

# *Module 7*

## Developing an Intervention

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“The important thing is this:  
to be ready at any moment  
to sacrifice what we are  
for what we could become.”

—Charles Dubois

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**Promoting Community Health and Development  
The Community Tool Box (CTB) Curriculum  
Module 7 Participant Guide**

**Work Group for Community Health and Development  
The University of Kansas  
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### **Introduction**

What will you do to create improvements in your community and advance the goals of those who live there? Perhaps you've joined with others to assess needs and resources, analyze the problems and goals of the community, and consider a vision, mission, objectives, and strategies that might be used. You've identified a model of change or framework to guide your work. You've come to the point at which you can select or develop an appropriate intervention, or purposeful action, to accomplish your goals.

**Developing an intervention** involves selecting and using intervention components and elements based on a thorough analysis of contributing factors and available resources.

So, how do we do this? Ideally, we will approach the issue with the same thoroughness and community engagement advocated in prior modules. These lessons will focus us toward five primary activities. First, we will identify the multiple components and elements that make up comprehensive community interventions. Next, we will describe methods by which to identify the "best" or most promising practices that would have relevance for our own community organization or effort, and select or develop one or more to use. We will learn how to adapt those selected or developed interventions to fit the local context, and then address how to actually implement the interventions chosen. Finally, we will look to define the conditions under which the intervention can actually work for the community.

The development of appropriate interventions depends heavily on the work done by the group in earlier stages: a thorough assessment and analysis of the community's needs, resources and goals. Only then can an organization select an approach that will bring about true change.

To make the most of this learning module, consider the following:

#### **PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING**

Participants will be better prepared for learning if they have experience in assessment, analysis, and planning. Being able to select promising interventions for a given context requires a broad and deep understanding of local conditions and is enhanced by having an organization with broad social networks and membership that includes those most affected. The participant should be aware of the community's needs and goals. A process of strategic planning such as VMOSA will have resulted in a clear vision and mission for the organization or effort and potential strategies or solutions. These preliminary ideas are what then frame the selected interventions. A comprehensive list of possibilities will help to streamline selection.

Learning is enhanced for those participants that can see links between cause and effect. They understand that change in the environment can effect changes in behavior, and that comprehensive and sustained interventions are more likely to be effective. Creativity is important, but not enough. Some members of the group must also be able to evaluate options in terms of costs and benefits, prioritize approaches, and combine and adapt intervention components and elements to fit local conditions.

#### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

We recommend the following readings from the Community Tool Box (CTB), online at <http://ctb.ku.edu/>:

1. Chapter 18, Section 1: Designing Community Interventions
2. Chapter 18, Section 2: Participatory Approaches to Planning
3. Chapter 19, Section 1: Criteria for Choosing Promising Practices and Intervention
4. Chapter 19, Section 2: Understanding Risk and Protective Factors: Their Use in Selecting Potential Targets and Promising Strategies for Interventions
5. Chapter 19, Section 4: Adapting Community Interventions for Different Cultures and Communities
6. Chapter 19, Section 5: Ethical Issues in Community Interventions
7. CTB Toolkit for “Plan the Work”: Developing an Intervention

### KEYWORDS AND CONCEPTS TO LISTEN FOR

Adaptation, Best Practice, Community, Components, Comprehensive Intervention, Context, Elements, Environmental Factors, Evidence-Based Practice, Intervention, Personal Factors, Prevention, Promotion, Protective Factors, Risk Factors, Treatment

At the conclusion of this learning module, you may expect to have the following:

### KNOWLEDGE

- Key issues related to the development, selection, adaptation and implementation of community interventions
- Cultural and ethical considerations important to those processes
- Skills and steps required to develop, select, adapt and implement interventions
- Setting conditions for interventions to be successful
- Potential intervention components and elements related to identified strategies and solutions

### SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- Translate what is known about the community into appropriate interventions
- Identify promising or best practices developed elsewhere that will help you meet your community’s goals
- Identify cultural issues and characteristics in your target community that will affect adaptation
- Adapt interventions to fit the particular needs and cultural context of your community
- Develop a plan for an intervention

### CORE PRODUCT

By the end of Module 7, you will have produced a **Table of Intervention Components and Elements** that summarizes the core aspects of the intervention and how it will be delivered, and a **Plan for Developing an Intervention** based on the CTB Toolkit “Designing an Intervention” (under “Plan Work” on the CTB homepage <http://ctb.ku.edu>—See Lesson 7.5).

### Content Overview

- Lesson 7.1    Developing a Preliminary Community Intervention**  
*How to Develop a Preliminary Intervention*  
*Components and Elements of Comprehensive Interventions*
- Lesson 7.2    Reviewing and Selecting “Best Practices”**  
*Where to Find Out About Existing Best Practices*  
*What We Are Looking For*  
*How to Select “Best Practices”*  
*Fitting Best Practices into Your Situation*
- Lesson 7.3    Adapting Interventions to Fit the Local Context**  
*Why and When to Adapt Interventions*  
*Adapting Interventions to Fit Different Community and Cultural Contexts*  
*Some Guidelines to Enhance Your Success*
- Lesson 7.4    Ethical Considerations in Implementing Interventions**  
*Some Guiding Ethical Principles for Community Interventions*  
*Benefits of Ethical Behavior in Community Interventions*  
*Ethical Issues to Consider in Interventions*  
*Implementing Community Interventions*
- Lesson Activities and Worksheets**  
7.1    *Developing a Table of Intervention Components and Elements*  
7.2a    *Selecting “Best Practices” for Your Community’s Problem or Goal*  
7.2b    *Setting Conditions Under Which “What Works” Can Actually Work*  
7.3    *Identifying Community and Cultural Elements That May Affect Adaptation*  
7.4    *Assuring Attention to Ethical Issues in Your Community Intervention*
- Lesson 7.5    Putting It All Together: Creating a Plan for Developing an Intervention**

## Workshop Agenda

### **Orientation** for Module 7 (if appropriate)

Welcome and Introduction: Icebreaker

Expectations/Ground Rules

Review of Curriculum, Module, Background and Learning Objectives

### **Lesson 7.1 Developing a Preliminary Community Intervention**

How to Develop a Preliminary Intervention

Components and Elements of Comprehensive Interventions

*Activity 7.1 Developing a Table of Intervention Components and Elements*

### **Lesson 7.2 Reviewing and Selecting “Best Practices”**

Where to Find Out About Existing Best Practices

What We Are Looking For

How to Select “Best Practices”

Fitting Best Practices into Your Situation

*Activity 7.2a Selecting “Best Practices” for Your Community’s Problem or Goal*

*Activity 7.2b Setting Conditions Under Which “What Works” Can Actually Work*

### **Lesson 7.3 Adapting Interventions to Fit the Local Context**

Why and When to Adapt Interventions

Adapting Interventions to Fit Different Community and Cultural Contexts

Some Guidelines to Enhance Your Success

*Activity 7.3 Identifying Community and Cultural Elements That May Affect Adaptation*

### **Lesson 7.4 Ethical Considerations in Implementing Interventions**

Some Guiding Ethical Principles for Community Interventions

Benefits of Ethical Behavior in Community Interventions

Ethical Issues to Consider in Interventions

Implementing Community Interventions

*Activity 7.4 Assuring Attention to Ethical Issues in Your Community Intervention*

### **Lesson 7.5 Putting It All Together: Creating a Plan for “Developing Interventions”**

### **Lesson 7.1** ***Developing a Preliminary Community Intervention***

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON**

To select or develop an intervention that can be effective in a particular context or community, it is worthwhile to understand the basic components and elements that are generally found in successful comprehensive community interventions.

