



Implementing EBP



Maher, E. J., Jackson, L. J., Pecora, P. J., Schultz, D. J., Chandra, A., & Barnes-Proby, D. S. (2009). Overcoming challenges to implementing and evaluating evidence-based interventions in child welfare: A matter of necessity. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(5), 555-562.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This case study describes challenges and solutions in implementing and evaluating an evidence-based mental health intervention for foster care youth in school settings. The article identifies and addresses these factors to manage expectations of evidence-based program (EBP) implementation and increase the success of future efforts. The article explains the need for EBPs, unforeseen challenges in implementation, solutions generated, lessons learned, and implications.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

There is an increasing need for evidence-based policies and programs in child welfare settings. Implementation challenges can occur at multiple levels, including systemic/legal, therapeutic, and logistical. The table below shows the challenges faced and solutions generated in this case study:

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE	SOLUTIONS GENERATED
System/legal collaboration – Mental health services delivered in multiple settings are not always coordinated.	Involve stakeholders in advisory board, rely on curriculum, develop standards and protocols to inform, create work groups, share drafts
Education/Child Welfare – Lack of coordination between systems.	Develop teacher engagement strategies, plan to educate teachers on project, utilize videos
Protective policies – Rules/policies govern confidentiality and information sharing.	Stakeholders develop procedures to identify youth, notify parties, obtain consent.
Curriculum adaptations – Planning requires multiple layers of adaptations and procedures	Convene a one-day meeting, use consultants and research team, create literature review, develop structured documentation process
Scheduling the intervention – Services delivered during school mean logistical issues with transportation and scheduling.	Conduct on rotating class schedule, schedule make up sessions with a clinician, offer academic mentors to participants
Evaluation – Conducting evaluation while implementing program poses challenges	Use large sample size, expect high attrition, review by IRB.

Factors that must be considered include:

- Stakeholder readiness, interest and buy-in;
- Cultural, linguistic, and geographic contexts;
- Referral mechanisms; and
- Practicality

Successful intervention implementation requires multiple systems integration, coordination, information-sharing, and education about service needs.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Multiple-system collaboration is essential to provide evidence-based intervention services. Child welfare agencies should pursue purposeful partnerships, information sharing, and participation of all partners in decision-making to ensure effective implementation of new practices and policies.

Agencies should strive to increase the range and type of EBPs and encourage replication.

Agencies should explore partnering with other jurisdictions /agencies to minimize costs.

It is necessary to document and share innovative projects, lessons learned, solutions to barriers, and research findings to enable replication and new program development.