

Change and Implementation AT A GLANCE

Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation



As child welfare agencies face decisions about how to address their needs, choosing the right solution is crucial to improving outcomes. While there is often pressure to rush to a decision, taking time to research options and think critically about fit, feasibility, and racial equity impact can prevent wasted resources in the long run.

What It Takes to Get It Done

The Selection Process

- Research possible interventions:
 - Search directories
 - Conduct a literature review
 - Contact program developers, experts, and peers
- Assess evidence, fit, and feasibility of possible interventions
- Determine whether interventions are well-defined (usable/transferable)
- Decide to replicate or adapt an existing intervention or design a new one

Ensuring a Well-Defined Intervention

- Define the intervention broadly
- Develop a proposal for decision-maker:
 - Explain desired outcomes, proposed intervention, rationale for selection, and capacity considerations
 - Lay out plans for replication, adaptation, or new design, as needed
- Further define and operationalize the intervention, if needed:
 - Design new or more fully developed core components and develop operationalized definitions
 - Adapt or create practice profiles that describe everyday practice

Get the Most Out of Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation

During the selection process:

- ◆ To help assess fit and feasibility, use a racial equity impact analysis to examine how different groups may be affected.
- ◆ As you research interventions, consult people with lived experience and members of the communities the intervention will serve about which interventions they recommend.
- ◆ Determine which interventions have evidence of effectiveness with the populations you serve. Look beyond traditional evaluation studies as you investigate.
- ◆ Consider the limitations—and potential consequences—of delivering interventions primarily tested on White populations to families of color. Consider how families could be harmed by the delivery of child welfare interventions not tested or designed to serve their families and address their needs.
- ◆ Consider nontraditional or innovative strategies as options, including “upstream” prevention opportunities to strengthen families and communities before problems occur.

As you develop a proposal:

- ◆ Ask youth, families, and community members in different racial and ethnic groups about which adaptations might make the intervention more accessible and responsive, and how the intervention and the setting could be enhanced to better fit with community values and culture.
- ◆ Partner with people with lived experience and those reflective of the communities your agency serves to be sure your proposal reflects their feedback and vision.

A well-defined intervention enables consistent implementation and monitoring and meets four criteria:

Clear description

Identified core components
("essential ingredients")

Operational definitions
(specific actions/behaviors)

Practical performance
assessment

Source: Van Dyke, M., & Metz, A. (2014). *Usable intervention criteria*. National Implementation Research Network

Key Takeaways

- ◆ To select an appropriate intervention, agency teams should consider:
 - ❖ Alignment with their theory of change
 - ❖ Evidence of effectiveness
 - ❖ Degree to which the intervention is defined and usable/transferable
 - ❖ Appropriateness for the population to be served (considering culture, age, setting, etc.)
 - ❖ Fit with the system and agency context
 - ❖ Feasibility of implementation given existing or potential agency capacity
 - ❖ The racial equity impact of the intervention
- ◆ The availability of “off the shelf” interventions already proven effective in a similar situation and serving similar populations is often limited. This is particularly true for culturally relevant and effective interventions designed and tested with communities of color.
- ◆ An agency may need to make changes to an intervention to align with the populations served and agency context. Proposed changes (e.g., new engagement strategies, cultural adaptations to specific practices, service delivery supports) should reflect input from youth and families who are (or who will be) served by the intervention. When adapting an evidence-supported intervention, agencies should make every effort to preserve the integrity of the core components.
- ◆ If no well-defined interventions meet agency needs and circumstances, teams may need to design a customized solution.

Looking for more?

- ◆ Explore additional [intervention selection and design/adaptation resources](#).
- ◆ See [Change and Implementation in Practice](#) for more information about other change and implementation topics.
- ◆ Find questions for consideration at each phase of the process in [“Focusing on Race Equity Throughout Change and Implementation.”](#)
- ◆ Learn more about the integration of lived expertise in [“Strategies for Authentic Integration of Family and Youth Voice in Child Welfare.”](#)

Key Change and Implementation Topics



Click on each icon in the Change and Implementation graphic for more information.

Once an intervention has been selected, your team can begin developing an [implementation plan](#).

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