

Transcript of Fit and Selection Webinar June 23, 2011

ITEGE: Webinar for state PREP grantees on selecting an evidence based program that fits. Federal staff working on this project include Mark Clark, Director of the Division of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs, and fellow project officers Sara Axelton and LeBretia White. We are pleased to work with OAH Professional Services Staff Valery Boykin and Jamie Que to provide training and technical assistance to grantees.

Today's webinar will highlight the importance of selecting a program that meets the needs of the community, organization and population being served as well as highlight the steps for selecting a program. We trust that this information will be useful to you as you continue implementing your PREP/Teen Pregnancy Prevention program. And now I would like to introduce our presenter. Our presenter for today's webinar will be Gina Desedario and Mila Fishbein, both from Healthy Teen Network. Gina and Mila, thank you.

MILA: Thank you, Itege. Today in this webinar, Selecting an Evidence Based Program that fits, we will review the elements of program fit when selecting programs for your own communities. We will ask you to think about how a program fits for your priority population, for your organization and your communities. So that the program selection process is easier.

To begin, we will review some definitions. Then we will go through the five steps that [ensures] the program will fit. We will introduce a fit checklist too that you can use to assist you in selecting a program that fits. We will identify some resources. And then close with time for questions and comments.

Before we begin, we would like to review the objectives of today's webinar. At the conclusion of this sixty minute webinar, you will be able to (1) define "fit" in the context of program selection, (2) explain the importance of selecting a program that best fits the community and (3) identify the five critical steps to assess and select programs for the state PREP charter.

FS: We need to stop. We're having an issue with showing the PowerPoint presentation. Please just bear with us for a minute. [pause] Okay, we're ready to begin. So if we could advance to slide seven, please. Thank you.

MILA: So to get us started, I would like to hear a little bit from you. I will pose a question. And I would like you to share a response in the webinar question box. Just as you would be if you were in a meeting in person and you were participating in a larger group activity.

So my first question for you is, what type of information do you need to know before selecting an evidence based program? Please share and respond in the question box. We're going to wait a couple of more minutes to see what other

answers we get. Again, you can share your answers in the question box. What type of information do you need to know before selecting an evidence based program?

Well, we have a couple of answers. We have target population, what models are available, the audience, the age, the group, the size of the group, the gender, parents' opinion, STI rates, STD rates, population that you serve. From the variety of your responses, it's clear that there is a great deal of information needed before you can select a program.

So now that you have identified the range of information needed to select a program, I would like to consider my next question. Next slide, please. Why is it important to know this information before selecting an evidence based program? Please share your response in the webinar question box for slide eight.

Again, why is it important to know this information before selecting an evidence based program? Please share your response in the webinar question box.

We have a lot of wonderful answers. So just to read a couple of them. The success of the program weighs heavily on how the parents feel about the program, in order to select a program that will best serve the population, accountability, accuracy, ability to assure fit, to implement the program with fidelity, to gain the community support, to reach desirable outcomes.

Your responses demonstrate experience working in this field as well as the importance of selecting a program that fits. All evidence based programs have strengths and limitations. Not all programs will work with all groups, organizations and communities. There are some programs that can be easily adapted to fit the needs of certain communities and youth without compromising the fidelity. But with others, it may not be a good fit.

[Assessing] the limitations and strengths of when going through the process of selection helps us to identify the programs that better fit our needs. This is essential in selecting programs. The program that might seem a perfect fit for community X, might seem limited for community Y., because evidence based programs are not perfect in the sense that they do not fit everyone across the board. Each organization, community and youth participant are unique.

Next slide, please. As you indicated in our first question, there is a great deal of information that you need before you can select a program to fit. To gather this information, you should first complete a needs and resource assessment in order to gather information about sexual risk-taking behaviors, recent factors that will include culturally and specific indicator, and community resources, services and partnerships.

The final [inaud.] on your needs and resource assessment will help you to identify your priority population. Based on this information, then you can establish goals

and objectives for programs, research potential evidence based programs and identify a list of potential programs. Once you have gathered this critical information, you are ready to move onto assessing potential programs for fits in order to select the program. When selecting a program to implement, it is important to select a program that fits the youth, community, organization and estate holders. Because it increases the likelihood that you will be able to implement the program with fidelity. Thereby, increasing the likelihood of achieving the desired health outcome. So, today we are going to talk about how you can assess for fit in order to assess an appropriate program.