This lesson addresses the initial phases of developing or selecting interventions. It will introduce you to interventions that can affect changes in behavior and the environment, including comprehensive interventions or those that combine various components to provide a sufficient “dose” to produce a significant “response” or improvement in behavior and related outcomes. We will identify the components and elements that have been found to make comprehensive interventions more effective.

#### **KEY LEARNING**

What is an **intervention**?

To “intervene” literally means to “come between.” An intervention comes between what exists (our current situation) and where we hope things will be (our goals). Intervention refers to what is done to prevent or alter a result—the means by which we change behavior and environmental conditions related to a group’s goals.

What is a **comprehensive intervention**?

Comprehensive interventions combine multiple components and elements to produce changes and outcomes valued by the group. It is a “complete package”: a multi-component effort (of programs, policies and practices) intended to achieve an overall result.

#### **HOW TO DEVELOP A PRELIMINARY INTERVENTION**

1. *Consider or review background information, analysis and goals.*

A great deal of groundwork must be completed before interventions can be chosen and developed. The first steps are those already described in earlier modules, but they are listed here as a checklist for the completeness of your process to date. Consider whether the group has been able to:

- a. Identify what needs to happen for the community’s goals to be met:
  1. The services that should be provided
  2. The changes in communities and systems that should occur
  3. The specific behaviors of whom that need to change
  4. The improvements in community-level outcomes that should result
- b. Assess the level of the problem or goal. Some types of assessment include:
  - Direct observation of behaviors or products related to the problem or goal
  - Conducting behavioral surveys
  - Interviewing key people in the community
  - Reviewing archival or existing records
- c. Describe those whom the intervention should benefit—those whose behavior should be targeted for change, and those who can help make change happen.
- d. Engage those clients or end-users of the intervention in the process to promote ownership and sustainability of the program, and to get their feedback on the appropriateness of the intervention’s goals and means.

*There is no failure, except in no longer trying.*

—Anonymous

- e. With clients' input, identify issues, problems, and/or goals to address together. Identify underlying causes of present conditions through:
  - Personal contacts
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Community forums
  - Concerns surveys
- f. Analyze issues, problems, and/or goals to be addressed by the intervention, using clients' input. Outline:
  1. Personal and environmental factors to be influenced (i.e., history and experiences, knowledge and skills, and aspects of the physical and social environment that put them at risk for or protect them from experiencing certain problems)
  2. The behavior or lack of behavior that caused the problem or condition
  3. Those whose behavior or lack of behavior is currently maintaining the problem
  4. All for whom the current situation is a problem
  5. The negative consequences for those directly affected and the broader community
  6. Who benefits, and how, from things staying the same
  7. The conditions and behaviors that need to change for the issue to be resolved
  8. The appropriate level at which the problem or goal should be addressed (e.g., individually, neighborhoods, city, state)
- g. Set goals and objectives. Include:
  1. Those goals the intervention is targeted to accomplish
  2. A description of what success would look like
  3. The specific objectives the intervention will achieve (how much of what change in behavior and outcome by when)

### 2. Identify "best practices" and assess what the group can do.

Once you've completed the background analysis, it is possible to look for "what works" and to consider what is possible.

- a. Identify "best practices" or "evidence-based" interventions to address the issue (see lesson 7.2).
- b. Brainstorm potential interventions of your own based on the experiences of group members.
- c. Determine what your organization can afford to do. Consider the costs the group can afford, including:
  1. Time
  2. Financial costs
  3. Political costs
  4. Loss of opportunities
  5. Other resources

### 3. Develop and adapt the intervention.

- a. Specify the **core components and elements** to be included in your intervention (see next section).
- b. Identify **the mode of delivery** through which the intervention will be delivered in the community (e.g., courses, workshops, personal coaching, support groups) (see the next section).

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- c. Indicate how you will **adapt** the intervention or “best practice” **to fit the needs and context of your community** (e.g., to fit differences in values, beliefs, traditions, interests, experience, competence and language) (see Lesson 7.3).
4. Plan, test, implement components and monitor the intervention.
    - a. Develop an **action plan** to carry out the intervention. Include:
      1. The core components and elements to be implemented
      2. Who should implement what by when
      3. Resources and supports needed and those already available
      4. Adaptations for cultural context
      5. Anticipated barriers and/or resistance and planned counteraction
      6. Individuals and organizations that need to be informed
    - b. **Pilot-test** the intervention on a small scale. Determine:
      1. How to test the intervention and with whom
      2. Unintended consequences or side effects and how they might affect the implementation of your final intervention
      3. How to collect and use feedback to adapt and refine the original intervention
    - c. **Implement** the intervention (see Lesson 7.4).
    - d. **Monitor implementation and evaluate** the effects of the intervention.

### COMPONENTS AND ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE INTERVENTIONS

**Core components** of interventions are general approaches intended to bring about change in behavior and improvement in outcomes. They are the broad steps or general things you will do to accomplish a specific goal. You will recognize the terms from Modules 3 (Analyzing Problems and Goals) and 5 (Developing Strategic or Action Plans). Categories of intervention components include:

1. Providing information and enhancing skills (e.g., training, public service announcements)
2. Modifying access, barriers, and opportunities (e.g., assuring transportation)
3. Changing the consequences, (e.g., incentives, disincentives)
4. Enhancing services and supports (e.g., support groups for parents)
5. Modifying policies and broader systems (e.g., flextime in workplaces, laws)

A comprehensive intervention will include components from most, if not all, of these categories. For instance, to promote physical activity in a community, we would not merely provide information about its value for health. We would improve access to safe places to walk, encourage walking in groups, and so on.

*Science may have found a cure for most evils, but it has found no cure for the worst of them all—the apathy of human beings.*

—Helen Keller

**Elements** of interventions are the distinct activities or steps taken to implement a component. Therefore, if the comprehensive intervention noted above includes a specific component of modifying access or barriers, within that component there will likely be multiple elements (e.g., provide transportation, locate services near where people live).

For example, a comprehensive intervention to promote early childhood development might include five components and related elements.

a) Providing information and enhancing skills (e.g., public service announcements on the benefits of reading to children; parent training classes). b) Modifying access, barriers, and opportunities (e.g., provide quality day care where people work). c) Analyzing the consequences (e.g., honor those who are champions for child causes). d) Enhancing services and supports (e.g., expand home visitor programs to reach all new parents). e) Modifying policies and broader systems (e.g., extend access to health care for all families).

**Mode of delivery** refers to how each component and element of the intervention will be delivered. Common modes of delivery include courses, workshops, personal coaching, support groups, media campaigns, advocacy efforts and ways to implement the intervention.

Here is an illustrative “Table of Intervention Components and Elements” for an effort to prevent youth violence:

Intervention Components	Specific Elements	Models of Delivery
1. Providing Information and Enhancing Skills	a. Violence prevention curriculum b. Social marketing effort for “caring neighbors” c. Public service announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt curriculum in schools</li> <li>• Workshops in youth organizations</li> <li>• Promotional messages throughout the media</li> </ul>
2. Modifying Access, Barriers, and Opportunities	a. Safe after-school programs b. Establish mentoring programs c. Provide in-school counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize programs for students in schools</li> <li>• Organize programs through local youth organizations</li> <li>• Bring counseling within the schools</li> </ul>
3. Changing the Consequences	a. Provide rewards for attending safe after-school programs b. Stricter punishment for violence in schools c. Increased adult oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize support groups in the schools</li> <li>• Organize parent groups in local faith communities</li> <li>• Organize workshops in schools for students to set personal goals</li> </ul>
4. Enhancing Services and Support	a. Support groups for youth b. Support groups for parents of violent youth c. Personal goal setting programs for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize support groups in the schools</li> <li>• Organize parent groups in local faith communities</li> <li>• Organize workshops in schools for students to set personal goals</li> </ul>
5. Modifying Policies and Broader Systems	a. Non-violence contracts in the schools b. Incorporate non-violence education into health classes c. When students commit violent acts, require they meet with a counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools can require students to sign a contract of non-violence</li> <li>• Require teachers to adopt new curricula</li> <li>• Have counselors in the schools</li> </ul>

### Lesson 7.2 Reviewing and Selecting “Best Practices”

#### OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Throughout the CTB Curriculum, we've advocated for building on the work of others. We encourage collaboration because community work benefits from the understanding and experience of people with different gifts. It is this same principle that leads us to strongly encourage you to seek out and learn from the “best practices” or promising approaches used in other communities to address problems or goals similar to yours.

