

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**PREVENTION FIRST**  
*Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse*

### TIP SHEET

### GUIDING GOOD CHOICES: FIDELITY AND ADAPTATION

#### **FIDELITY AND ADAPTATION OVERVIEW**

Balancing the concepts of fidelity and adaptation when implementing programs can be challenging. To properly deliver this program you need a solid understanding of these concepts and a plan for adhering to program fidelity and making purposeful adaptations.

Fidelity is defined as the degree to which a program is implemented according to its design. Rigorous evaluation studies of model programs indicate that implementing the program according to the program design will produce predictable outcomes. Delivering the program exactly as it is intended shows a high degree of fidelity. Implementing programs with a high degree of fidelity allows you to demonstrate accountability and predict the effectiveness of the program. The Guiding Good Choices curriculum is like a recipe; to get the best results, you need to do the following:

- Deliver the five workshops to parents of children ages 9 – 14 (generally grades 4-8).
- Teach one session per week for five consecutive weeks.
- Teach workshops sequentially.
- Facilitate all activities and discussions included in each workshop.
- Use all the materials corresponding to each workshop.

Adaptation is defined as modifications to aspects of a program or practice, including content, delivery method, and length of program sessions. Sometimes it is necessary to make changes to the program to fit the needs of a particular situation or the needs of the target population. Changes that make the program more relevant to the parent's culture and the geographic setting can help create a better fit with the community. Adaptations can deteriorate program effectiveness and should be made with caution. Striking a balance that addresses both the need for fidelity to the original model program and the demonstrated need for local adaptation is an essential task for professionals to deliver well-run programs.

#### **STRATEGIES TO BALANCE FIDELITY AND ADAPTATION**

##### **Understand the theory behind the program**

Guiding Good Choices aims to strengthen and clarify family expectations for behavior, enhance protective factors that promote bonding within the family, and teach skills for drug resistance. The program is grounded in research demonstrating the presence of consistent, positive parental involvement is important to help children resist substance use and other antisocial behaviors

##### **Understand how the facilitators' manuals are set up**

The Workshop Leader's Guide provide step-by-step instructions on how to facilitate each workshop. Each section of the Workshop Leader's Guide include five parts: (1) objectives, (2) materials needed, (3) session overview, (4) session activities, and (5) training tips. Throughout the manual you will find



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research facts, talking points, implementation highlights and references to the Family Guide to help participants follow along. Training tips at the end of each section provide important instructional techniques as well as answers to frequently asked questions to help prepare facilitators and ensure sessions run smoothly. Adaptations should not be made if they take away from the objectives of the session or in any way change the skills taught during the session.

### **Assess fidelity/adaptation concerns for the setting**

Determine which adaptations must be made to suit the need of the population or setting. Weigh the potential change against the goals of the program and objectives of each session and ensure that the program effectiveness will not deteriorate as a result of the change.

### **Consult the program developer**

As the workshop leader, you are the key to the program's success. To be optimally effective, Guiding Good Choices workshops should be implemented as intended. Just as important as what is being taught, is how the workshop is facilitated. Training is available and highly recommended for all workshop leaders. For questions regarding training or program fidelity and adaptations, please consult Channing Bete Company.

### **Consult with the school or organization where the program will be used**

If partnering with a school or other community agency to host the program it will be necessary to have critical conversations regarding the importance of fidelity and required adaptations. These conversations allow partners to provide valuable input on changes made in this particular setting that have been successful in the past and allows you to build sustained support for the program.

## **HELPFUL HINTS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Create a strong linkage agreement**

If working with a school or other partner, develop a strong linkage agreement. Partners need to know the details about implementation requirements and program information such as dates, times and lengths of sessions, and equipment needed. This agreement also allows you to ensure that partners have shared expectations and are clear on the roles and responsibilities of each party.

### **Incentivize parents to attend sessions**

To ensure program fidelity, parents must attend all five sessions. While ideally sessions should be scheduled on the same evening each week for five weeks, you will want to avoid scheduling sessions at the same time as other community events that parents may want to attend, such as athletic events or school open houses. In addition to scheduling sessions at convenient times and locations for parents, providing a few well-planned services can act as an incentive and minimize barriers to participation. Childcare services can make the difference in whether some parents attend each workshop. Showing appropriate videos or playing games will make the program enjoyable to children, who will then encourage their parents to attend subsequent sessions. Ensuring transportation to-and-from workshops can encourage parents to show up. Additionally, having free and convenient parking or reimbursing parents who take public transportation can incentivize attendance. Providing food or snacks for parents and their children can also act as an incentive. Finally, prizes, which may be donated from sponsors or local businesses, can be raffled off at each workshop, or at the final session for parents who attended each week as an incentive for completing the program in its entirety.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

For more information about technical assistance or the services we offer, please contact [providerservices@prevention.org](mailto:providerservices@prevention.org) or call 217-836-5346.

Guiding Good Choices Program Support

Dr. Dorothy Ghylin – Channing Bete Company

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<http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/guiding-good-choices/guiding-good-choices.html>

SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices – NREPP

[www.nrepp.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)