaptation is necessary

The **CDC's SELECT, ADAPT, EVALUATE!** offers tools for how to select and adapt an EBP to fit your community. <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/adaptation-guidance/>

# 4: Adapt the program using best practices

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- ▶ If needed, make adaptations in consultation with program developer/trainer
- ▶ Acceptable ('green light') vs. risky ('red light') adaptations
- ▶ Stay true to duration, intensity, and core elements of the program

The **CDC's SELECT, ADAPT, EVALUATE!** offers guidance on "green light" and "red light" adaptations. <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/adaptation-guidance/>

The **MADI Decision-Making Guide** offers questions to consider when making adaptation decisions. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-020-01021-y>

### GREEN LIGHT CHANGES

- » Usually minor
- » Made to increase the reach, receptivity, and participation of the community
- » May include:
  - Program names
  - Updated and relevant statistics or health information
  - Tailored language, pictures, cultural indicators, scenarios, and other content

### YELLOW LIGHT CHANGES

- » Typically add or modify intervention components and contents, rather than deleting them
- » May include:
  - Substituting activities
  - Adding activities
  - Changing session sequence
  - Shifting or expanding the primary audience
  - Changing the delivery format
  - Changing who delivers the program

### RED LIGHT CHANGES

- » Changes to core components of the intervention
- » May include:
  - Changing a health behavior model or theory
  - Changing a health topic or behavior
  - Deleting core components
  - Cutting the program timeline
  - Cutting the program dosage

Proceed with minor adaptations to improve fit for your community, setting, target population.

Proceed with caution if adaptations do not interfere with program theory/core components.

Stop.  
Avoid these adaptations if possible.



# 5: Document, monitor, & improve

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- ▶ Document and discuss progress regularly
  - ▶ Fidelity
  - ▶ Adaptations
  - ▶ Participant engagement
  - ▶ Participant outcomes
- ▶ Use implementation monitoring tools
- ▶ Stay up to date on program revisions

The **CDC's SELECT, ADAPT, EVALUATE!** offers tools for tracking and evaluating adaptations. <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/adaptation-guidance/>

# Part 3

Provide an example and discuss how to apply these research-based tools & strategies to successfully walk the fidelity-adaptation tightrope.

# Context for Example

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- ▶ Washington State legalized use of cannabis by adults (21 and older) in 2012.
- ▶ Washington State communities have a long history of implementing Strengthening Families Program for caregivers of youth 10-14 year old (SFP 10-14) to reduce youth substance use.
- ▶ SFP 10-14 was not developed or evaluated within the context of legalized cannabis use.



# 1: Select the EBP that best meets your needs

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## SFP 10-14 Pros:

- Strong evidence of reducing alcohol, cigarette, and cannabis use in mostly White rural youth
- Washington State has long history of successfully implementing with variety of communities

## SFP 10-14 Cons:

- Program has not been tested in context of legalized adult use of cannabis
- Caregivers have expressed concerns about communicating to youth about cannabis

## 2: Determine core program elements

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- ▶ Gather program materials
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- ▶ Develop program logic model

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The **CDC's SELECT, ADAPT, EVALUATE!** provides a worksheet for 'estimating essential elements' of violence prevention programs. <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/sites/vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/files/estimating-essential-elements-of-program-508.pdf>

## ELEMENTS

### What

- Knowledge, skills, and messages delivered through program activities

### How

- How it should be delivered
- Instructional methods, setting, timing

### Who

- Characteristics of who should ideally deliver the program

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What messages will be communicated?
2. What knowledge will be increased?
3. What skills will be developed?