Time, energy and understanding are all much too limited to ignore “evidence-based” interventions that have been tried and tested elsewhere. This is not to say that an intervention that worked well in a different community or situation would automatically work in your context. But, identifying those “evidence-based” practices is an excellent place to begin for ideas. Looking for commonalities and differences in context can lead your organization to shape the “best practices” so that they can likewise be effective in your situation.

This lesson will introduce some criteria to use when evaluating and selecting practices that have proved successful in other contexts, and may also be useful in your own. We will discuss how to find out about such interventions, as well as how to choose those that may be right for your community or organization.

#### KEY LEARNING

What is a **best practice**?

**Promising or best practices** are those particular ways of doing things that have the potential to effectively address the issues of concern in your community. They include programs, policies, practices that have worked elsewhere, as judged by standards of effectiveness, feasibility, and appropriateness to the situation.

What is an **evidence-based approach**?

An **evidence-based approach** is a way of addressing a problem or goal that has research information to suggest that it “works” (i.e., the intervention, and not something else, brought about the observed improvements in related behavior and outcome). A caution: the “evidence” may be limited, or the effects too small, to solve the problem or achieve the goal. Although it may work in one situation, such as with specially-trained staff, there may be little evidence that it will work in your situation.

#### WHERE TO FIND OUT ABOUT EXISTING BEST PRACTICES

Sometimes, promising practices and interventions are as yet **untried**, but are based on a sound theory of practice, past experience, or a thorough analysis of the problem. When the problem or goal is important, and no evidence-based practices exist, the group might develop its intervention based on a clear logic model or theory of practice. Often, a comprehensive community intervention includes a mix of so-called “best practices” and other elements needed to achieve the goal.

The ideal approach to identify best practices is to use as many avenues as are open to you. Where possible, find and contact directly the developers and the planners of the programs or interventions of interest. Some sources of information include:

- Networking, especially with people doing work in the area of interest, but also with people who care about your initiative and its goals
- Libraries (especially reviews of the relevant literature)
- State and national advocacy and professional organizations
- International, federal and state agencies

- Researchers at colleges and universities
- The Internet (relevant websites and list-servs) (e.g., the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website for The Community Guide—[www.thecommunityguide.gov](http://www.thecommunityguide.gov))
- The “Explore Best Processes and Practices” feature of the Community Tool Box (<http://ctb.ku.edu/>)

Be sure to **cast a wide net** when gathering ideas for review. You should consider almost everything that could work. It also means finding out **what didn't work** (at least in that situation). Although less promising, an intervention that was ineffective in one situation might enjoy success elsewhere if paired with other supports and intervention components.

### WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

#### Best practice for what?

First, determine whether the “best practice” or “evidence-based” approach is relevant for your goals. Three broad categories define a continuum of intervention:

- **Treatment**—Treatment programs aim to reduce or minimize the adverse effects of an already existing problem or condition. Such practices are vital, but are limited because they often do not address the underlying cause of the issue. For example, a treatment program, such as therapeutic counseling, may attempt to reverse the harm caused by child abuse or drug addiction.
- **Prevention**—Prevention attempts to reduce the chances of an undesirable problem or condition. Such efforts may address personal factors, such as knowledge or skills, and environmental factors, such as providing opportunities or enhancing support. For example, a prevention program for child abuse and neglect may address personal factors (e.g., parenting skills) and environmental factors (e.g., providing respite care for parents) to reduce risk and enhance protection for children and families.
- **Promotion**—Promotion aims to attain an improved level of health and development. It may ask people to do something, such as physical activity or healthy diet, rather than to stop doing something. For example, to promote child well-being, a community might make it easier and more rewarding for adults to be engaged in caring relationships with children not their own.

It is common to select one aspect, such as treatment or prevention, as a focus of your efforts. However, a community may find greater success over the long term if it finds ways to integrate efforts along the continuum of treatment, prevention and promotion.

#### Using qualitative and/or quantitative information to identify “what works”

**Quantitative information involves** using data or numbers to analyze and understand the effects of particular practices or interventions with specific groups or target populations. The numbers may be used in simple or complex ways: counting, comparing, or statistically analyzing the effects to reach conclusions about what worked and under what conditions. Quantitative analysis is generally considered objective, and is often what

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funders look to for proof of effectiveness. But, standing alone, quantitative data may not tell enough of the story to determine what made the difference and whether it is likely to work in another situation.

**Qualitative information** uses stories, focus groups, or in-depth interviews to look at what actually happens when a particular intervention is used. The information gathered often includes descriptions of people's experiences, adding depth and texture to an analysis.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis will give you a more complete picture of reality. It can help identify promising practices, and necessary conditions, for your intervention to be successful.

### **Nine characteristics of programs that work**

CTB Chapter 19, Section 1 discusses criteria for choosing promising practices. It outlines the seven attributes of highly effective programs discussed by Lisbeth Schorr in her work on strengthening families and communities (Common Purpose, 1998), and adds two additional characteristics.

Successful programs:

1. Are comprehensive, flexible, responsive and persevering
2. See those who should benefit (e.g., children) in the context of their groups (e.g., families)
3. Address the groups (e.g., families) as parts of broader context (e.g., neighborhoods and communities)
4. Have a long-term prevention orientation, a clear mission, and the ability to evolve over time
5. Are managed by competent and committed individuals with clearly identifiable skills
6. Have staff that are trained and supported to provide high quality, responsive service
7. Operate in settings that encourage practitioners to build strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect
8. Are collaborative, both within the group and between groups
9. Involve relationships and core values that strengthen their sense of shared purpose, and give them faith that disappointments and setbacks can be overcome.

These general characteristics help make a particular program or practice more promising, providing an overall structure to assure that it works. These nine attributes paint a picture of an intervention effort that is responsive, flexible, collaborative, well managed, competent, supportive, and committed to a clear mission.

### HOW TO SELECT “BEST PRACTICES”

There are several steps in selecting “best practices” or evidence-based approaches to addressing the problem or goal that matters to your community.

1. Search for “best practices” or “evidence-based approaches” for addressing the issue. Use existing online databases, reviews of the literature, and the experience of those working on this or related issues. For example, to seek out promising approaches for preventing substance abuse or youth violence, we might go to related online databases, such as CDC’s The Community Guide, retrieve and read reviews of the literature, and talk with experts in the area. Illustrative online databases that are valuable to those doing the work of community health and development include:
  - The Community Guide (U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>)—This Web site summarizes what is known about the effectiveness, efficiency, and feasibility of programs, policies and practices related to a variety of community health issues (e.g., immunization, tobacco, diet, physical activity, substance abuse, violence).
  - Pathways Mapping Initiative (Lisbeth Schorr’s Project on Effective Interventions supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation; <http://www.pathwaystooutcomes.org/>)—This Web site maps the pathways or factors contributing to child and family functioning (e.g., early childhood development, transition to adulthood), and what works in achieving related outcomes.
  - Cochrane Collaboration (<http://www.cochrane.org/>)—This collaborative effort uses rigorous standards for including best practices for a variety of issues.
  - Campbell Collaboration (<http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/>)—This Web site includes systematic reviews of the literature in the area of social, behavioral, and educational practices.
  - The “Explore Best Practices” feature of the Community Tool Box (<http://ctb.ku.edu>), offers links to these and other databases of best practices.
2. Consider the strength of the “evidence base” for whether the “best practice” caused the improvement in behavior and/or outcome. A fundamental question is, “Can we attribute observed improvements to the intervention, and not something else?” For each promising approach, we should consider the strength of evidence (e.g., insufficient evidence, moderate evidence, strong evidence of a relationship). Key questions include:
  - Did what was measured reflect the community’s indicators of success? For example, if the reviews show a resulting increase in knowledge but not behavior, or for a few individuals but not whole communities, does this fit what the community wants from the intervention?
  - Did the experimental design make it possible to rule out other plausible explanations of the effect? For instance, did the observed effects occur when, and only when, the intervention was in place?
  - Are the effects socially significant? Are they not merely statistically significant, but large enough to actually make a difference with the problem or goal?

