

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PREVENTION FIRST
Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse

TIP SHEET

BOTVIN LIFESKILLS TRAINING HS PROGRAM: 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.

Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST) High School Program is like a recipe; to get the best results, you must do the following:

- Deliver the core program to either 9th grade or 10th grade students. NOTE: SAPP Providers should refer to the Youth Prevention Education Evidence-Based Model Program Overview Chart for further information.
- Teach at least one lesson per week or up to two lessons per week until all lessons are complete.
- Teach lessons sequentially.
- Facilitate all activities and materials included in the lesson.
- Use interactive teaching strategies included in the lessons.
- Teach lessons the entire length of the time.

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 student culture and the geographic setting can help create a better fit with the community. On the other hand, 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 program learning objectives. Rather than merely teaching information about drugs, the Botvin LifeSkills Training High School Program has three major objectives that cover critical domains found to prevent drug use. Research has shown that students who develop skills in the following three domains are far less likely to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors:

1) Personal Self-Management Skills 2) General Social Skills 3) Drug Resistance Skills

Understand how the sessions are set up. Key unit information such as materials needed, timing, vocabulary, and special preparation is visible at a glance to aid in preparation. Summarized unit goals and objectives provide background information and information about what students will learn in each lesson.

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 and objectives of the program and ensure that the program effectiveness will not deteriorate because of the change.

Consult the program developer. In order to be optimally effective, Botvin LifeSkills Training High School program should be implemented carefully and completely. Just as important as what is being taught is how the program is taught. Training is available and highly recommended for all LST providers. If you have questions regarding program fidelity or an adaptation, please consult Botvin LifeSkills Training for guidance and assistance. The Botvin LifeSkills Training Program website offers a myriad of resources. In addition to the comprehensive teacher's manual and student guide, the LST website offers an extensive list of FAQs as well as a FREE companion site for both teachers and students.

Consult with the school or organization where the program will be used. Communication about the importance of fidelity and required adaptations is necessary to garner sustained support for the program. These conversations can evoke valuable input and insight about changes/adaptations made successfully in the proposed setting.

HELPFUL HINTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Create a strong linkage agreement. Strong linkage agreements provide schools with important details about the implementation requirements of LST. A strong linkage agreement allows you to detail the number of classroom lessons required, length of sessions, and any other necessary requirements to implement the program with fidelity. A strong linkage agreement also allows the school and the prevention provider to list and acknowledge shared expectations and roles and responsibilities.

Always have a back-up plan. School schedules can be unpredictable at times. Weather and other school emergencies, practice evacuation drills, field trips, testing, and other planned/unplanned situations can occur within a school day that may shorten or cancel your lesson altogether. It is a good idea to arrange ahead of time how you will make up shortened or cancelled lessons. This can be included in your linkage agreement.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about technical assistance or other services offered at Prevention First, please contact providerservices@prevention.org or call 217-836-5346.

Botvin LifeSkills Training Developer Information

Website: <https://www.lifeskillstraining.com/botvin-lifeskills-training-high-school-program/>

Email: LSTinfo@nhpamail.com

SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices – NREPP <https://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp>