Handout #3: Important Terminology

Theory Driven or Theory Based
Program planners use theory to investigate answers to the questions of "why," "what," and "how" health problems should be addressed. Theory guides the search for reasons why people engage in certain behaviors. Theory also helps suggest strategies and identify which indicators should be monitored and measured during program evaluation. Therefore, theory can provide a road map for studying problems, developing appropriate interventions, and evaluating their successes. *(from Theory at a Glance, NCI, Pub # 05-3896, Sept 2005)*

Best Practices
Programs based on best practices utilize STRATEGIES that have been shown to be effective. Strategies found in the Guide to Community Preventive Services (Community Guide) or the Guide to Clinical Preventive Services (Clinical Guide) provide strategies that can serve as best practices for programs. The Community Guide can be found at http://www.thecommunityguide.org. An example of best practices being used can be found at: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/bestprac.htm.

Evidence-Based
Evidence-based PROGRAMS have been proven to be effective in the populations and settings in which they were studied. Using an evidence-based program shortens the time it takes to develop a new program, reduces the amount of research needed, and helps focus the evaluation process.

Research Tested
Research-tested is a feature of evidence-based practice. It means the program was tested in a peer reviewed and funded research study. A program may not be as effective once it leaves the research setting if there are changes in parts of the program used, the environment, or the population served. However, the program serves as a good starting place. Research-tested programs can be found on Step 4 of Cancer Control PLANET (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/).