

What Does It Mean to be Evidence-based?

Interventions with “evidence of effectiveness” have been found to be effective under a specific set of circumstances. Experts agree that an intervention is evidence-based if it fulfills one of the following three conditions:

1. It is included in a federal registry of evidence-based interventions.
2. It is reported in peer-reviewed journals (with positive effects on the primary targeted outcome).
3. When no appropriate interventions are available through the first two primary resources on evidence-based interventions, then prevention planners may need to rely on other, weaker sources of information to identify an intervention that addresses the problem, the population served, and the cultural and community context in which it will be implemented. With this third option, documented effectiveness must be supported by other sources of information and the consensus judgment of informed experts, as described in the following set of guidelines, all of which must be met:
 - *Guideline 1:* The intervention is based on a theory of change that is documented in a clear logic or conceptual model.
 - *Guideline 2:* The intervention is similar in content and structure to interventions that appear in registries and/or the peer-reviewed literature.
 - *Guideline 3:* The intervention is supported by documentation that it has been effectively implemented in the past, and at multiple times, in a manner attentive to scientific standards of evidence and with results that show a consistent pattern of credible and positive effects.
 - *Guideline 4:* The intervention is reviewed and deemed appropriate by a panel of informed prevention experts that includes well-qualified prevention researchers who are experienced in evaluating prevention interventions similar to those under review, local prevention practitioners,

and key community leaders as appropriate (e.g., officials from law enforcement and education sectors or elders within indigenous cultures).

When selecting an intervention, it is important to consider whether the evidence of effectiveness is weak or strong. Priority should be given to interventions with strong evidence of effectiveness.

For specific problems, there may be fewer programs that are evidence-based and listed in federal registries or peer reviewed journals. For example, there aren't many evidenced-based programs that address prescription drug abuse than that address underage drinking. There are also fewer evidence-based programs that have been shown to be effective for certain population groups.

Finding Evidence-Based Interventions

- **U.S. Department of Education**
Exemplary and Promising: Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Programs
https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/report_pg7.html
- **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs**
Model Programs Guide
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/>
- **National Institute of Drug Abuse**
Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/preventing-drug-abuse-among-children-adolescents>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
Guide to Community Preventive Services
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org>

Peer Reviewed Journals

- American Journal of Public Health
- Journal of Addiction Studies

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- Annual Review of Public Health
 - Journal on Studies of Alcohol
 - Preventive Medicine
 - Journal of School Health
 - Journal of Adolescent Health
 - Journal of the American Medical Association
 - Public Health and Research