Next slide, please. First, however, it would be important to make sure that we are all on the same page by reviewing some key definitions. What is an evidence based program, also known as an EBP? An evidence based program is a program proven through rigorous evaluation to be effective at changing sexual risk-taking behaviors among youth.

Although there are countless teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention programs being implemented throughout the United States and internationally, only some have been proven effective in changing sexual risk taking behaviors. And that [were] included on the Office of Adolescent Health's list of evidence based programs.

That is not to say that a program not included on the OAH list of evidence based programs is necessarily less effective than others on the list. It may simply mean that the program has not been rigorously evaluated or examined for inclusion. To be considered effective at changing sexual risk-taking behavior, evidence based programs on the OAH list must have demonstrated evidence of positive and statistically significant impacts on at least one of the following outcomes.

1) sexual activity such as initiation of sex, frequency of sex, risk of vaginal, oral or anal sex and number of sexual partners. 2) contraceptive use that is consistent [...] one can use for either condoms or another contraceptive method. 3) impacts as it relates to sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy or births.

Additionally, this must be a positive and statistically significantly impact for either the full sample or as the group's defined by either gender or sexual experience at baseline. Keep in mind that evidence based programs that have been proven effective to the specific population, for example, race, ethnicity, age, grade level and in a particular setting, for example, a school versus a clinic versus a community based organization. Knowing which population and setting were used in the original evaluation, is important when selecting the most appropriate program for your youth, your community and achievement of your household.

To be considered rigorous evaluation, a program must have had an appropriate evaluation design. The evaluation design may be experimental, with a random assignment of participants into a treatment group. The treatment group will be the

group that receives the program being evaluated and a control group which is the group that doesn't receive the program that is being evaluated.

In other words, in an experimental design, the researcher controls the experiment. On the other hand, the evaluation design may be quasi-experimental with no random assignment of participants. In this design, the researcher had less control and there may be compounding variables. Also to be considered rigorous evaluation, the form must have been published in a peer review journal. For more information on evaluation requirements, please see the mathematical policy research criteria for the OAH value and evidence based program.

It is important to note, however, the grantees are not limited to selecting one of the twenty-eight models of evidence based programs identified in the DHH side. But you should talk more with the project officer who is selecting a program beyond this list.

Next slide, please. When implementing an evidence based program, it is extremely important to implement that program with fidelity. Fidelity is the faithfulness with which a curricula or program is implemented in its entirety. Fidelity refers to how long the program is implemented without compromising its core components, the essential ingredients for the program's success.

Selecting a program that fits the youth, community, organization and the stakeholders is important. Again, like we said earlier, because it increases the likelihood that you will be able to implement the program with fidelity. Thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving the desired health outcome.

Next slide, please. When implementing a program, we talk of core components. Core components are the program characteristics that must be kept intact when the intervention is being replicated or adapted. In order for you to produce program outcomes similar to those demonstrated in the original evaluation research. Sometimes core components are referred to as the essential ingredients of an evidence based program. Core components are separated into three categories: content, pedagogy and implementation.

Next slide, please. Core content components refers to what is being taught in the program. This includes the knowledge, the attitudes, the values, the norms and skills that I addressed in the program's learning activities and are most likely to change sexual behavior. For example, knowledge about refusing pressure to have sex, perception of HIV risk, attitudes about abstinence, values about monogamy, knowledge about using condoms, skills to refuse sex.

Next are the core components that address the pedagogy of the program. These core components refer to how the content is taught. Core pedagogical components include teaching strategy, methods and interactions to be screened at youth and facilitator. All these contribute to the program's effectiveness. For example, core

pedagogical components will include things such as role plays, showing videos, giving games, giving quizzes, small group work or other activities with parents.

Finally, the core implementation components refer to the logistics that support the learning environment. One example of core implementation components will include number of youth per class, number of facilitators per class, length of each lesson, create a simple group, use of peer educators.

Next slide please. So the first thing to consider when selecting a program is if the program can be implemented with fidelity. This involves delivering the program as-is, but it may also involve adapting the program while maintaining the core component, the elements that are essential to the program's effectiveness. Removing core components negates the validity of any evidence based programs. Maintaining the core components increases the likelihood that the program would generate the same desired outcomes. The process of adaptation is often prescribed as the adaptation recipe metaphor. Because just like a delicious chocolate chip cookie recipe, adapting a program requires the right ingredients, techniques and tools.

