

# Measuring and Tracking Fidelity and Adaptations

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# Overview

- Define fidelity and adaptation
- Look at two opposing views of Fidelity/Adaptation
- Understanding why fidelity is important
- Methods for tracking fidelity
- Measuring fidelity
- Brief description of an adaptation tracking tool
- Case example from a SS/HS site in Washington State
- Discussion

# Defining Fidelity and Adaptation

## Fidelity

- “The agreement (concordance) of a replicated program or strategy with the specification of the original.” (CSAP’s Prevention Platform, 2005)
- “The degree of fit between the developer-defined components of a program and its actual implementation in a given organizational or community setting.” (Backer, 2002)

## Adaptation

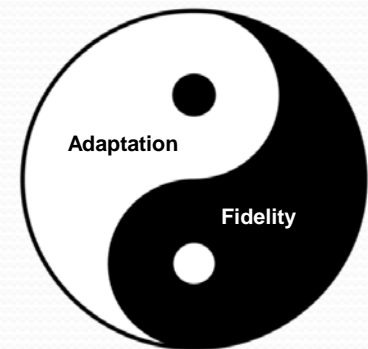
- “Changes or departures from the methodology enlisted in the original implementation of the program or strategy.” (Cummins, *et al.*, 2002)
- Intention: can be either deliberate or accidental (Backer, 2002)
- Characteristics: additions, deletions, or modifications to the original implementation of the program (Cummins, *et al.*, 2002)

# Opposing Viewpoints

“Fidelity is related to effectiveness and any bargaining away of fidelity will most likely decrease program effectiveness. There is very little experimental evidence on the impact of local enhancements or modifications on the effectiveness of programs.” (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004)

“Adaptation may render a program more responsive to a particular target population. Adaptation could increase a program’s cultural sensitivity and its fit within a new implementation setting... cultural adaptation, for example, has been found necessary to engage the interest of prevention program participants.” (Schinke, Brounstein, & Gardner, 2002)

“Attention to BOTH fidelity and adaptation is essential for successful implementation of science-based prevention programs.” (Backer, 2002)



# Benefits of Tracking Fidelity

- Helps identify what has been changed and how changes may impact outcomes (Dusenbury, *et al.*, 2003).
- Helps determine whether or not the implementation was sufficient to permit a good test of the program (Orwin, 2000).
- Helps reduce the possibility of Type III error (Dobson & Cook, 1980; Dusenbury, *et al.*, 2003).

## Reasons for Poor Fidelity

- Lack of stakeholder buy-in
- Lack of training
- Lack of time
- Staff turnover without re-training
- Lack of district support
- Complexity of the intervention (lack of program manuals, core components, program logic models, multi-component programs with multiple staff)
- Skill level of delivery agents

# Tracking Fidelity

- There is no widely accepted method or instrument for assessing program fidelity (Waltz, *et al.*, 1993; Dusenbury, *et al.*, 2003).
- There has been some recent agreement concerning characteristics of program fidelity that people should attend to when planning their studies (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Backer, 2002; Cummins, *et al.* 2002; Mihalic, 2002; Dusenbury, *et al.*, 2003).

# Evidence-Based Programs with Fidelity Tools

## Common EBIS implemented in SS/HS sites that have fidelity tools

- Second Step
- PBIS
- Too Good for Drugs
- Life Skill Training
- Project Alert
- Project SUCCESS
- Strengthening Families
- Reconnecting Youth
- Steps to Respect
- Positive Action



# Tracking Fidelity:

## Primary Characteristics of Fidelity

1. Adherence to the program
2. Dose/exposure
3. Quality of program delivery
4. Participant responsiveness

# Adherence and Dose/Exposure

## **Adherence**

Was the program delivered as designed along the following dimensions?

- Program content
- Utilization of specified protocols, techniques, and materials
- Characteristics of the target population
- Characteristics of program providers
- Characteristics of the setting(s) in which the program is delivered.

## **Dose/exposure**

- Participant attendance
- The number of session delivered
- Length of sessions

# Quality and Responsiveness

## **Quality of program delivery**

Assesses the manner in which providers implement the program:

- Provider knowledge of content
- Provider delivery skills
- Provider enthusiasm
- Provider preparedness

## **Participant responsiveness**

Looks at the extent to which program participants are:

- Engaged
- Receptive to the activities and content of the program

# Measuring Adherence

## **Content and Delivery Methods**

- Session-specific implementation checklists for each program objective, curriculum point, and activity (5-point Likert scale from “Not Covered” to “Completely Covered.”)
- Alternatives – observations, unannounced site visits, use of trainer dyads.

## **Target Population, Provider, and Settings**

- Demographics on the target population
- Documentation of provider characteristics
- Documentation of setting characteristics

# Measuring Dose/Exposure and Quality of Delivery

## **Dose/Exposure**

- Number of session delivered
- Length of each session
- Attendance data

## **Quality of Delivery**

- Provider knowledge of content
- Provider delivery skills
- Provider enthusiasm
- Provider preparedness

# Measuring Participant Responsiveness

- Provider assessments
- Observations
- Participant Feedback

## So What Should We Measure?

- Be strategic – document as much as possible without breaking the bank:
  - Program Records – attendance, dosage, number of sessions delivered.
  - Implementer self-report of adherence to curriculum or core components.
  - Observation or videotape of program implementation.

# Examples of Fidelity Tools

- Second Step (handout)
- Parenting An Athlete (handout)
- Example from Washington (handout)



# One Method for Tracking Adaptations

- Assessing Program Fidelity and Adaptations Tool Kit (EDC, 2003)

<http://learn.aero.und.edu/pages.asp?PageID=97629>

- Assesses fidelity to original or model program and to proposed (adapted) program.
- Lends itself to tracking environmental approaches as well as curriculum-based programs.
- Assesses fidelity at intervals.
- Assesses all aspects of the program (e.g., content, delivery methods, target population, setting delivery agent)
- Assesses adaptations to evaluation methods (in both original and proposed program).
- Assesses rationale for adaptation.

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