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3. Consider the “evidence base” for whether the best practice would achieve the desired results in your community or situation. For instance, if we were attempting to prevent HIV/AIDS using practices tested with gay men in New York City, we would consider the similarities and differences with our context. Key questions include:
  - Are the effects observed in situations likely to generalize to people and conditions in your community?
  - Alone or in combination, will the “best practices” be sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes? For instance, if we implemented the several recommended “best practices” for preventing violence (e.g., home visiting, firearms laws), what is the likelihood that this would achieve desired improvements in the rate of violence in the community?
4. Consider whether the conditions that affect success (see next section) are present (or can be created) in your community. Some key questions include:
  - Is it feasible for us to implement the intervention in our community?
  - Can we assure the required amount (“dose”) of the intervention for the required time (“duration”)?
  - Can we assure that important factors affecting success—such as the knowledge and skill of implementers, leadership, technical support, time and other resources—will be present in our community?

### FITTING BEST PRACTICES INTO YOUR SITUATION

Working with community partners and collaborators, both in the planning and implementation phases of your intervention, consider the following steps:

1. Conduct a community-based assessment and planning process to be sure that you’re addressing the issues most appropriate and pressing for the community.
2. Decide whether you’ll address the issue directly, or whether you’ll try to change the conditions that create or support it.
3. Find or create programs, policies or practices that will successfully address the issue in the way you want to address it.
4. Determine what elements of a promising intervention will work in your community, and which ones need to be changed. Consider using Everett Rogers’ concept of “reinvention” to shape the innovation to fit local conditions (*Diffusion of Innovations* 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1995).
5. Implement the intervention, making adjustments as you go along.
6. Evaluate your work and results regularly, understanding that no matter how well any intervention works, it can always be improved.

Be aware of certain difficulties in adopting and implementing best practices and anticipate how you will overcome them:

*Do not repeat the tactics  
which have gained you one victory,  
but let your methods be regulated  
by the infinite variety of  
circumstances.*

—Sun Tzu

1. Excellent programs often don’t “travel” well.
  - it may not work in a different context or situation
  - people may not be able to explain exactly what they did
  - the success of the intervention may have depended largely upon the talents or support of key individuals or organizations

2. You can't expect people to accept and embrace a program if it is imposed upon them from elsewhere or above.
3. No intervention or practice that involves people—either staff or programs—is perfect.
4. The difference between a successful and an unsuccessful intervention can be subtle.
5. If you can't replicate an intervention's resources as well as its practices, you're probably headed for trouble.

### **Setting conditions under which “what works” can actually work**

Several factors or conditions can enhance success in adopting best practices. Lisbeth Schorr, writing in *Common Purpose* (1998) makes a distinction between “what works” (or best practices) and the conditions under which “what works” actually work effectively. Success depends on both the characteristics of the original intervention and the conditions under which it will be implemented. Adapted from the work of Lisbeth Schorr, these 10 factors or conditions include:

1. Use of practices that are sound and well developed through systematic research and experience
2. Knowledge and skill of local implementers and local leadership
3. A clear sense of mission or belonging to something greater
4. Access to people who have successfully implemented the program previously
5. Technical assistance that recognizes there are new things to be discovered
6. Adaptation (reinvention) of the best practices to reflect the context
7. Local involvement in initial planning, finding and choosing among best practices, and implementing (adapting) the intervention
8. Adequate resources: people, money, supplies and time, to achieve your goals
9. Documentation and feedback on implementation of core intervention components and community and systems changes
10. Outcomes (for individuals and whole communities) matter when judging success of the effort

*We are caught in an inescapable  
network of mutuality,  
tied in a single garment  
of destiny. Whatever affects one  
directly, affects all indirectly.*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

### Lesson 7.3 Adapting Interventions to Fit the Local Context

#### OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

In the preceding lesson, we discussed the identification of best practices, and addressed the question of whether an intervention that worked elsewhere could work to meet your community's needs and goals. We understand that interventions are not one size fits all. Typically, there are differences in culture and context, as the people and setting simply cannot be exactly the same. Accordingly, adaptation is necessary and welcomed so long as effectiveness is assured. Community organizer Saul Alinsky taught that we should always work within the experience of the group. This requires understanding of the local situation and in how the interaction unfolds in each context.

This lesson introduces some of the basic principles helpful to successful adaptation, and guidelines or steps in making the adaptation to the community and its cultural norms and context.

#### KEY LEARNING

What is **community**?

Community refers to those who share a common place (e.g., neighborhood, workplace), experience (e.g., being a youth, being an African American), or interest (e.g., in child well being or safety). Most people belong to multiple communities that may reflect their professional lives (e.g., business, government), personal interests (e.g., the arts, sports), religion (e.g., Catholicism, Islam), and ethnicity or race.

What do we mean by **culture**?

Culture refers to the distinctive behaviors (e.g., ways of interacting), norms (i.e., customary or expected ways of doing things), roles (i.e., expected functions such as leader or observer), and achievements and products (e.g., writings) of a particular group. We can also see culture as the ethnicity (e.g., Latino), traditional practices (e.g., language, diet, religion), or history (e.g., discrimination, domination) that a group of people shares.

Within broad cultural groupings, there can be subgroups with significant differences from one another.

Aspects of cultures with varied traditions, histories, or differences include the following:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity and race
- Social class
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Employment
- Educational background
- Geographic or regional background
- Family background
- Neighborhood

What is **context**?

Context refers to those factors and circumstances that contribute to why an event occurs or a person behaves in a certain way, for example, a youth may behave differently in the contexts of family, school, church, or playground. Context encompasses those experiences, beliefs, history, and physical and social environments that influence what people say and do.

### WHY AND WHEN TO ADAPT INTERVENTIONS

It is almost impossible for a community or organization to find a “best practice” approach that requires absolutely no adaptation to fit the local situation or context. The approach may address a similar problem or goal, such as educational success, but the context, such as affluent or impoverished school, may be different. Alternately, the community context may be similar, but the problem or goal is different. Resources, competence and leadership can seldom be duplicated across places. Adaptation will almost certainly be necessary.

Adaptation requires that when a community or organization has identified a best practice or approach that has been effective elsewhere, they must also be aware of the differences in context between their organization or community and that of the situation in which the best practice was identified. What elements of the intervention are necessary to preserve its effectiveness? Is your targeted group different from the original situation, and in what ways—poverty, ethnicity, age, religion? How might this difference affect implementation of the approach in your community? What kinds of changes in the intervention would take advantage of your organization or community’s strengths and resources?