Consider this for a second. If you don't follow a recipe with fidelity, using the same ingredients and making the batter the same way, assemble them with the same tools and baking them in the same oven at the same temperature, there is no guarantee that you will achieve the same result. Remember, adapting a program is a process that makes the program more suitable, a better fit, for a particular population or an organization capacity without compromising its core components.

Just imagine how different chocolate chip cookies will be if you substitute ingredients. For example, if you use olive oil instead of butter. Or if you hand mix the batter rather than use an electric mixer. Or if you try to speed the cooking time by turning the temperature in the oven up too much.

Just like a recipe, a program must be implemented with fidelity to get the same or similar results and to be considered evidence based. Once you understand how a program that you are considering works and what its core components are, you are in a position to anticipate the effects of potential adaptation.

Next please. It is important to note that at this point, you are not making adaptations. Rather, you are considering programs for tips. And as part of that process, you are thinking through potential adaptations that might be necessary in order for a parent to speak to youth, community, organizations and stakeholders.

While there is no single standard for making decisions about adapting programs, there is a simple matter for adapting progress. But that is a topic for another webinar. For now, we are going to focus on how to select a program that fits. And to do that, Gina is going to talk more about fit.

GINA: Next slide, please. Thank you, Mila. When selecting a program, you'll want to be confident that the program fits: that it's well matched or appropriate for the community, organization, stakeholders and potential participants. When considering programs, you may realize that a program is not a good match for your respective participants or organizational capacities. You may want to adapt it. Or you may choose another potential program to explore further.

When selecting a program for a good fit, important considerations are the costs and feasibility of adaptations under consideration. If it looks like the program requires a lot of time, money and effort to adapt, perhaps you can find one that requires fewer changes. Often small changes to a program can, and even should, be made to increase fit, especially when it comes to working with your particular youth participants.

Thinking about possible adaptations now will help you implement the program with fidelity and avoid making changes on the spur of the moment that may diminish the program's effectiveness. Understanding fit can help you identify key changes early and thoughtfully make appropriate adaptations ahead of time.

Next slide, please. When considering the fit of a program for a community, there are several factors to consider. The exact meaning of "community" partly depends on the geographic scope of your work. Your organization could be instituting at a school, a clinic, a city or a regional program or a set of programs. Whatever its scope, the program needs to harmonize with the many aspects of the community such as culture, values and practices, readiness for a program of this nature, organizational mission and philosophy, characteristics and context of the youth you're serving, for example, age, gender, ethnicity, language, urban, suburban, rural settings, level of needs, et cetera.

Priorities of key stakeholders, for example, funders, program partners, policymakers, service providers, community leaders, et cetera, as well as existing programs and services that maybe doing some of the same activities with some of the same youth.

Next slide, please. Effecting for a fit with the organization also entails considering whether your leadership, staff, facilities, finances and other resources are adequate to carry out those programs with fidelity and quality.

The degree to which your organization's resources are up to the task is your organizational capacity. Developing capacity therefore involves building and maintaining key stakeholder support for the program by ensuring from the outset that it will be properly planned, implemented and evaluated.

You'll need to understand key capacities you need to support the program implementation. You'll also need to determine whether you have the right levels of

capacity for the potential program as well as identify capacities that must be further developed so that you can proceed.

Consider aspects of organizational capacity such as staff and volunteer capacities, leadership capacity, partnership and collaboration capacities, and fiscal, legal and technical capacities.

Next slide, please. As we review how to select a program for fit, we're going to be using an example organization as it undergoes the selection process. And I'd like to introduce you to this hypothetical example now. Youth Connections promotes positive youth development and provides services and programs for youth in a community based setting.

Youth Connections is a local community based organization in an urban setting that provides outreach in education to foster care youth and their families. Staff members noticed that a growing number of program participants were getting pregnant. And staff were concerned about the effect of these early pregnancies.

They decided to investigate this more closely and possibly add a teen pregnancy prevention component to their program. First, Youth Connections conducted a comprehensive needs and resource assessment to learn the critical information about their youth and community.

Next, using this information from their assessment, Youth Connections identified a health goal: to reduce teen pregnancy and STI rates among boys and girls, ages 15 to 19, who currently attend Youth Connections programs. They identified the outcomes they wanted to change, including increased use of condoms and contraception. They identified determinants of those behaviors on which to focus, including increased self-efficacy to use condoms and knowledge about HIV and other STIs.

