

Step 2

Identify the Problem and Select an Evidence- Based Practice

The checklist below on identifying the problem and selecting an evidence-based practice (EBP) is the second checklist in the series of eight and is designed to help agencies identify the problem to solve, examine the need for the EBP(s), and ensure that they consider several EBPs before selecting and implementing one (or more). Following these steps can help determine whether the EBP is a good fit in the agency and whether it will address the identified problem(s).

Identify the problem to be addressed by the EBP(s).

1. Has a gap analysis, service and process inventory, or similar analysis of resources been conducted to determine the need for the EBP?

- ☐ Conduct a survey or analysis to determine the need for the EBP in terms of the problem(s) to be solved.
- ☐ Determine which agency or agencies have resources to support the EBP.
- ☐ Identify new funding sources (i.e., grants, state or local funding, etc.).

Evaluate potential EBPs to tackle the problem(s).

2. Have several EBPs that could be used to address the problem(s) been identified?

- ☐ Identify EBPs that could be used to address the problem(s).
- ☐ Consider the pros and cons of each solution.
- ☐ Solicit support for each solution among key partners (e.g., judges, probation officers, jail commanders, behavioral health providers).
- ☐ Assess the impact of each EBP in terms of return on investment.

Select an EBP.

3. Is the identified EBP consistent with existing efforts to address criminogenic risk and/or behavioral health needs?

- ☐ Identify why the EBP is needed and ensure that it is aligned with your goals and other initiatives in place.
- ☐ Develop educational materials (e.g., memo, presentation) to share how the selected EBP will complement existing efforts and the benefits to implementing the EBP for each agency involved and the people each agency serves.

Ensure that the selected EBP addresses criminogenic risk and behavioral health needs.

4. Is the EBP designed to address criminogenic risks and behavioral health needs?

- ☐ Use results from criminogenic risk, substance use disorder, and mental illness screening tools to assign individuals to appropriate programs and services.
- ☐ Ensure that the EBP has components that address dynamic risk factors.
- ☐ Prioritize people for a program based on their criminogenic needs as well as life needs.

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Identify champions for the implementation initiative.

5. Have champions been identified in each participating agency who can be counted on to highlight the EBP with agency staff and external stakeholders? (Champions are designated individuals who are considered subject-matter experts or opinion leaders.)

- ☐ Identify potential champions from each agency involved in the project.
- ☐ Identify how the champions will be used (e.g., presenting to staff, sending a memo, writing policy, etc.).
- ☐ Create a committee of champions to work on cross-system messaging.

Resources

Behavioral Health Diversion Interventions: Moving from Individual Programs to a Systems-Wide Strategy [↗](#)

provides a conceptual framework for creating a continuum of diversion opportunities that span a community's criminal justice system.

Engaging Stakeholders in Your Project [↗](#)

identifies 13 strategies for engaging the community.

Getting It Right: Collaborative Problem Solving for Criminal Justice [↗](#)

is a systematic planning and problem-solving guide to make sure the system can deliver on its promises of safety, justice, and accountability.

Solving Puzzling Probation Problems with PDSA [↗](#)

provides the background and evidence supporting the use of "Plan-Do Study Act" (PDSA) and uses community corrections examples to translate ideas for the justice field.

Strengthening Collaboration between the Behavioral Health and Juvenile Justice Systems to Improve Reentry Outcomes [↗](#)

is a webinar that discusses strategies for effective collaboration to connect youth returning home from confinement to behavioral health services in their communities.



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