Handout #3: Alternative Sources for Evidence-Based Programs

Finding Alternative Evidence-Based Programs

If you do not find an appropriate evidence-based program from Cancer Control PLANET's (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/) Research-tested Intervention Programs (RTIPs), try the following steps:

1. Locate databases for peer-reviewed journals, which are journals reviewed by a panel of experts. You may be able to find these through your organization, local library, or nearby college or university.

   Some of these databases are:

   - MEDLINE/PubMed (medical journals)
   - Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC)
   - FirstSearch
   - EBSCO
   - Academic Search Premier
   - Web of Science.

   See the Literature Review Handout from Module 2.

   When doing a search of databases, look for journals such as these: *New England Journal of Medicine, Journal for the American Medical Association, Health Education Research, Health Promotion Practice,* and *Health Education and Behavior.* See the Literature Review Handout from Module 2.

2. Brainstorm search terms related to your topic of interest.

3. Conduct a systematic review of the literature related to the topic. Find intervention studies. When you find these studies, look at the procedures, evaluation methods, and target populations. Read the conclusions and discussion sections of the article, where the researcher discusses the strengths and the weaknesses of the study. If you choose an evidence-based program from one of the alternative sources, look at a systematic review guide. Two of these guides are the Community or Clinical Guides which you can find on Step 3 of Cancer Control PLANET (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/). Your selected program should use best practices as described by systematic reviews such as PLANET (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/) or the Cochrane review.

4. Find the principal investigator's (PI) contact information. The PI is often listed as the first author.

5. Develop a script and question guide for talking to the PI(s). Decide how to ask for a copy of the evidence-based materials to adapt to your audience. See Handout #4, Talking With the Principal Investigator.

6. Obtain the evidence-based materials from the original intervention studies.

7. Use the 24 criteria from the National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices (NREPP) Web site, www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/template.cfm?page=nrepgen, to rate the program. These program scores will help you evaluate the strength of the program. You may want to see how it compares with other programs you find during your search.

8. Double-check your NREPP program scores with at least one to two other reviewers.

Priorities for Selecting an Invention Program: Levels of Research Evidence

When you look for an evidence-based program to adapt, be aware that they have been through different levels of research. Even research-tested intervention programs (RTIPs) you can find on Cancer Control PLANET (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov/) vary among Levels 1, 2, and 4. In the breakdown listed below, a Level 1 program has the strongest evidence. A Level 5 program has acceptable evidence. A Level 1 program may be more effective than a Level 5 program, but a program that meets Level 5 requirements may be a useful model.

Level 1

A program that:

- Is funded by a peer-reviewed grant. This means that a panel of experts had to approve the intervention and evaluation study design before it received funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Is part of a systematic review. This means that other researchers have tested similar programs.
- Uses strategies listed in the Guide to Community Preventive Services (Community Guide) (https://www.thecommunityguide.org/). The Community Guide summarizes systematic reviews. It looks for the best practices for effective programs.

Level 2

A program that:

- Is funded by a peer-reviewed grant. This means that a panel of experts had to approve the intervention and evaluation study design before it received funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal

- Is part of a systematic review. This means that other researchers have tested similar programs.
- Uses strategies listed in other systematic reviews, such as Cochrane (http://www.cochrane.org/index2.htm). However, it is not recommended by the Community Guide.

OR

- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal but is not funded by a peer-reviewed grant
- Is part of a systematic review. This means that other researchers have tested similar programs.
- Uses strategies listed by the Community Guide (https://www.thecommunityguide.org/).

Level 3

A program that:

- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal but is not funded by a peer-reviewed grant
- Is part of a systematic review. This means that other researchers have tested similar programs.
- Uses strategies listed by other systematic reviews, such as Cochrane (http://www.cochrane.org/index2.htm). However, it is not recommended by the Community Guide.

Level 4

A program that:

- Is funded by a peer-reviewed grant. This means that a panel of experts had to approve the study design before it received funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Uses strategies that have been proven effective in a single study. But they have not been tested in other research studies or been evaluated as part of a systematic review.

Level 5

A program that:

- Has findings published in a peer-reviewed journal but has not been evaluated and funded by a peer-reviewed grant
- Uses strategies that have been proven effective in a single study. But they are not supported by other research or part of a systematic review.