Youth Connections researched the available evidence based programs approved by the Office of Adolescent Health, narrowed the list and identified the following list of candidate programs: All For You, Making Proud Choices, and Reducing the Risk.

As an aside, please note that these programs identified here are for instructional purposes only and that this is not an endorsement of these programs above any other program.

Youth Connections began to examine their candidate programs for fit with their participants and larger community as well as the values and capacity of their organizations. We'll come back to Youth Connections in a little bit. But for now, let's consider why fit is so important.

Next slide, please. Evaluating a program fit increases the chances it will be appropriate to and accepted by the community and participating youth. If your

program doesn't fit with the culture and values of your youth organization and stakeholders, it will be harder to implement and maybe less effective.

In order to ascertain fit, therefore, you need to grasp the full context in which your program will operate. The resulting benefit affects all participants and constituents. Because selecting a program that fits is more likely to be accepted by youth and community; complement the efforts of other groups in the community, redoing duplication and perhaps boosting results for multiple groups; build strong relationships with other providers, funders and stakeholders; ensure sufficient participation in a program; and allows you to choose and adapt the right program, increasing your chances of making the changes you want to see.

Just as a good fit makes it likely that a person will wear a piece of clothing, good program fit can increase the chances that the program will be accepted by the youth and community.

Next slide, please. To start assessing your candidate program, you need to assemble some basic information about each program, such as content, activities, dosage and settings. The information should include data on the age, gender and race, ethnicity of youth participating in the evaluated version of the program. The information should cite evaluation results indicating that the participants showed a greater understanding of the risks associated with sexual involvement and demonstrating other outcomes consistent with the goals of the program.

You can see the Office of Adolescent Health's website has a list of evidence based programs as a first step in gathering this information. If you need more information, you may be able to get information from the developers, organizations currently implementing the program, websites or published articles.

Before moving too far ahead into examining the fit of your program, it is important to understand what you can and can't change about the program. Less may be known about what can and cannot be changed, but when or if this information is available, this can be very helpful in planning for appropriate modifications to the program.

For example, can a program originally evaluated as a community based program be implemented in a school based setting? Or can a program originally implemented in two four-hour sessions be implemented in eight one-hour sessions?

This information will help you determine if the changes you want to make to achieve fit would maintain or compromise the integrity of the program. If the changes are too substantial, you should consider investigating other programs.

Next slide, please. In order to assess a program and select for fit, you need to understand the values and traditions of youth culture. It's highly recommended that you involve youth and adults from the community in the analysis and

assessment of activities, such as interviews and discussion groups if at all possible. Avoid making assumptions about cultural factors, invite youth and community members from different groups to help you learn more and think through appropriate cultural adaptations.

If not possible, use what you and your team know about the youth you serve in order to think critically about the fit of the program to these youths' lives, culture, contact and community norms. You'll also find it helpful to have information from your needs and resource assessments handy.

To assess for fit, you will complete the following steps starting with addressing fit for each group individually, then considering adaptations in order to narrow your list. Number one, assess fit with the participant, that is, the youth. Step two, assess fit with the organization. Step three, assess fit with the stakeholder. Step four, consider adaptations that would improve fit. And step five, narrow the number of potential programs.

Ascertaining fit also involves determining whether your community is ready and willing to support a particular program. This will involve speaking with community leaders and key stakeholders and sharing what you learn.

Finally, there's no single solution that will make a program fit perfectly. You may need to understand competing interests first and then balance them. For example, a program might fit with a tech savvy American youth. But many youth we serve may not have access to all the same gadgets.

Next slide, please. To complete the first step and assess for fit with participants, you'll want to answer the following questions. Have youth similar to ours been helped by the same program? Are the planned activities socially and developmentally suitable for our youth? Are the planned activities culturally and linguistically suitable? Would the youth we plan to serve enjoy and attend the program?

Next slide, please. To answer these questions for step one, first you'll want to gather the same basic information about characteristics of your potential participants as you did about the program's participants, such as age, gender and race/ethnicity. Include their level of reading literacy, health literacy, education geographic location and setting if known. Remember, you should have this information from your needs and resource assessment.

Two, learn more about the cultural context. Involve youth and other community members in the process to learn more about their values, practices, beliefs, religions, customs, rituals and language. Especially those characteristics most relevant to your program.

