Selecting an Evidence-based Program

As the juvenile justice system in Nevada moves toward adopting evidence-based programs, many agencies and service providers may need to identify new evidence-based program options for their service continuum. Many may find the task overwhelming and are unsure of where to begin. Fortunately, there are great resources available to assist in the selection of evidence-based programs. This newsletter provides guidance and resources to simplify the process of choosing a new evidence-based program.

1. Determine Needs

The first step in selecting a new evidence-based program is to determine which type of program is needed in your jurisdiction. It is best to involve a group of stakeholders when discussing programming needs within your jurisdiction. Research has shown that programs are more effective when they address identified risk factors and needs of youth. Criminogenic risk factors and needs drive delinquent behavior2, therefore, they should also drive program selection. These risk factors and needs can be gathered by aggregating data from a validated risk need assessment tool such as the YLS/SCCM, or through a community youth survey. For example, risk need assessments or a community youth survey may indicate that substance abuse, antisocial attitudes and poor academic performance are common risk factors and needs for youth in your jurisdiction. Review currently available program options within your jurisdiction to determine if service gaps may exist for these risk factors. Prioritizing risk factors will help you target a specific programming need, saving valuable time and resources.

2. Explore Registries

Once a specific need for programming is identified, for example substance abuse, explore existing programs within your jurisdiction orregistries that are available to assist in the selection of evidence-based programs. Options such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Model Program Guide and the National Institute of Justice’s Crime Solutions.Gov can be used to determine the program’s effectiveness and help implement evidence-based programs. Most registries include a program description, targeted outcomes, and evaluation results as well as research evidence can be used to determine the program’s effectiveness. Make sure to consider funding requirements. Not all evidence-based programs work the same in every jurisdiction or with every population. It is important to consider which programs work best considering your population and your capacity to implement and sustain the program. Compare the populations studied in the research evidence to your jurisdiction of interest and evaluate if the program is eligible for state funding. Programs in the registries are searchable by various criteria that are important to determine if it is eligible for state funding. Programs in the registries are searchable by various criteria that are important to ensure that programs are more effective when they address identified risk factors and needs of youth.

3. Make an Informed Selection

Identify a few programs that meet your needs and then review them closer to determine if you are able to meet implementation requirements. Not all evidence-based programs work the same in every jurisdiction or with every population. It is important to consider which programs work best considering your population and your capacity to implement and sustain the program. Compare the populations studied in the research evidence to your jurisdiction of interest and evaluate if the program is eligible for state funding. Programs in the registries are searchable by various criteria that are important to ensure that programs are more effective when they address identified risk factors and needs of youth. Make sure to consider if the program is eligible for state funding. Programs in the registries are searchable by various criteria that are important to ensure that programs are more effective when they address identified risk factors and needs of youth.

Selecting a new evidence-based program is an important step towards improving outcomes for youth in Nevada’s juvenile justice system. The NCJJI is staffed with knowledgeable researchers to assist you in the process. Contact the NCJJI for additional support and guidance.

Creation of the NCJJI

Evidence-based practices is at the heart of the juvenile justice reform efforts under AB 472, which establishes policies for reducing recidivism rates and other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system, juvenile court-involved youth, their families, and their communities. The law also requires that court-imposed programs and interventions are effective. AB 472 established an evidence-based program resource center, later renamed the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation, to support the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices. The resource center is headquartered by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Institute of Justice and the National Office on未成年人.

Additional Resources

EBP 101: Selecting an EBP

Explore a series of short videos created by the PA EPISCenter that focus on selecting an evidence-based program.

Selection on EBP

Youth.gov is a U.S. government resource that supports programs and services for youth, and can help you identify and select evidence-based youth programs.

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