



*Safe Communities ~
Safe Schools*

FACT SHEET

FS-SC26

2011

Recommendations for Program Implementation for Agencies/Organizations

While information on best practices and effective programs has been developed and disseminated at federal, state, and local levels, information diffusion alone is not enough to create beneficial and enduring prevention programming. Dissemination of best practices is only the first step. The second step is promoting the actual use of research-based information (Backer and David, 1995). Information on the experiences and problems encountered in replicating programs and effective methods for sustaining quality implementation is extremely important. The Blueprints for Violence Prevention initiative, funded by OJJDP, is a major effort to disseminate information on effective programs and provide funding for training and technical assistance to help these programs get established in communities. Blueprints also systematically gathers information on the challenges that arise in adopting new programs, implementing them, and in taking these programs to scale. Below are some of the major lessons learned from implementing Blueprints programs in different settings with widely varying problems and process outcomes.

1. Choose a Program after Careful Research

- **Assess Need for Prevention Program**
Program adoption decisions should be made by assessing the risk and protective factors in the community or school that need addressing and determining the population most in need of services. The needs assessment should include an overview of programs already being implemented to assure a comprehensive package of programming that is developmentally appropriate for each age stage and can meet local needs.
- **Learn about Empirically Documented Programs**
The information search can begin with the lists of effective programs identified by various federal and non-profit agencies. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) has a website that documents these various lists, the types of programs, and the selection criteria. (www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints).
- **Choose a Program that Fits the Need and the Population Targeted**
Carefully matching a program to the community or agency needs will help ensure that the program is more readily accepted by other key players. When programs are not matched well, there is a risk of program failure as implementers may perceive the costs as greater than the benefits. Worse yet, the program may not have the intended results.

2. Enhance Readiness of Site

- **Build an Environment that is Supportive of the New Program**
 - Provide detailed information about the program prior to implementation to all key participants to build motivation and support.
 - Arrange staff meetings to discuss the program and how it might be integrated into the organization.

- Arrange a site visit for program representatives to deliver a presentation for all agency staff and relevant community members.
 - Confront competing philosophies early in the process by presenting the theoretical rationale and research findings that demonstrate the program's effectiveness.
- **Plan for Implementation**
Create an implementation plan that details the logistics of program operation and work out obstacles in the plan before implementation begins.
 - **Ensure that Money, Materials and Personnel are Adequate**
Learn about hidden program costs and garner all necessary resources and materials. If the program has a curriculum or manual, it should be purchased for all implementing staff. Ensure that the program is fully staffed prior to training to avoid additional training costs.
 - **Understand the Importance of Implementation Fidelity**
Ensure that administrators and implementers are indoctrinated in the theoretical underpinnings of the program and that all staff understands the core elements of the program that must be maintained to achieve the same results as those in research trials.

3. Improve the Quality of Implementation

- **Build Organizational Capacity and Administrative Support**
 - Effective leaders have the power to instigate changes in the organization, allocate money and resources, and communicate a vision for the agency (and how the new program fits into that vision).
 - Leaders must demonstrate "active" support of the program.
 - The organization should strive for internal stability.
 - Interagency linkages must be developed, as necessary.
 - Begin program efforts incrementally.
- **Build Staff Support**
 - Continuously build staff motivation and support.
 - Hire staff with the appropriate credentials and requisite skills.
 - Build confidence and impart new skills through an ongoing system of training and technical assistance.
 - Provide the resources, materials and financial compensation necessary to conduct the program.
 - Provide the time necessary to accomplish all aspects of the job.
- **Ensure that Site has Program Champion(s)**
 - Every program must have someone who keeps the program moving forward and motivates other staff.
 - Develop a coordinating committee which builds multiple champions.
- **Provide Training and Technical Assistance (TA)**
 - Inform staff about new program prior to training.
 - Hire all staff prior to training.
 - If a school-based program, plan for substitutes or incentive pay.
 - Have protocols detailing who should attend training and appropriate behavior during training.
 - Start implementing immediately after training.
 - Build ongoing training costs into the budget.

References:

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado at Boulder. (2002) *Blueprints for Violence Prevention Replications: Factors for Implementation Success*. Boulder, Co