The program may address peer norms, for example. But you need to know if your youth participants' norms are similar to those in the original program.

For example, diverse groups may view teen parenthood differently. Some youth groups may come from cultural or ethnic backgrounds where teen pregnancy is more common and thus perceived less negatively. Or, for example, research has tied culture-related assets and protective factors to positive sexual health outcomes for Latino youth, including high aspirations and strong family relationships.

Understanding such connections or perceptions in different cultures can improve success in implementing programs and may aid in engaging families. Consider cultural elements that could be important to priority populations of communities such as traditional beliefs about health care, values about pregnancies, parenthood and family, practices around accessing health care and practicing preventative care, communication about sexuality, knowledge and understanding of reproduction, cultural characteristics of other critical organizations, as well as ways of relating in meaningful and sustained ways.

And three, to answer these questions, you'll also want to identify issues arising from special situations, such as youth in foster care, alternative schools or juvenile detention. Once you know more about the context in which your youth live, you can determine whether the program is a good fit as written or if adaptations would be needed.

Next slide, please. The second step to selecting a program for fit has to do with the implementing organization. Organizations work towards their mission by accomplishing goals. Whether an organization grows tomatoes or operates a hospice, a clean line of sight between mission and goals eliminates doubts about purpose, focuses action and improves the quality of decisions made by staff, volunteers and other participants.

Thus, an organization's philosophy and values must be congruent with those embodied in any program it implements. Staff members are much more likely to deliver the program with fidelity if they believe it fits with their organization's vision and mission.

To complete the second step and assess for fit with the organization, you'll want to answer the following questions. Is the program goal compatible with your organization's mission? Review each potential program's goals and determine if they are compatible. What do board, staff and leadership think of the potential program? Involving staff in leadership and volunteers in the selection process ensures a good fit with a range of motivations for belonging to, working in or working with your organization.

What is the context and setting in which the program was delivered and evaluated versus the one you plan to use? If the program was implemented in school, but you plan to use a broader community setting, would you be undermining an

important contributing factor to success? Perhaps not. But you should consider the possibility.

How realistic is the program dosage? That is the number and duration of sessions. Determine how realistic it is within the scope of your organization, program setting and timing.

Next slide, please. When considering a program for fit, it's important to consider fit with your organizational capacity. These next questions, still part of step two in assessing for fit, have to do with organizational capacity. Ask yourself, do you have the staff capacity necessary to implement the program with fidelity?

Skilled facilitators are essential to success and possess a number of skills, including ability to engage, inform and involve individuals in groups. Knowledge of adolescent development, effective classroom management, expertise in program content, cultural competence. You also need to consider the level of effort available for staff capacity, including for support and administrative staff.

Do you have the necessary leadership capacity? To successfully achieve your program's goals, you need diverse leaders and leaders who stay involved over the long-term. Do you have the necessary partnerships and collaborations? Partners and collaborators provide access to new skill sets, assets and opportunities for leveraging limited community resources in support of youth.

Do you have the necessary fiscal, resource and technical capacity? No matter what program you select, you'll need a number of basic tools to do the work, such as meeting space, transportation, incentives, health educator training, computers, internet access, programs, copies of the materials, DVDs, AV equipment, anatomy models and so on. When considering the total cost to run your program, think well ahead.

Next slide, please. The next level of fit to consider expands your circle of support to the larger community, and specifically calls attention to the priorities and values of key stakeholders, such as funders, policymakers, service providers and other community leaders. To complete the third step and assess for fit, with key stakeholders, answer the following questions.

Is another group already implementing similar efforts? Review other local programs to determine if a group in the community is already implementing similar efforts. Information you gathered in your assessment should help you here as you consider, "Would our potential program complement or conflict with the existing program? Would it make sense to collaborate? And what void would our program fill in the community?"

The next question asks your level of readiness for youth and community. Assess the potential participants and community level of readiness. Depending on the answers to the questions, you may need to rethink your starting point and spend

some time building towards readiness regardless of which program you ultimately select. Consider, are our potential participants and community really ready for the activities in these programs? Will the community support the program? Do the participants and community have the health literacy skills necessary to embrace this program? And finally, ask yourself, what are the key stakeholders' priorities?

You can informally survey this. If funders and other partners do not share your vision, you may end up wasting time trying to persuade them to support your plan. Also, get to know those who disagree and learn their priorities. So that conversation is productive. Talk with stakeholders and identify agreements and differences among them.