In cases where differences in population or situation exist, the importance of appropriate adaptation cannot be overstated. A well-adapted intervention will:

- *Show respect* for the community and its many cultures’ values and identities
- Improve your *ability to connect* with the community
- Increase the relevance of your actions
- *Decrease* the possibility of unwanted *surprises*
- Increase the involvement of members of other community and its cultural groups
- Increase support for your program by group members
- Increase the chances for success of your intervention
- *Build bridges of trust and cooperation across communities*—which should raise the prospects for more successful interventions in the future

Although it is difficult to know in advance how much adaptation is necessary, it is safe to assume that some will be required, and to proceed cautiously as a result. Six useful criteria help determine when you should adapt interventions to fit different community contexts. Do so when:

- You have a promising approach
- The practice is already tested and found it to be successful
- You are actively interested in trying out the idea in a different community context
- You have the needed time, money, and people power to go forward
- Members of a different community or cultural group from the original use of the best practice are known to be interested in your intervention
- Members of that community group are actively willing to collaborate with you in making that intervention a success

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Sometimes an intervention will need only minimal adaptation. For example, a particularly technical or skill-oriented intervention, such as leading a dialogue or meeting, may not require much adaptation. However, how it is presented (e.g., language, expertise level, appropriate examples) will need to be adapted depending on the audience. For instance, teaching reading to adults who know a different language will differ from teaching toddlers or older adults who know how to read in a different language than the one being taught.

Consider not only whether the people and environment are new, but also whether variations would make any difference in achieving the intended result. A health intervention for a group of children suffering from diarrhea and dehydration, for instance, may be similar no matter where in the world that dilemma is faced, whether due to no drinking water or to an infectious disease. But, how that intervention is made effective may vary by context (e.g., information about how to purify water being communicated by indigenous leaders to fit local practices).

### ADAPTING INTERVENTIONS TO FIT DIFFERENT COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

There are specific steps that have been shown to improve the success rate of making an intervention work in different settings. Use these steps as a guide as you approach your work:

1. **Evaluate whether the intervention is worth adapting.** Consider whether the effects are consistent and large enough to make a difference with the community problem or goal.
2. If yes, reflect on **your organization's readiness** to adapt the intervention.
  - What cultural values and beliefs are important within your organization or community, and how might they differ from those of the target community?
  - Do you have any experience working with the cultural group that could most benefit and contribute, or with similar groups?
  - What lessons can you draw from past experiences that might be useful in adapting the intervention?
  - Are individuals in your organization ready to take on the work of doing the adaptation?
3. **Check the readiness** of the group targeted to benefit.
  - Have you engaged those most affected by the problem or issue as resources and partners in the adaptation process?
  - Is the community or cultural group you wish to work with ready to work with you?
  - Are they able to work with you? Have you developed relationships with them and sought their input on the intervention's importance and appropriateness to their situation?
  - How is the group likely to react to your cultural tradition?
4. **Make a commitment** to do the adaptation with local people, and do it well.

If you believe, after responding to the questions and issues above, that you are ready to go ahead with the intervention in the new community or cultural context, then:

5. **Set specific objectives** for the adapted intervention. Indicate what components and elements of the intervention should be adapted. By when will this happen?

The next steps require work with members of the community group, as well as outside experts. They include:

6. **Do some research** to learn as much as you can—even if you think you already know a great deal. Learn about the community's beliefs and practices, its social and political concerns, its history, etc. Use written and archival resources noted in earlier lessons, including:
- Articles or reports on the community or cultural group
  - Census data
  - Maps
  - Government documents
  - Local reports and statistics
  - Hometown newspapers (current and back issues)
7. **Talk to people in the community**, either one-on-one or within group settings. Include key members of those groups who are especially knowledgeable about the community and known experts on the local history and culture.
8. **Spend significant time** in the community. Find ways to work and play in the community to build relationships and increase your understanding and appreciation.
9. **Propose the intervention idea to some of the people in that context**—after reflecting on the questions and completing the research described above:
- Propose the idea as tentative and open to revision
  - Be tactful, keying your words to the experiences of your listener
  - Ask for feedback on the idea, and be responsive to that feedback
10. **Find additional people in the community** beyond those you have already engaged who will work together with you to make the intervention happen. Create conditions that enable collaborators to feel comfortable, welcome, and contributing to the effort.
11. **Begin planning and pilot testing**. Be clear about what intervention elements are to be adapted and who will do what by when. Be careful to design intervention strategies that your collaboration can afford in terms of people, time, money, and other resources.

As was true in the original intervention, the opportunity to pilot test the adapted intervention with a subset of the larger group may provide valuable lessons for the intervention.

*Learn from the PAST.*

—American Indian College  
Fund Slogan

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### **SOME GUIDELINES TO ENHANCE YOUR SUCCESS**

These four guidelines will help make the adaptation successful:

1. ***Look for common ground.***

Understand that the commonalities we share are far greater than the differences we see. Start with the common ground (i.e., where we are in agreement), and then work to bridge differences.

2. ***Anticipate how your organization or effort will resolve conflict or differences.***

- Conflicts are a natural part of working together, especially when people from different groups haven't done so before.
- Relationships need to be formed and common language developed.
- Trust needs to be built (and trust takes time).
- Rather than avoiding or suppressing conflict, see that it gets expressed, openly and respectfully. Regular "check-in" meetings asking, "How is this going?"—can help to monitor both process and progress.

3. ***Translate or adapt materials if the community shares different language or cultural histories.***

Getting the words right—having a good translation—is part of the battle in ensuring understanding. If relevant materials already exist in the native language of the group, use them. If you choose to translate materials, select an experienced translator who not only speaks the language, but also has experience in the community. Have the translated material reviewed by others who are part of the group. Translate material back to its original language for accuracy, but more importantly, to determine if any meaning has been lost.

4. ***Use cross-cultural training.***

If the plan is for groups with differing cultural backgrounds to work together for a period of time and especially when neither group has much experience with the other, then cross-cultural training may be beneficial. Trainers from one group can work with the other, and vice-versa; this can be effective at the outset and as an ongoing component of the collaboration.

*The best leaders have a deep  
appreciation for people's  
differences.*

—Robert Rosen

**OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON**

The time will come when you take what you know and try to make things happen. You've done your homework. You've developed your intervention and capacity. It is time for action.

As a consequence, this lesson focuses on two final considerations. The first is proceeding in an ethical and respectful way with your community intervention. The second affirms that you know what you're doing and have the capacity to do it, and encourages you to take action.

**Lesson 7.4**  
***Ethical***  
***Considerations***  
***in Implementing***  
***Interventions***

**KEY LEARNING**

**What is meant by the term *ethics* in this context?**

Ethics refers to what is considered right and good for ourselves and others. Ethical behavior is governed by personal, moral, legal and social standards of what is right and good. Although these may vary by situation and culture, shared values, such as in justice or security, are common. Often, people who work within a particular profession or live within a cultural group may share a code of ethics or ethical principles—a shared understanding of what is right and good.

**SOME GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS**

In the CTB Chapter 19, Section 5 on “Ethical Issues in Community Interventions,” Phil Rabinowitz identifies several principles that most people who do this work would agree guide their daily practice as community workers and service providers. These include:

- First, do no harm. Realize that this may mean not starting a community intervention at all.
- Respect people for who they are, not as means to an end.
- Respect participants' ability to play a role in determining what they need.
- Respect everyone's human, civil and legal rights.
- Do what is best for everyone under the circumstances – considering each participant's needs.
- Don't abuse your position or exploit a participant to gain a personal advantage or to exercise power over another person.
- Don't attempt an intervention alone in areas in which you're not trained or competent. Seek out others with experience and knowledge to assist you.
- Try to improve or correct, to the extent possible, the conditions that affect participants in your program and the community.

**BENEFITS OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN COMMUNITY INTERVENTION**

Most of us engage in this work because we seek to do the right thing. Ethical choice in behavior is simply consistent with what is right and good—both for you and for others. Acting ethically typically results in:

1. Greater effectiveness of the program
2. Increased standing of the organization or effort in the community
3. Greater moral credibility and leadership
4. Personal and professional growth of participants

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Additionally, some professions are bound by specific ethical and legal codes of behavior (e.g., social workers, clergy, educators, researchers, health and mental health professionals).

