

IMPLEMENTATION TOOL 2: HOW SHOULD YOU ADAPT?

HOW SHOULD YOU ADAPT?¹

'Adaptation' includes any changes to a program's content and delivery in order to fit specific needs. How should you adapt interventions to fit different cultural traditions?

Here is one step-by-step approach you can use as a guide. (If you are working within an organization, the same steps will apply to your organization as well.)

1. Ask yourself, honestly: **"Is the intervention is worth adapting?"** It may be good; but is it good enough? Is its potential value high enough to justify the effort you will be putting in? A sincere and thoughtful answer to this question, well before you start, can save you a lot of time and trouble later on.
2. Suppose you decide the intervention is worth adapting. **Do you want to do the adaptation?** Much of the success of your adaptation -- or of *any* intervention -- will depend upon your personal desire. There may be other things you would rather do. So unless you can answer this question with a definite "yes," think very carefully before moving ahead.
3. You may decide that you want to do it. But here's another question: **Is it really your role to direct the adaptation?** Maybe it is; maybe no one else is ready to come forward at all. (If so, ask why.) But maybe the intervention would work better if you didn't direct it. Maybe others should take on the lead responsibility -- which could both make the intervention more successful and empower those others as well. Maybe your best place is on the edges, or in the background.
4. **Check your readiness.** If you do have a role, are you culturally ready to take it on? You might want to ask yourself these questions:
 - o What are your own cultural values and beliefs? How might they be different from those of the target community?
 - o Do you have experience working with the cultural group in question, or with similar groups?
 - o If so, what lessons can you draw from those experiences that might be useful here?
 - o Are you personally ready to take on the potential work of doing the adaptation?
5. **Check the readiness of your target group** - "readiness" works both ways:
 - o Is the cultural group in question ready to work with you?
 - o Is it also *able* to work with you? Does it have the skills and resources that might be necessary?
 - o How is it likely to react to your own cultural tradition? (You will be bringing that tradition to the intervention whether you want to or not.)
6. Depending on your answers to these questions, you may be ready to go ahead. If so, **make the commitment** to do the adaptation. Your external commitment, as well as your internal desire, will be an important ingredient in your success.
7. **Set specific objectives** for the adapted intervention. What, specifically, do you want it to accomplish?

For more information:

Wadud, E. and Berkowitz, B. (n.d.). *Chapter 19. Section 4: Adapting community interventions for different cultures and communities*. Retrieved from The Community Tool Box: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/choose-and-adapt-community-interventions/cultural-adaptation/main>

¹ Implementation tool borrowed directly from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/choose-and-adapt-community-interventions/cultural-adaptation/main>