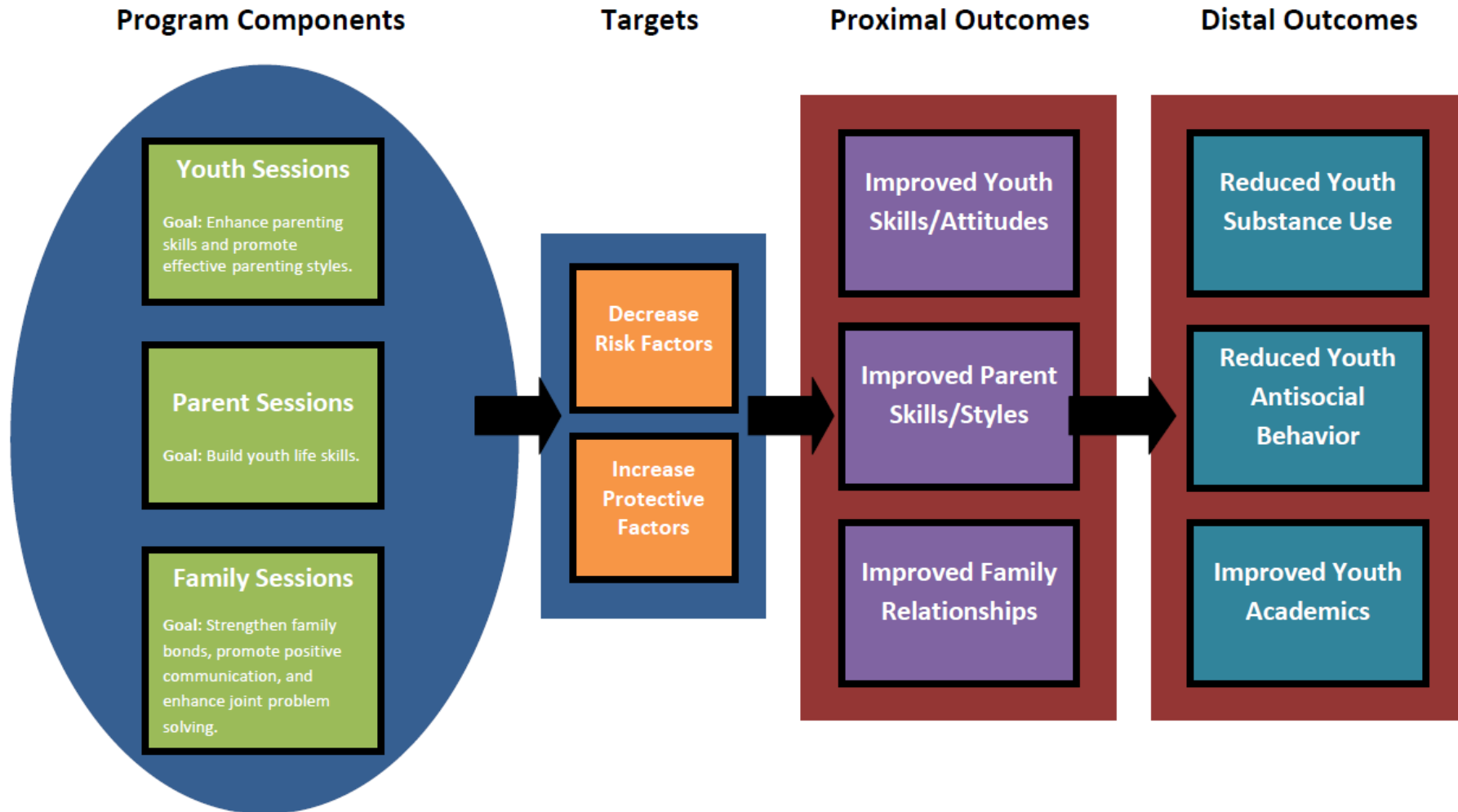
1. What are the recommended teaching methods?
2. How many sessions should be delivered, for how long, and over what period of time?
3. What setting will best support learning?

1. What skills and experiences will help facilitators deliver essential content?
2. What other characteristics (e.g., credibility) will help a facilitator successfully deliver program?

# Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (ISFP or SFP 10-14)

Program developed for Project Family of the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University by Virginia Molgaard, Ph.D. & Richard Spoth, Ph.D.

*Logic Model created by the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) at Penn State University*



\$\$ It has been shown that for every dollar spent on implementation of SFP 10-14, there is a return of up to \$9.60 and a cost benefit of \$5, 805 per youth. \$\$

*Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute & Washington State Institute for Public Policy*



### Program Components & Goals

SFP 10-14 is delivered over 7 weeks. Each week, the youth and parents meet separately and then, together. Targeted goals drive the parent, youth, and family sessions.

### Program Modalities

Specific strategies, methods, and techniques are used to accomplish the program goals.

### Targeted Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors increase the likelihood of drug use, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and violent behavior. Protective factors exert a positive influence and act as a buffer against these negative outcomes.

### Proximal Outcomes

Targeted outcomes that the program is designed to impact immediately following program completion.

### Distal Outcomes

Outcomes impacted by the program months/years following program completion that have been demonstrated through research.

#### Component: Parent Sessions

Goal: Enhance parenting skills and promote effective parenting styles.

Projects & Games

Role Play & Skill Practice

Group Discussions

Video Portrayal & Modeling

#### Component: Youth Sessions

Goal: Build youth life skills.

Group Discussions

Self-reflection

Video Portrayal & Modeling

#### Component: Family Sessions

Goal: Strengthen family bonds, promote positive communication, and enhance joint problem solving.

Family Meal

Family Games & Projects

Video Portrayal & Modeling

Role Play & Skill Practice

#### Risk Factors:

- Negative youth and family management practices: harsh, inappropriate, or inconsistent discipline, indulgence, poor monitoring, demanding/rejecting behavior, and poor communication of rules
- Youth aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors and substance use
- Negative peer influences
- Poor social/stress management skills
- Family conflict
- Early initiation and persistent antisocial behavior
- Poor school performance

#### Protective Factors:

- Positive youth and family management practices: monitoring, age-appropriate parental expectations, and consistent discipline
- Effective and empathetic parent-child communication
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Family bonding and supportive family involvement
- Goals/positive future orientation
- Positive parent-child affect
- Emotion management
- Pro-social family values
- Peer pressure refusal skills

#### Improved Youth Skills/Attitudes:

- Healthy coping & stress management
- Peer pressure resistance
- Making good decisions/Setting goals for the future
- Empathy & appreciation of parents
- Understanding the value of rules & responsibilities
- Know qualities of good friends
- Understand the harmful impact of problem behavior & substance use