Next slide, please. Though a program may not match the characteristics of your participants exactly, it may not require much adaptation to achieve an appropriate fit. Of course, you don't want to make changes that compromise the intent or internal logic of the program, the core component. For example, sharing information about ways to say no to sex is not the same as practicing those ways during a role-play.

To complete the fourth step and consider adaptations to improve for fit, answer the following questions. Will the potential adaptations maintain the program's core components so it can be implemented with fidelity? Are there any costs associated with these adaptations? What staff training will be required so facilitators can implement their program with fidelity? What is the feasibility of making the adaptation? And what materials or information is needed to make the adaptation?

Keep track of potential adaptations for each candidate program. Adaptations could be associated with any of the stakeholders affected by the program selected, including youth, organizations or community. If you cannot implement the program with fidelity, that is if you cannot implement the program without compromising the core components, then the program is not a good fit and should not be selected.

Next slide, please. Finally, it's the final step for assessing a program for a fit. In step five, after going through steps one through four, discuss any adaptations you will need to make to improve each candidate program fit, reconsider each of them in light of achieving the best fit possible. No matter how appealing a program looks on paper, selecting the wrong one for your community may lead to ineffective effort. If an ill-suited program alienates any of your key stakeholder group, youth, organizations or community, it may be difficult to garner support for future efforts. Therefore, you should be careful to review a range of potential programs and determine the most appropriate and make informed adaptations if necessary. It's critical that you're able to implement with fidelity and quality.

Finally, you'll select a program that fits, based on the criteria you've assessed in steps one through four to implement the program with fidelity.

Next slide, please. To assist you in completing the five steps of assessing a program to select for fit, the Healthy Teen network has developed a program fit checklist tool you can use. You should have received this tool separately. But if not, we will be sure to distribute the tool along with an electronic version of the slides. The tool is pretty straight forward as it walks you through each step. Each section is color coded for ease of separation. And the key questions to consider for each step are listed along with a table for capturing your information.

In step one, you assess for fit with the youth. As you can see, on the screen with this excerpt from the tool, you have a table set up where you can log the critical information, both about the program as well as your potential participants, document if the fit is sufficient and finally, describe potential adaptation. Here we have a part of the tool showing a table for capturing information on age, race/ethnicity and sex.

Next slide, please. In step two, you assess fit with the organization. Again, here you see the questions to consider are provided at the top of the table as well as columns and rows for recording your information.

In this excerpt, you can see that you must compare the program goal with the mission, vision and values of the implementing organization as well as assess if the match is sufficient or if potential adaptations are needed. The next row asks about program setting compared with the intended setting for the implementing organization.

Next slide, please. In step three, you assess fit with stakeholders. Here in this screen shot, you can see that you are asked about community resources. Is another group already implementing similar efforts? What are existing resources? And again, you're asked to check if the fit is sufficient and if there are any potential adaptations needed.

Next slide, please. In step four, you consider adaptations that would improve fit. Here, the tool provides space for describing potential adaptations, affirming that the potential adaptation would maintain the core components and fidelity, as well as a space for considering the cost of the adaptation, whether training is required and the feasibility.

I do want to note that each of the screen shots provided of this tool thus far have been excerpts. For the tools for step one through four, you'll want to fill in this information requested in order to answer the questions for each step. And then you'll need to fill out a new copy of the tool for each program as you assess it for fit.

In other words, if I were assessing three different programs, I'd fill out a copy of the tool three times, once for each program. Obviously, some parts of the tool will be easier to fill out subsequent times because the information about your youth,

community, organization won't be changing, just the information about the specific program. For this reason, we do have the tool available electronically for download on the Healthy Teen network website.

However, the tool changes in that in step five, it allows you to look at all the potential programs together. We don't have a screen shot for this excerpt of the tool. But what you'll see when you look at it on your own version is that it provides you with room for summarizing your assessment, comparing each of your potential programs all in one state. You identify the program. You have a rating to assess the level of fit based on the information gathered in steps one through four. Check yes or no to whether you would recommend the program for implementation. And then you also have space for notes.

So in conclusion, this tool provides you with a comprehensive way to move through steps one through five, considering the relevant questions for each step. Now Mila is going to take us back to our example organization, Youth Connections, for a summary of how they completed steps one through five to assess and select a program for fit.

