



RESPONSIBILITY + ACTION = POWER

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK ~ NOVEMBER 1 - 7, 2014

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Crime Prevention – The Importance of Implementation for Positive Impacts

Based on Public Safety Canada's soon to be released *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs: What Do We Know So Far?* By Julie Savignac with Laura Dunbar, 2014

Have you ever wondered why a crime prevention program implemented in one place yields positive results but in another place, the results of the same program are less promising?

Through its National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), Public Safety Canada supports the implementation and evaluation of community-based crime prevention initiatives to identify what works, how it works, and what it costs.

The question of “how” crime prevention works has often been overshadowed in favour of focusing on program impacts. Yet the quality of the implementation of prevention programs is a key factor in their success.

Selecting an effective program is not enough; various experiences of replicating evidence-based programs have shown that effective programs have not necessarily achieved the expected results.

So, what works and how? An effective program, combined with a high-quality implementation, increases the likelihood of success and leads to better results for participants. Emphasis should be placed on program selection, but also equally on the identification of effective conditions for implementation. Moreover, a dynamic, committed and open context that is amenable to change will facilitate a program's integration and sustainability in the longer term.

Stages of the Program Implementation Process

Program implementation is not a unique, linear event but rather a dynamic, iterative process within which multiple steps overlap and it requires the use of strategies and key components. Four stages are central within an effective implementation strategy: 1. Exploration and Adoption; 2. Preparation and Installation; 3. Initial Implementation; and 4. Full Implementation. These stages:

- Represent a dynamic, iterative process;
- Are accompanied by a set of key activities carried out at different times;
- Are interconnected and affected by various internal and external organizational factors; challenges addressed (or not addressed) in one stage will impact the entire process (for example, high staff turnover could require an organization to go back to a previous stage of implementation);
- Are associated with structural and procedural changes: programs are not *plug and play*; a number of changes will take place in the organization and various forces will take place (including forces of resistance); and
- Are spread out over a period of two to four years.



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Implementation Drivers

In addition to the factors that positively or negatively influence the implementation process, implementation drivers will help to increase the probability of success in replicating a program. The most important implementation drivers are: staff selection, staff training, coaching, performance measurement and evaluation (fidelity), partnerships, engagement from management, information management systems, and leadership (Fixsen et al., 2009).

Implementation Teams

Implementation teams are made up of three to five people who have program expertise and knowledge of the principles of implementation. These individuals are fully engaged in and dedicated to the implementation process. Regardless of their composition (e.g. program developers, service providers, intermediary organizations, and on-site people), the implementation teams:

- Ensure the use of the implementation drivers;
- Follow the implementation process;
- Establish connections between partners; and
- Facilitate internal changes for integrating the new program into the organization's existing structure.

Fidelity in Program Implementation

Program fidelity refers to the degree to which the elements of a program, as designed by its developer, match its actual implementation by an organization. Programs implemented with greater fidelity have a greater likelihood of producing the expected changes.

Although there is no denying that it is preferable to replicate the program with fidelity, some adaptations are often needed and can be made without affecting the key components and the expected results. Some examples of acceptable adaptations include: changing some expressions, replacing original images, replacing cultural references and/or adding evidence-based content to make the program more appealing to participants. Adaptations such as modifying the amount of intervention (dosage), theoretical approach and amount or type of staff are considered risky adaptations as they jeopardize the achievement of the program's expected results.

A Note on the Implementation of Crime Prevention Programs

Crime prevention programs work with people who have multiple risk factors, sometimes even criminal records, which raises a series of implementation challenges that seem to be specific to this area – for example, obstacles related to the identification, recruitment and retention of participants. Other examples of challenges related to the implementation of crime prevention programs include: fidelity in the implementation, program adaptation (and cultural adaptation), selection and retention of qualified staff, training and technical support (especially for programs developed in other countries).

For more information on the implementation of programs in the field of crime prevention or in a related field, please sign up to receive a posting alert for the Public Safety Canada *GUIDE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS: WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?*

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/bt/mlng-1st-eng.aspx>



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