#### Improved Parent Skills/Styles:

- Empathy with youth stressors
- Support youth goals & dreams
- Active listening and effective communication
- Understand youth development
- Clear communication of rules and substance use expectations
- Identify and deliver appropriate consequences calmly
- Reward good behavior
- Monitor youth

#### Improved Family Relationships:

- Family bonding/Affective quality
- Joint problem solving
- Effective communication
- Identify family strengths & values
- Value time together/family fun

#### Reduced Youth Substance Use:

- Less likely to have ever used alcohol
- More likely to delay initiation of alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use
- Less likely to have misused prescription drugs
- Less likely to report methamphetamine use
- Less likely to show growth in poly-substance use
- Less likely to report drunkenness or illicit drug use

#### Reduced Youth Antisocial Behavior:

- Less self-reported aggressive & destructive behavior
- More likely to delay onset of problematic behaviors
- Less likely to show growth in internalizing symptoms

#### Improved Youth Academics:

- More likely to report improved school engagement
- More likely to report improved academic success

# Estimating Essential Elements of Program

Practitioners can use this worksheet to estimate essential elements of educational approaches. If the WHAT and HOW sections vary considerably by session, consider filling out one worksheet per approach session.

Session #

	Questions for Practitioners	Estimated Essential Elements
<b>W H A T</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What messages will be communicated?</li> <li>2. What knowledge will be increased?</li> <li>3. What skills will be developed?</li> </ol>	
<b>H O W</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the recommended teaching methods?</li> <li>2. How many sessions should be delivered, for how long, and over what period of time?</li> <li>3. What setting and environment will best support learning?</li> </ol>	
<b>W H O</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What skills and experiences will help facilitators deliver essential content clearly?</li> <li>2. What other characteristics, like credibility with participants, values, and buy-in, will help a facilitator successfully deliver the approach?</li> </ol>	

This worksheet is part of a series for the Violence Prevention in Practice tool which is part of VetoViolence®. This worksheet was developed by the Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# 3: Assess the need for adaptation

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## **SFP 10-14 Mismatch**

- No explicit information about cannabis, especially within the context of legalized adult use



## **Consultation**

- Focus groups with experienced facilitators and caregiver participants
- Literature review of ineffective programs

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# Adaptation Idea #1

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- ▶ Add a new session at the end focused on cannabis use
- ▶ Concerns about:
  - ▶ Extending the length of the program might increase participant burden → more likely to dropout
  - ▶ Youth being exposed to cannabis-specific information

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# Adaptation Idea #2

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- ▶ Add 15 minutes of cannabis-specific content to each caregiver session
- ▶ Add 15 minutes of general substance use-related content to each youth session
- ▶ Principles used to guide additions:
  - ▶ Add new content and resources in alignment with content for that session
  - ▶ Add new content and resources in alignment with feedback from facilitators and caregivers
  - ▶ Assure additions do not include elements of ineffective programs

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# Questions & Discussion

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- ▶ How do you envision using these research-based tools and strategies in your own work?
- ▶ What is missing or still needs to be addressed to meet your needs?

# Today's goal...

I have the tools I need to determine when and how to make thoughtful adaptations while still maintaining fidelity. I am confident I can implement my program with fidelity AND meet my community's needs!



# Additional Resources

# Prevention Technology Transfer Center

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- ▶ Recorded Webinar: A Cultural Adaptation of Screening, Brief Intervention to Treatment for Working Hispanic and Latinx Communities (2-Part Series) <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/national-hispanic-latino-pttc/product/cultural-adaptation-screening-brief-intervention-and>
- ▶ Recorded Webinar: Applying Prevention Science to Practice: What Implementation Experts Need to Know about Program Fidelity <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/pttc-network-coordinating-office/product/applying-prevention-science-practice-what-0>
- ▶ Recorded Webinar: Adaptation in Substance Misuse Prevention: Improving Effectiveness and Achieving Better Outcomes <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/northeast-caribbean-pttc/product/adaptation-substance-misuse-prevention-improving>
- ▶ Recorded Webinar: Toward Equity-Focused Prevention of Substance Misuse for Hispanic & Latin Populations <https://pttcnetwork.org/centers/pacific-southwest-pttc/product/toward-equity-focused-prevention-substance-misuse-hispanic>

# Cultural Adaptation Readings

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- ▶ Colby, M., Hecht, M. L., Miller-Day, M., Krieger, J. L., Syvertsen, A. K., Graham, J. W., & Pettigrew, J. (2013). Adapting school-based substance use prevention curriculum through cultural grounding: A review and exemplar of adaptation processes for rural schools. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(1), 190-205. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-012-9524-8>
- ▶ Okamoto, S. K., Kulis, S., Marsiglia, F. F., Holleran Steiker, L. K., & Dustman, P. (2014). A continuum of approaches toward developing culturally focused prevention interventions: From adaptation to grounding. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 35(2), 103-112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-013-0334-z>
- ▶ Marsiglia, F. F., & Booth, J. M. (2015). Cultural adaptation of interventions in real practice settings. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 25(4), 423-432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731514535989>

# Thank you!

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