MILA: Thank you, Gina. Next slide, please. The Youth Connections completed in step one through five in assessing the potential programs for fit with their organization, community and youth. In step one, "assess fit with participants," Youth Connections realized that Making Proud Choices wasn't an appropriate fit for their youth. Primarily because it was originally evaluated with younger teens, ages eleven to thirteen, and their priority population includes youth 15 to 19 years old.

Youth Connections is considering All For Youth because it has been evaluated and proven effective at changing sexual risk-taking behavior for youth ages fourteen to eighteen. And it's designed for youth in alternative school settings. They are considering Reducing the Risk because it is appropriate for high school age youth and has been shown to be effective in urban, suburban and rural populations with youth of diverse races and ethnicities.

Youth Connections examines how All For Youth and Reducing the Risk fit with the youth and parents, the values of Youth Connections and their community. For example, with Reducing the Risk, they realized that the program does not provide an opportunity for youth to practice the correct [inaud.], only a demonstration is included.

In step two, "assist the organization," Youth Connections affirms that the program matched their mission for an organization leadership approved. And they could implement the program in appropriate context and settings.

With regard to organizational capacity, Youth Connections determined that they will need a training of educators for its health educators. In order to help them prepare to implement the curriculum. One health educator implements the

Reducing the Risk years ago. So she's coming in with a curriculum, but if the curriculum has been adapted and it has been several years, she will still need other a refresher trainer. No health educator is coming there with All For Youth.

In step three, "assess with stakeholders," Youth Connections review other local programs to determine if a group in the community was implementing similar efforts. Well, they found that one group was implementing an abstinence-only until marriage program, it was not proven to reduce sexual risk-taking behaviors. And did not find any other evidence based teen pregnancy and STI, HIV prevention programs that were being offered in the community based setting. They then established a connection with the local health clinic that was working with its youth outreach. And this partnership would be useful for referrals to help problem youth access service. The funder, a local foundation, also required the use of evidence based programs. So they knew they would have the support of the funder onboard.

In step four, "consider adaptations that would improve fit," because of the desire to increase participants with skills and self-sufficiency, we used a common collective, Youth Connections felt including this practice would be important. Which would require the adaptation of adding an activity to Reducing in the Risk.

Also given their assessment of the youth, they knew another lesson on reproductive anatomy would be needed. But this lesson is not included in All For Youth are Reducing the Risk. Youth Connections determined they would need to adapt any of the programs it implemented with a complementary anatomy lesson prior to beginning the program to address the necessary health literacy.

In step five, "narrow the list and select a program that fits." Based on the process of completing step one to four, Youth Connections selected Reducing the Risk as the program with the most appropriate fit for the organization, youth and community. That, in brief, is an example of how a community based organization completed steps one to five to assess programs for fit. Of course, we have shortened the process in the summary, but we hope to illustrate the steps for you.

Next slide, please. In closing, we would like to review some important points about fit. First, you cannot take fit for granted. Even if you have already selected or you have been implementing your program for a while, in fact, you will likely increase your program's relevance and effectiveness if you consider ways to make it fit your various stakeholder groups better, especially with the priority population.

Consider your selected program from several angles. Discuss program fit. Assemble a small work group and go through the steps of assessing the program fit together. In an afternoon conversation, you may discover a few more creative ideas for updating your work. Take a fresh look. Explore the overall fit of the program. Perhaps, your work groups can think of adaptations related to fit that will improve your program.

Select one. Adaptation. Reduce changes you have made. Make sure that your adaptations do not compromise the core components of the program.

Next slide, please. And finally, remember some lessons learned by selecting programs based on fit. Take the time before you implement the program to make sure it fits what all stakeholder groups increases the likelihood that your community will support it and participate in it.

Aspects of fit may change, including any number of factors, like the economy, funding, changes in the demographics of your community or shift in your organization operation. By staying on top of potentially relevant internal and external influences, you'll be better able to continue to improve fit as well as with factors that could affect the long-term sustainability of your work.

Right now, you have some questions to think through any lessons learned through your fit assessment. That will help you as you move on towards implementing and evaluating your program. Do we have organizational support for our program? It's very easy to ascertain whether the staff will work closely with the [curriculum] your program supported. But are you sure and do you know whether others in your organization support it? How about internal management? The more everyone understands the potential benefit of your program the more likely it can be sustained over time. Demonstrating the close compatibility between your program and the work of your organization as a whole is especially important to internal sustainability.

