

IMPLEMENTATION TOOL 3: ADAPTATION GUIDELINES

ADAPTATION GUIDELINES¹

Here are some general guidelines to follow when adapting a program:

- **Select programs with the best practical fit to local needs and conditions.**

This will reduce the likelihood that you will need to make any significant adaptations.

- **Select programs with the largest effect size.**

In general, a program with a large effect size is less likely than a similar program with a small effect size to have the relevant outcome reduced by an adaptation.

- **Change capacity before changing the program.**

It may be easier to change the program, but changing local capacity to deliver it as it was designed is a safer choice.

- **Consult with the program developer.**

Consult with the program developer to determine what experience and/or advice he or she has about adapting the program to a particular setting or circumstance.

- **Retain core components.**

There is a greater likelihood of effectiveness when a program retains the core component(s) of the original intervention.

- **Be consistent with evidence-based principles.**

There is a greater likelihood of success if an adaptation does not violate an established evidence-based prevention principle.

- **Add, rather than subtract.**

It is safer to add to a program than to modify or subtract from it.

For more information:

SAMHSA. (2019, June 20). A Guide to SAMSHA's Strategic Prevention Framework. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>

¹ Implementation tool borrowed directly from a 2013 SAMHSA website document. This particular reference is no longer available on their website. However, a very similar resource can be found here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>