### **ETHICAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN INTERVENTIONS**

As you make decisions about the ethics of your intervention, it is important to consider the treatment of people and other actions of the group's members, staff, and volunteers. Use this list of issues as a check in your planning, and also as you engage in ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of the interventions.

1. **Confidentiality**—Based on the tenet of trust, confidentiality also includes the issue of invasion or protection of privacy. Since this can affect respect, dignity, and personal power, it is very important in community work. Possible policy options for your organization regarding confidentiality include:
  - a. No one other than the individual working with a particular participant will have access to information about or records of that person without his or her permission.
  - b. Information is confidential within a program, but may be shared among staff members for purposes of consultation and enhancement of program effectiveness.
  - c. Information is confidential within a program or to a particular staff member, but may be shared with staff members of other programs in which the participant is involved either to improve services for the participant or to contribute to the other organization's reporting data.
  - d. Information is confidential within a program, but is submitted to funding sources as documentation of services provided anonymously.
  - e. Information is not confidential, or is only confidential under certain circumstances.

In all circumstances, regardless of the confidentiality policies adopted and used within an intervention, participants are informed regarding the policy. This permits individual choice regarding participation.

2. **Consent**—the opportunity to decide whether or not, is another important ethical principle. For community interventions, there are three probable types of consent that may be built into the policies regarding the intervention program:
  - a. Consent to sharing of information is usually provided by the participant(s) in writing for specific purposes or as a “blanket” permission for open sharing.
  - b. Informed consent for participation in services, treatment, research, or intervention conditions can be requested so that the expectations, fears or questions of participants can be addressed. Usually, a form will outline what a participant can expect to have happen as a result of participation, have the opportunity to ask questions and receive information, and then sign the form signifying his or her understanding and willingness to participate.
  - c. Community consent may be difficult to obtain, but it is almost always best to let people know what is intended by an intervention in a whole community and to negotiate with them if they have concerns.

- 3. Disclosure**—an outgrowth of the tenet of trust. People typically have greater trust when they have greater information. Disclosure may be in one of several types:
- Disclosure to participants of the conditions of the program they are in, respecting their “right to know.”
  - Disclosure of participant information to other individuals, agencies, etc. This is limited by confidentiality guidelines unless otherwise spelled out to participants in advance.
  - Disclosure of conflicts of interest (e.g., potential financial gain) or acknowledgement of bias (e.g., public positions on the issue) by all engaged parties.
- 4. Competence**—By engaging in community work, the organization is creating an implied social contract with the community and insurance that it will do the job it says it will do. Participants and the community have a right to expect that the intervention’s implementers know what they are doing and will make their best faith effort to provide an effective intervention that is implemented by those competent to do so.
- 5. Conflict of interest**—Conflicts can stem from situations in which personal or organizational self-interest could influence (or have the perception of influencing) judgments or actions taken in the community. Some conflicts are obvious and some are more subtle, but all are potentially damaging. When conflicts of interest arise or become evident, take two steps:
- Be open about the conflict (e.g., potential financial gain) or bias (e.g., public positions on the issue), pointing it out to those with a need to know, and discuss solutions to the problems
  - Eliminate or avoid the conflict situation or minimize the bias in all future actions (e.g., arrange for affected decisions to be made by others who do not have a conflict of interest)
- 6. Other unethical, immoral, or criminal behavior**—Behavior that goes beyond the bounds of what may be considered right and good by society, and is considered therefore to be grossly unethical, could include:
- Sexual relationships where a power imbalance exists (e.g., with a child or student)
  - Exploitation for financial gain
  - Defrauding of funders
  - Denying necessary services
  - Discriminating in service delivery by race, gender, ethnicity
  - Outright criminal behavior
- 7. General ethical responsibilities**—Beyond avoiding a breach of the principles noted above, general ethical responsibility means actively striving to do what is right and good, and treating all people associated with the effort as you and others would hope to be treated. This includes a number of responsibilities:
- Responsibility to participants* for trying to provide the best and most effective intervention possible while respecting participants’ rights and treating them with respect.
  - Responsibility to staff* for fair treatment, appropriate training, support and development, and for protecting them from harm.
  - Responsibility to funders* for fiscal responsibility, good stewardship or trusteeship, and working toward the agreed-upon ends.

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- d. *Responsibility to the community* for working to understand its needs and strengths, to respond to its concerns, and for trying to improve the quality of life for individual participants and for the community as a whole.

As your organization tries to live out its mission in good faith, adherence to a well-thought out and articulated ethical code will assist its success. Clear expectations for ethical behavior as an organization, and in individual members and participants, will improve the trust that is crucial for such work, as well as the credibility and effectiveness of the efforts.

### **IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY INTERVENTION**

When the time comes for action, you had better just jump in. And the truth is, that time is now. It makes sense to reflect on how you have, as individuals and as an organization, identified interventions that have a strong chance of making a difference in your community. You have:

- Assessed the community thoroughly to obtain a clear picture of the changes in behavior and environment conditions that are needed
- Analyzed the problem to assess the current level of the problem or goal attainment, identified both targets and agents of change, engaged the community and clients in identifying the problem or goal and intervention, identified risk and protective (personal and environmental) factors that require attention
- Developed strategic and actions plans that describe what success will look like and that include specific, measurable objectives
- Researched what others have done and exhausted local sources of interventions; selected interventions that fit your financial and human resources; identified core components and elements and adapted them to the local context; pilot-tested the intervention, and considered the ethical practices you will adhere to in your interventions

If all of this has been done, then your interventions will be more likely to be successful in creating change and improvement in your community. Go ahead, and jump on in. That first action step is to get in the water, and the water is fine.

*If one tells the truth,  
one is sooner or later  
to be found out.*

—Oscar Wilde

## Activity 7.1

### *Developing a Table of Intervention Components and Elements*

Time: 20 minutes

Goal: This exercise asks participants to take the potential solutions and strategies generated in earlier modules (Activities 3.5 and 5.2b) and frame them as intervention components and elements and modes of delivery. The activity should surface gaps, as well as provide a framework for identifying best practices that might fit the characteristics of potential interventions.

Steps:

1. Participants should be divided into small groups of no more than five persons. Each group should select or be assigned one of the completed problem/goal charts created in Activity 3.5 and pair it, if possible, with identified community and system changes created in Activity 5.2b that could be part of the interventions—**OR**—in the absence of those items, fill in all sections of the chart on the following page (this will require an additional 30 minutes to complete).
2. Small group members will brainstorm and frame the existing information about personal and environmental factors in an attempt to complete the chart of specific intervention elements under each related component. The goal is to take previously generated solutions and strategies and insert them into the component and elements, if possible, and to generate additional potential intervention elements where gaps exist.
3. Identify modes of delivery (i.e., the how) for each intervention component.
4. When you are finished, save the work for use in a later activity. As time permits, share with one another the potential intervention components and elements that were surfaced. Ask group members to critique the completeness and appropriateness of intervention components and elements in addressing the problem or goal (sharing information as a part of this activity will require additional time).

#### ***Carrying It Forward***

Reflect on your thinking and conversation regarding intervention components and elements. Did it help push your thinking regarding “solutions” to consider the five specific categories of intervention components? Were you able to generate a comprehensive list? Of components and elements? Do your intervention components and elements reflect your analysis of personal and environmental factors that affect the problem or goal? What components appear to be most realistic to accomplish, and which will be more difficult? Which components are the higher priority? Why? What resources and supports will you need to implement the interventions of highest priority? How would others in your community view your list of intervention components and elements, and what would they add or change? How can you seek their input and adjust your intervention accordingly? How will you use this process to specify and communicate your intervention?