Then it would be important to wonder, "how do we communicate the benefit of our program? How do we facilitate better fit within your organization and with your stakeholders and community by telling people your story, explaining the need for the program and underscoring what everyone will get out of it?"

It really can be used to help infuse the entire organization with knowledge about the program. Ongoing training and communication are necessary to give information cred and to reach new staff and volunteers coming into the organization.

Finally, though we have a variety of champions who support our work, champions are people who understand what you are trying to do and want to help. A champion can be a program manager, an administrator or a board member. You can have champions throughout an organization. You might also have someone out in the community who supports your program and organization, such as a funder, a school superintendent or policymaker. Champions can help us spread the word, support high quality implementation with fidelity and provide links to a variety of resources, especially when they see [inaud.] for the youth program.

Next slide, please. So, when assessing programs for fit, there are many resources to support you. Here are some selected resources that we would recommend you look at.

Next slide, please. This brings us to the close of our webinar. We would like now to open the floor for questions or comments. Put the questions in the question box of the webinar.

GINA: Again, if you have any questions, please feel free to post those in the question box.

MILA: So, we have got a question: "Does ACF have to approve program adaptations of any kind or do the adaptations need to be directed to the providers of the curriculum?" I think that's a question that somebody from ACF would be glad to answer. Itege?

ITEGE BAILEY: Hi, this is Itege Bailey from ACF. What we will do is we will send out guidance to all of the grantees around adaptations and approval of adaptations. Thank you.

GINA: Thanks. The next question is, "Where can I find core components by content, pedagogy and implementation for the evidence based program?" It would be great if that full list of 28 programs had the core components already identified. That's not the case unfortunately. The CDC and ETR did partner on a project. So there are some adaptation kits for some of the evidence based programs. And so, we'd encourage you to go see ETR's website, etr.org/recatt. They've got some great information on adaptation. And it can be helpful, for example, if you look at their Making Proud Choices adaptation kit and see how they've gone through and identified the core components and put together a logic model for that program. You can see how that would correlate to other programs. But unfortunately, that work has not been done for all programs. So there is some work for you to do in considering adaptations.

MILA: And also, the developers can be a great help identifying the parts of the curricula that localize the pedagogy and implementation of content components.

GINA: We have a question. "Is the expectation that the evidence based programs be implemented with fidelity in the truest sense such as the research model, for example, the same use of survey questions, follow-up at three, six and twelve months, inclusion of clinic laboratory testing, et cetera, or fidelity does the curricula implementation?"

The first priority is to the core component of the curriculum. The outcome evaluation design would be beyond that. So ideally, if you can do similar evaluations, that'd be great. At a minimum, what you want to do is a pre and post.

MILA: And you will receive also more guidance from your project officer in regards to what is the level or the degree of evaluation that you want to put in place when you implement the program?

GINA: One of the great things about using an evidence based program is that it's already been through the rigorous evaluation test. And so we know that when it's implemented with fidelity, it can achieve those positive outcomes. That's why you want to be sure to be implementing it the same way. But that rigorous level of evaluation, it's quite a high level. And that requires a higher level of funding as well. So those are considerations. But that would be beyond the realm of implementing the curricula fidelity according to its components. Are there other questions?

MILA: Well, if that is all for now, we don't see any more questions at this moment.

Q: There's one more question that just came through.

GINA: Oh, great. Thank you.

MILA: "Regarding emphasis on abstinence and contraception, we have observed that in some curriculums, the mission is provided, but rather reserved in emphasizing this element or could use improvement. What do you regard as the appropriate level of intensity to reinforce abstinence and contraception methods?"

SARA: Hi, this is Sara from ACYF. And that's actually information that we will share with all of you shortly. We need to decide internally what the guidance will be around that level of intensity and expectation. Thank you.

MILA: Thank you, Sara. So, if we don't have any more questions, we would like again to thank everybody for participating in this webinar. Please feel free to contact us if you have other questions and your project officers as well to comment, to share. There are a variety of resources available in our website as well as resources that your project officers would share with you together, with the pink sheet that you were receiving. If there are no further questions, we just want to keep this webinar, close this webinar. I guess unless ACF has additional comments?

Q: Nothing from ACF. Thank you, Mila.

MILA: Thank you, everybody.

GINA: Thank you. Have a good day.

(END OF TRANSCRIPT)