The Heart of Successful Childhood Intervention: Preserving Essential Elements While Meeting Each Family’s Unique Needs

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Evidence-Based Practice

EBP

Best available research evidence.

Client’s characteristics, state, needs, values + preferences.

Resources, including practitioner expertise.

Environment + organizational context.

Social Work Policy Institute, 2002
What’s in the black box of an EBP?

Hultcher et al., 2003
What are the essential ingredients of an EPB?
How do you know families are receiving the essential ingredients?
FIDELITY
What is it?

The degree to which a program or practice is implemented as intended

(Dane & Schneider, 1998; SAMHSA, 2002)
FIDELITY

Why is it important?

- To avoid doing more harm than good
- Without assessing fidelity, you can’t tell if you are providing an evidence-based intervention
- It is critical to sustainability and scale-up
- There is a strong link with positive outcomes
Fidelity and fidelity assessment address adherence to an EPB

- Content
- Coverage
- Frequency
- Duration

Carroll et al., 2007
A “train and hope” approach is not effective for increasing providers’ skills or enhancing implementation.
ASSESSING FIDELITY

- Direct observation
- Indirect observation
- Written manuals
But fidelity is unlikely in absence of basic skills
FIDELITY AND CLINICAL COMPETENCE

Clinical competencies in trauma-informed care (NCSTN, 2005)

- Basic assessment
- Risk assessment
- Case conceptualization
- Treatment Planning
- Treatment engagement
- Treatment quality monitoring
Qualities of effective therapists

1. Has sophisticated interpersonal skills
   - Provides a treatment plan consistent with explanation

1. Helps clients feel understood, trust, hope
   - Does not avoid difficult material in therapy, uses therapeutically

1. Able to form a positive working alliances
   - Flexible and adjusts therapy if limited progress or resistance

1. Provides an adaptive explanation for the client’s distress
   - Continually monitors client progress in an authentic way

FIDELITY AND CLINICAL COMPETENCE

Influential, persuasive, convincing
- Is aware of the client’s characteristics and context

Communicates hope and optimism
- Aware of own psychological process; does not inject into therapy unless therapeutic

Aware of the best research evidence related to the particular client
- Seeks to continually improve

American Psychological Association
FIDELITY

Does one size fit all?
Should perfect fidelity be the goal?

_Fidelity is important because it has been shown to be associated with superior outcomes. However, the goal is the good outcomes, not necessarily the faithful delivery of EBPs._

Berliner et al., 2013, p. 27
FIDELITY

Is there room for differentiation?
Fidelity vs. Adaptation
ADAPTATION

What is it?

How much, and in what ways, a program or practice is changed to meet local circumstances

Backer, 2001; SAMHSA, 2002
ADAPTATION

Common types

- Deletions, additions (enhancements) of components

  a. Modifications in the nature of the components

- Changes in the manner or intensity of administering program components

- Cultural and other modifications required by local circumstances

Backer, 2001; SAMHSA, 2002
Why adapt an intervention given the importance of fidelity?

- Cultural needs of a family diverge from standard practice
- Local context is not compatible with current model
- Serving a new population with different needs
- Continuous quality improvement
Why adapt an intervention given the importance of fidelity?
Modifications to core components must be done thoughtfully and in partnership with program developers and researchers...data-based decision-making should guide modifications to core components.
The goal of EBP training and fidelity should not be to produce automatons
Conclusion:

“First, do it right, then do it differently”

- Begin by adhering to core elements; high fidelity
- Implement as intended and build capacity before making changes
- Add components rather than remove them, when possible

- Make adaptations thoughtfully and intentionally; build them in
- Work with experts before making adaptations
- Closely monitor and evaluate adaptations; make adjustments as needed

Blasé & Fixsen, 2005; SAMHSA, 2002
Conclusions

- Always maintain the essential ingredients of an EBP
- Assess fidelity regularly to ensure families reap maximum benefits
- Allow flexibility to incorporate new knowledge, contexts, and culture
- Evaluate adaptations before full implementation and scale-up
- Account for the unique skills, strength, and vulnerabilities of EBP providers
Thank you!!!
Questions?

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