

Investigating Adaptations to an Evidence-Based Prevention Program

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Presentation Overview

- o Introduction
- o Methodology
- o Results
- o Implications
- o Recommendations
- o Closing Remarks

Introduction

- Evidence-Based Programs (EBPs) are commonly utilized in adolescent prevention programs
- Implemented in schools, afterschool programs, retreats, etc.

Translational Research

- o Institute for Translational Research
 - o Partnership between C.E. Mendez Foundation and USF
 - o 'Too Good' Programs
- o Adaptations/Modifications/Changes
- o Literature gaps

Research Questions

o Who

o What

o Why

Research Purpose

- o To assess
- o To explore

Who is our population?

- o Program facilitators
- o Ex: teachers, coaches, prevention specialists, etc.



Methods

- o Mixed-method approach
- o Two phases



Phase One

- o Quantitative
- o Survey
 - o 101 responses (n=101)



Quantitative Results

- o ~64% of respondents have adapted the *Too Good* programs
- o ~40% of respondents felt confident making adaptations to the program
- o Guidance counselors were found to be four times less likely to make modifications

Quantitative Results (Cont'd)

- ~60% of respondents reported receiving training
 - Of the 40% that did not receive training, 64% felt it wasn't necessary
- Training did not have a significant influence on whether or not respondents reported making adaptations
- Training did not significantly impact respondents' confidence in making substantive changes to the program

Phase 2

- o Qualitative
- o Phone interviews
 - o 7 interviews total (n=7)



Qualitative Results

- Guidance counselors
- Majority participants understood adaptation and modification
- Majority of participants made adaptations
 - Consciously/Pre-planned
 - Unconsciously

Qualitative Results (Cont'd)

‘We don’t have a full class period. To overcome time challenge, I do half the program or half the lessons and do the other half the next time, and it stretch it out. I don’t think this is so bad. Also, I add a video clip from the Blind Side to illustrate goal setting and decision making process so drawing it out a little bit longer.’

Qualitative Results (Cont'd)

“When you’re unfamiliar and you’re not sure what you’re teaching, y’know, you have to follow stuff more closely, but now that I’ve done it a while and I know what it is, what the essential learning is, what I’m trying to get to – what the skill is, y’know, I can kinda teach that without having a lot of the other stuff. I feel more like I can cut out stuff and they’re still getting the basic concept.”

Implications

- More research is necessary.
- How are programs being implemented?
- If modifications exist, are they appropriate?

Recommendations

- *Too Good* Programs Curriculum Training
- Fidelity
- Program respondents recommendations
- Online

Curriculum Implementation and Adaptations

Too Good Programs Implementation Standard:

- ✓ Implementation remains true to the original program design in order to affect the outcomes for participants as well as the program's effectiveness of which the evidence-based program promises.

Program Drift:

Program drift refers to the unintentional changes that are made as the program is implemented over time. These changes may happen when a facilitator adjusts the program to fit his or her facilitation style, eliminates content he or she doesn't like, or adds in pieces that may not support the goals of the program. As the number of these changes grows, it becomes less and less likely that the implementation program will have the promised effects.

Strategies for maintaining program effectiveness:

- ✓ **Ensure that staff members are committed to program fidelity.**
Particularly when a program is being implemented by more than one staff member or in multiple locations, commitment from all staff is critical to ensuring program success.
- ✓ **Determine the key elements that make the program effective.**
The core components or the "active ingredients" in the Too Good programs are the skills related to goal setting, decision making, identifying and managing emotions, effective communication, bonding and relationships, conflict resolution, anger management, and respect for self and others.
- ✓ **Take steps to avoid program drift.**
A checklist similar to the Teacher Implementation Survey and the script is an excellent assessment tool.
- ✓ **Stay true to the duration and intensity of the original program.**
This issue is often out of your control. Please use the guide on the following pages to help determine how to handle individual time crunches.
- ✓ **Stay up-to-date with program revisions and new materials.**
Evidence-based programs may be periodically revised and updated to remain current with effective prevention implementation, or new materials may become available.
- ✓ **Contact the program developers.**
The curriculum development team can provide key information about the theory and assumptions that influenced the programs development.

Types of Program Adaptations

Acceptable Adaptations:

- ❖ Changing language – Translating and/or modifying vocabulary
- ❖ Replacing images to show youth and families that look like the target audience
- ❖ Replacing cultural references
- ❖ Modifying some aspects of activities such as physical contact
- ❖ Adding relevant, evidence-based content to make the program more appealing to participants.

Risky Adaptations:

- ❖ Reducing the number or length of sessions or how long participants are involved
- ❖ Lowering the level of participant engagement
- ❖ Eliminating key messages or skills learned
- ❖ Removing topics
- ❖ Changing the theoretical approach
- ❖ Using staff or volunteers who are not adequately trained or qualified
- ❖ Using fewer staff members than recommended

Adaptation Checklist

What do I do when...I can't follow fidelity 100%?

Questions to ask...

1. Am I still teaching the rationale and objectives for the lesson?
2. Are the students learning and practicing the skills?
3. Am I keeping the protective factors in this activity?
4. Am I making sure to cover the things that will produce positive norms and behavior change?

Things to remember...

- ✓ Try to shorten activities instead of leaving them out.
- ✓ Focus on skill building. You do not want to cut the opportunity for students to learn and practice the skills.
- ✓ We want all students to participate.
- ✓ We want to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.
- ✓ Just because the students appear interested in a story or activity it does not mean we are producing positive behavior change.

Closing Remarks

- o Thank you
 - o Institute
 - o Mendez Foundation
 - o Mentors and supporters

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Questions?