**Activity 7.1 (cont.)**  
***Developing a Table of Intervention***  
***Components and Elements***

**Table of Intervention Components and Elements**

Community Problem or Goal:

Intervention Components	Specific Elements	Models of Delivery
1. Providing Information and Enhancing Skills		
2. Modifying Access, Barriers, and Opportunities		
3. Changing the Consequences		
4. Enhancing Services and Support		
5. Modifying Policies and Broader Systems		

## **Activity 7.2a**

### **Selecting “Best Practices” for Your Community’s Problem or Goal**

Time: 30 minutes

Goal: This exercise asks participants to search for, and reflect upon, identified “best practices” that could be applicable to their community intervention. Consider the results of earlier activities (e.g., personal and environmental factors identified in your analysis of the problem or goal; the Table of Components and Elements for your intervention). To retrieve candidate evidence-based practices, participants will require access to online databases and/or library resources.

Steps:

1. Participants should search for “best practices” or evidence-based approaches” for addressing the issue (during the session or as homework). To do so, they may use existing online databases, reviews of the literature, and/or the experience of those working on this or related issues.
2. Group members should consider the strength of the “evidence base,” for whether the “best practice” caused the improvement in behavior and/or outcome (i.e., can we attribute observed improvements to the intervention, and not something else).
3. Group members should reflect on the generality of the “evidence base,” for whether the best practice would achieve the desired results in your community.

#### **Carrying It Forward**

Reflect on the identified “best practices” for addressing the problem or goal that matters to your community. Were you able to find best practices for your issue? How adequate is the evidence about what works? Did what was measured reflect the community’s indicators of success? Are the effects socially significant (i.e., large enough to make a difference with the problem or goal)? Are the effects observed in other situations likely to generalize to people and conditions in your community? Alone or in combination, will the “best practices” be sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes? How will you use this approach for selecting “best practices” in your situation?

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## **Activity 7.2b**

### ***Setting Conditions Under Which “What Works” Can Actually Work***

Time: 20 minutes

Goal: This exercise asks participants to consider what they would do to set conditions for the success of their intervention (including “best practices”). Consider the results of earlier activities (e.g., personal and environmental factors identified in your analysis of the problem or goal; the Table of Components and Elements; “Best practices” identified for your intervention). To plan for supportive conditions, use the sheet provided below.

Steps:

1. Participants should review the 10 factors or conditions for assuring the success of their intervention (including implementation of “best practices”).
2. Group members should consider whether and how each factor is applicable to your situation.
3. For each condition needed for success, group members should specify what they will do to create or assure that condition in their situation.

#### ***Carrying It Forward***

Reflect on what you will do to assure conditions for success—so that “what works” can actually work. Which factors or conditions for assuring the success of the intervention are particularly important in your situation? How will you assure that these conditions are present? Is it feasible for us to implement the intervention in our community? Can we assure the required amount (“dose”) of the intervention for the required time (“duration”)? How will you use this approach for setting conditions for success for intervention in our community?

**Activity 7.2 b (cont.)  
Setting Conditions Under Which “What Works” Can Actually Work**

<b>Some Conditions for Success</b>	<b>Plan for Assuring This in Our Situation</b>
1. Practices that are sound and well-developed	
2. Knowledge and skill of local implementers and local leadership	
3. A clear sense of mission or belonging to this effort	
4. Access to people who have implemented the successful program	
5. Technical assistance	
6. Adaptation to reflect the local context	
7. Local involvement in planning, implementing, and adapting the intervention	
8. Adequate resources (e.g., people, money, time)	
9. Documentation and feedback on implementation	
10. Outcomes matter when judging success of the effort	

## **Activity 7.3**

### ***Identifying Community and Cultural Elements That May Affect Adaptation***

Time: 30 minutes

Goal: In this activity, participants must identify a community or cultural group for which they will adapt an intervention, and then generate as much information as possible about that group to assist them in decisions about adaptation. It serves to illuminate the types of information that could be relevant in this kind of decision-making.

Steps:

1. The facilitator refers to the very thorough listing of cultural issues and questions that follows (also included in CTB Chapter 19, Section 4 Tools). To save time, the group could sub-divide to address different types of issues (e.g., historical, economical, political).
2. The group decides on a) the particular cultural group that will be the object of consideration for this exercise – either a group with whom the participants hope to work, or another group for whom a known intervention might be useful, and b) the particular intervention to be adapted.
3. Participants work in pairs or small groups, preferably including members with different cultural experiences. Each pair/group uses the worksheet (see below) and the set of the questions to answer. They attempt to respond to the questions, using what is already known or suspected about the identified group. If resources are available to the group or can be collected in advance, those resources should be used to assure as much factual information as possible. Complete the worksheet for specific aspects of cultural differences.
4. At the end of a 15-minute period, the whole group is gathered together so that each pair/group can share with others the responses they either know to be true, or don't yet know. The facilitator may elect to gather other information and opinions as appropriate, particularly in cases when the information shared is potentially based in stereotype, assumption or misinformation. Assessments of the quality of the sources and accuracy of the information should be made.
5. Then, the group should move discussion to a particular intervention and how it might have to be adapted given the information provided. Complete the column of the worksheet for specific adaptations of intervention components and elements.

## **Activity 7.3 (cont.)**

### ***Identifying Community and Cultural Elements That May Affect Adaptation***

From: CTB Chapter 19, Section 4:

#### ***Adapting Community Interventions for Different Cultures and Communities***

Tools and Checklists Section:

#### ***Tool #1: Questions to Consider in your Search for Information about the Community or Cultural Group***

##### **Historical Issues**

- What is the history of the community?
- What name or names do the community or cultural groups use to refer to themselves?
- What is the significance of the different names?
- What are the major differences between cultural groups in your target community, particularly across generational, educational, socio-economic and geographic lines?
- What have been the major historical events that describe the target group's experiences in this country/region?
- Have there been or are there major conflicts between cultural groups in the target community? What were the consequences?
- Have there been or are there major conflicts within the group? What were the consequences?

##### **Economic and Political Issues**

- What are the different socio-economic levels of groups within the community?
- What is the political status of each group in the community (e.g., undocumented, refugee, legal immigrant, citizen)?
- What are the different literacy levels within groups? Are they literate/illiterate in the dominant language (e.g., English) and/or their own language?
- What are the different education levels within groups?
- How is their health status affected by their economic and political status? What are the predominant health problems and concerns?
- How often are health care and human services used by these different groups? What types of care or services are used?
- What are the organizations that successfully serve the different groups within the target community? Are they governmental, religious, community, social service, political or ethnic in nature?

##### **Culture and Tradition-Specific Issues**

- What are the values of the different groups in the community?
- How do various members of each cultural group define health, illness, and wellness?
- What are some of the more common beliefs and practices of community groups, both in general and with respect to specific problems or goals?
- What are the predominant family structures within the community's cultural groups? (e.g., patriarchal, matriarchal, single-parent household, extended families, etc.)?

## **Activity 7.3 (cont.)**

### ***Identifying Community and Cultural Elements That May Affect Adaptation***

- What are some of the traditional roles of different family members in these cultural groups, particularly where health and development is concerned?
- Who are the formal and informal leaders in the community, and what role do they have in the area to be addressed?
- How many languages and dialects are spoken within the community?
- What are the formal and informal channels of communication within and between different groups?

#### **Service Orientation**

- What are the group's general beliefs about the cause, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of different health and development?
- What are the group's attitudes towards "Western" medicine? Professional human services? Aid? Development efforts?
- In general, what has been the experience of different groups when trying to access the health care and human services? Government services?
- To what extent is there use of traditional healers?
- Where do people go for information about health and human development?

#### **Religion**

- What are the different religious practices among cultural groups in the community?
- How is practice of religion influenced by the group's culture?
- What is the size of membership, and who are the members?
- Who are the religious leaders, and what is their role in the larger community?
- Are there conflicts among or within the various religious groups?
- What involvement do various religious groups have in the area of health care? Human and social services? Development efforts?
- Do religious beliefs conflict with the philosophy of community health and development? Can the beliefs be incorporated into your program and effort?

