

Conclusion: Selecting Interventions



Selecting effective interventions involves two tasks: identifying interventions and ensuring a good fit between interventions and your school or community.

A variety of sources provide information on effective interventions. Many sources can be accessed through Web sites, including these:

- ▲ Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (www.air.org/cecp)
- ▲ Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence's Blueprints (<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/>)
- ▲ Center for Mental Health in Schools (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)
- ▲ Center for Mental Health Services (<http://www.mentalhealth.org/>)
- ▲ Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (<http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/csap/csap.html>)
- ▲ Centers for Disease Control National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (<http://www.safeyouth.org/home.htm>)
- ▲ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm>)
- ▲ The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) Safe and Sound: An Educational Leaders Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs (<http://www.casel.org/progrevfr.htm>)
- ▲ Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence (<http://www.hamfish.org/>)

- ▲ Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/positiveyouthdev99/>)
- ▲ Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Pennsylvania State University (<http://www.prevention.psu.edu/>)
- ▲ Surgeon General of the United States (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/report.html>)
- ▲ U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program's Model Programs (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/programs.html>)

The Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse, and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has prepared an excellent guide to online resources for those interested in youth violence prevention. This guide, *Youth Violence Prevention Resources*, can be requested for free from the Knowledge Exchange Network at (800) 789-2647.

It is important to understand that an intervention or program that has been demonstrated to work somewhere else will not necessarily work in your school or community with the types of children you want to serve (Weisz, Donenberg, Han, & Weiss, 1995). Be a skeptical consumer and ask questions about outcomes, costs, staffing implications, adaptability, and external support.

Outcomes. Ask whether the program can work with the types of students and staff that you have. What evidence shows that this program has worked in school communities similar to yours?

Costs. Determine the costs of implementing the intervention. Costs may include the purchase of materials, consultation, space, additional staff, and staff time. Program developers, technical assistance providers, and staff from schools that have implemented the interventions can help you determine costs.

Adaptability. School staff often adapt interventions to meet local needs and preferences. Although some components may be altered, certain key components of many programs should not be changed. Determine whether the key components of the program you select can address your needs and be implemented successfully—without alteration. Program developers and technical assistance providers should be able to give you answers.

External Support. Implementing new programs requires support. Support may be available from the developers, technical assistance centers, state department staff, regional or intermediate educational unit staff, district staff, or school staff who have been trained to implement programs.

Identifying effective interventions can be hard work. In addition, evidence of efficacy in clinical trials (where researchers have considerable control over who is included in the study and how the intervention is delivered) does not ensure that an intervention will work in schools or community settings (Hoagwood, Hibbs, Brent, & Jensen, 1995; Weisz et al., 1995). To help you select interventions, we convened an expert panel to determine the criteria you should use and to identify programs that meet these criteria. The panel, which included nationally recognized researchers, practitioners, and technical assistance providers, identified these six criteria for selecting programs:

- ▲ The program must have documented effectiveness and be based on sound theory.
- ▲ The program can be easily integrated with existing school practices.
- ▲ The program must have data that demonstrate effectiveness or ineffectiveness with particular student groups.
- ▲ Data must indicate that the program has a positive impact on student achievement.
- ▲ Program developers/sponsors must demonstrate that subscribing schools receive sufficient technical assistance.
- ▲ Program components must focus on promoting positive solutions to behavioral and emotional problems.

The panel then identified the interventions that are described in Appendix A: Program Briefs. To help you determine whether the interventions might be a good fit with your school and community, the briefs provide information on such matters as costs, risk factors targeted, types of children for which there is evidence that the intervention worked, adaptability (what can and cannot be changed), and technical assistance available.