#### ***Carrying It Forward***

Think about your process of identifying dimensions of cultural differences that serve as the basis for adaptation. How was it to generate statements about differences in culture and context? Did you resort to stereotypes, assumptions, or guesses? Were those accepted, challenged or rejected by other participants? Was it difficult to come up with facts about a different community or culture without members, experts, or other resources available to you? How will your group gain access to these sources of knowledge about the culture and context so that you can make a successful adaptation? What specific adaptations may be particularly important? How will you use this process to adapt the intervention for your home community?

**Activity 7.3 (cont.)  
Identifying Community and Cultural  
Elements That May Affect Adaptation**

**Specific Cultural Group:**

**Intervention to be Adapted:**

<b>Specific Aspects of Cultural Difference</b>	<b>Specific Adaptations of Intervention Components and Elements</b> (e.g., to fit differences in values, beliefs, traditions, interests, experiences, competence, language, power)
Historical Issues:	
Economic and Political Issues:	
Culture and Tradition-Specific Issues:	
Service Orientation:	
Religion:	
Other:	

## **Activity 7.4**

### ***Assuring Attention to Ethical Issues in Your Community Intervention***

Time: 20 minutes

Goal: This exercise asks participants to consider how ethical issues might be at risk and ways to protect for them in implementing your community intervention. Consider the results of earlier activities (e.g., the Table of Components and Elements; “Best practices” identified for your intervention). To plan for adherence to ethical principles, use the worksheet provided below.

Steps:

1. In the context of their group and intervention, participants should review the ethical issues at risk and to be protected.
2. Group members should consider whether and how each ethical issue is at risk is to be protected in your situation.
3. For each ethical issue noted, group members should specify what they will do to assure that ethical protections are in place in their situation.

#### ***Carrying It Forward***

Reflect on what you will do to assure that ethical principles will be adhered to in the implementation of your intervention. What ethical issues may be at particular risk? How will they be protected for? How will you use this approach for assuring adherence to ethical principles in your situation?

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**Activity 7.4 (cont.)  
Assuring Attention to Ethical Issues in  
Your Community Intervention**

**Specific Cultural Group:**

**Intervention to be Adapted:**

<b>Specific Aspects of Cultural Difference</b>	<b>Specific Adaptations of Intervention Components and Elements</b> (e.g., to fit differences in values, beliefs, traditions, interests, experiences, competence, language, power)
Confidentiality:	
Consent:	
Disclosure:	
Competence:	
Conflict of Interest:	
Other Unethical, Immoral, or Criminal Behavior:	
General Ethical Responsibilities (i.e., to funders, participants, staff, the community):	

You are now ready to develop a concrete plan to create change and improvement in your community—congratulations! It is time to put the knowledge and skills you have acquired to work on a problem or goal of importance to you and your community. Prior exercises have prompted you to identify what factors have influenced and are maintaining the problem or goal, what changes might make a difference, and how to successfully adapt “best practices” to fit your cultural and community context. The following outline enables you to plan out each of your steps before you begin acting. Good luck! [Note: For additional support in completing this outline, go to the CTB Toolkits for “Planning the Work,” and look at “Developing an Intervention” <http://ctb.ku.edu/>]

## **Lesson 7.5**

### ***Putting It All Together: Creating a Plan for Developing an Intervention***

1. Identify what needs to happen for the community’s goals to be met. Consider:
  - a. The services (programs) that should be provided:
  - b. The changes in community and systems that should occur:
  - c. The specific behaviors of whom that need to change:
  - d. The improvements in community-level outcomes that should result:
2. Assess the level of the problem or goal. Some types of assessment include:
  - a. Direct observation of the behaviors or products related to the problem or goal:
  - b. Conducting behavioral surveys:
  - c. Interviewing key people in the community:
  - d. Reviewing archival or existing records:
3. Describe those whom the intervention should benefit (i.e., those whose behavior should be targeted for change and those who can help make change happen):
4. Indicate how you will obtain clients’ input, identifying and analyzing problems and goals to be addressed by the intervention. Consider how you will use:
  - a. Personal contacts—Who will you speak with about what?
  - b. Interviews—What questions will you ask of whom about the problem or goal and possible interventions?
  - c. Focus groups—From what groups will you seek what kinds of information?

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- d. Community forums—What public situations would present an opportunity for you to discuss the problem or goal, and how do you use the opportunity?
  - e. Concern surveys—What questions of whom would you ask about the problem or goal and potential solutions?
5. Analyze the problem or goals to be addressed by the intervention. Using client input to specify:
- a. Those for whom the current situation is a problem. Who is affected by the issue, problem, or goal?
  - b. The negative (positive) consequences for those directly affected and the broader community. What effect does the problem or issue have on the lives of those affected?
  - c. Personal and environmental factors to be influenced (i.e., people’s experience and history; knowledge and skills; barriers and opportunities; social support and caring relationships; living conditions that put them at risk for or protect them from experiencing certain problems):
  - d. The behavior or lack of behavior that causes or maintains the problem. What behaviors of whom would need to change for the problem (or goal) to be eliminated (addressed):
  - e. Who benefits and how from the situation staying the same (economically, politically):
  - f. The conditions that need to change for the issue to be resolved (e.g., skills, opportunities, financial resources, trusting relationships):
  - g. The appropriate level at which the problem or goal should be addressed (e.g., by individuals, families, neighborhoods, city or county government), and whether the organization has the capacity to influence such changes:
6. Set goals and objectives for what “success” would look like. Include:
- a. A description of what success would look like. How will the community or group be different if the intervention is successful?
  - b. Those goals the intervention is targeted to accomplish. How will you know if your intervention is successful?
  - c. The specific objectives the intervention will achieve. What will change by how much and by when?
7. Identify and assess “best practices” or “evidence-based interventions” that could help address the problem or goal. Indicate:
- a. Where you will look for “best practices”:
  - b. How you assess the evidence about whether the “best practice” caused the improvement:

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- c. How you assess the evidence about whether the “best practice” would achieve the desired results in your community:
  - d. How you assess whether conditions (e.g., time, money, people, technical assistance) that affect success are present:
8. Specify the core components and elements of the intervention based on the analysis and identified best practices. Be specific about elements to be included for each component:
- a. Providing Information and Enhancing Skills (e.g., public announcements, skill training):
  - b. Modifying Access, Barriers and Opportunities (e.g., access to health services; opportunities for education):
  - c. Enhancing Services and Supports (e.g., mentoring; peer support groups):
  - d. Changing the Consequences (e.g., increasing public recognition for deserved behavior):
  - e. Modifying Policies and Broader Systems (e.g., business and public policies, improved housing):
9. Identify the mode of delivery through which each component and element of the intervention will be delivered in the community (e.g., workshops for skill training):
10. Indicate how you will adapt the intervention or “best practice” to fit the needs and context of your community (e.g., differences in values, beliefs, traditions, interests, experiences, competence, language, power):
11. Develop an action plan to carry out the intervention. Include:
- a. The core components and elements to be implemented:
  - b. Who should do what by when:
  - c. Resources and supports needed and those already available:
  - d. Anticipated barriers and/or resistance and planned counteraction:
  - e. Communication and organizations that need to be informed:
12. Pilot-test the intervention on a small scale. Determine how to:
- a. Test the intervention and with whom:
  - b. Assess the quality of implementation of the intervention:

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c. Assess results and consequences or side effects:

d. Collect and use feedback to adapt and improve the intervention:

13. Implement the intervention, and monitor and evaluate the process (e.g., quality of implementation, satisfaction and outcomes (e.g., attainment of objectives))

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