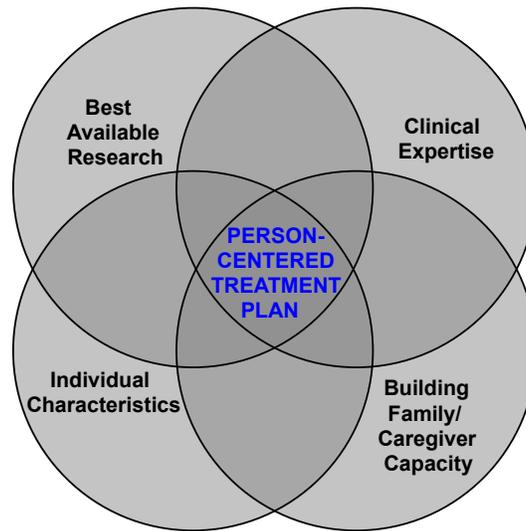


From the Report of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Committee



Evidence-based practice means a decision-making process that starts with the best available scientifically rigorous research and integrates clinical expertise, the individual's characteristics, and the goal of building family/caregiver capacity. Evidence-based practice is an approach to treatment rather than a specific treatment and incorporates culturally sensitive intervention strategies. It focuses on developing an individualized Person-Centered Plan. Evidence-based practice promotes the collection, interpretation, integration, and continuous evaluation of valid, important, and applicable individual- or family-reported, clinically-observed, and research-supported evidence. The best available evidence, matched to the individual's circumstances and preferences and a focus on building family and caregiver capacity, is applied to ensure the quality of clinical judgments and facilitate the most cost-effective care. *(Adapted from CA Trailer Bill)*

As previously stated, SAMHSA also acknowledges "emerging and "promising" practices. Emerging/ Promising Practices are those practices for which the scientific evidence is building and which address a widely held client need or gap in our service system. These terms are consistent with the idea that the strength of evidence varies among practices deemed likely to produce specific clinical outcomes.

Information provided by Arizona Substance Abuse Task Force member Claire E. Scheuren for consideration by the Work Groups

There are several sources of information about evidence-based programs and practices, but one of the most salient for our Work Groups will likely be NREPP, *National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices*:

<http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/AllPrograms.aspx>

The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) is an evidence-based repository and review system designed to provide the public with reliable information on mental health and substance abuse interventions. All interventions in the registry have met NREPP's minimum requirements for review. The programs' effects on individual outcomes have been independently assessed and rated by certified NREPP reviewers.

The purpose of NREPP is to help people learn more about available evidence-based programs and practices and determine which of these may best meet their needs.

In addition to NREPP, SAMHSA acknowledges “emerging and “promising” practices. Emerging/ Promising Practices are those practices for which the scientific evidence is building and which address a widely held client need or gap in our service system. These terms are consistent with the idea that the strength of evidence varies among practices deemed likely to produce specific clinical outcomes.

A widely accepted definition of evidence-based programs is available at <http://episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/definition> and copied below:

Defining Evidence Based Programs

Programs recognized as evidence-based have demonstrated the highest level of evidence of effectiveness based on the criteria below. These programs, if implemented with adherence to the program developer’s model, are likely to produce positive youth outcomes.

- **Effectiveness demonstrated in rigorous scientific evaluations**
- **Effectiveness demonstrated in large studies with diverse populations or through multiple replications**
- **Significant and sustained effects**

Caution: Not All Program Lists Have Stringent Inclusion Criteria

- A variety of terms are used to refer to programs or approaches demonstrating varying levels of effectiveness, such as science-based, research-based, empirically supported, best practices, exemplary, model, and promising programs. It is important to realize that there is a continuum of effectiveness and that some programs promoted as effective may not meet all of the above criteria.

- The lowest levels of evidence are reflected in program assessments conducted through non-experimental designs or by endorsements of authorities with clinical experience only. In contrast, comprehensive, enduring, and effective prevention programs have strong study designs and scientific evidence that they reduce negative outcomes and lead to sustained positive impacts.
- Many online lists of prevention programs include programs which have undergone some form of study, whether scientifically rigorous or not, and that have produced some outcome findings, positive or negative. These sites include programs with varying degrees of research and it is left to the reader to make their own judgment about whether the evaluation results represent an effective program.

How to Identify Evidence-based Programs

- Internationally, [The Cochrane Collaboration](#) conducts the most rigorous reviews of evidence-based health-focused programs.
- Nationally, the [Center for Healthy Youth Development \(University of Colorado Boulder\)](#) publishes a list of evidence-based prevention programs based on stringent inclusion criteria. Blueprints Model and Promising Programs are identified for their rigorous research design and as prevention programs with demonstrated outcomes. Compared to any other national list of effective prevention programs, the Blueprints list is recognized as including only those prevention programs with the greatest evidence of effectiveness.

Further Information on the Criteria for Evidence-based Programs

- The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [published a guide](#) explaining the continuum of evidence of effectiveness.
- [The Standards of Evidence](#) adopted by the Society for Prevention Research.

Steps to Selecting an Evidence Based Program

- Using local data identify risk and protective factors and problem behaviors in your community and prioritize short and long-term targets for population-based behavioral change.
- Identify an evidence-based program that addresses the locally prioritized targets and that is backed by strong evidence of a large effect in a population similar to the one you serve.
- Identify the key features of the identified program that must be implemented faithfully to achieve the desired outcomes. To identify these key features, review the website of the identified program and talk directly to the developer or program staff.
 - **Caution:** There is strong evidence that seemingly small differences in the way a program is implemented can alter a program's effects. It is importance to adhere to the model and implement the program as intended by the developer to ensure the same outcomes are achieved locally as were demonstrated in the research supporting the program.
- Conduct a community readiness assessment to ensure that capacity exists to

- implement the program with quality.
- If your site is deemed to have the appropriate resources to implement the program, work closely with the program developer and technical assistance providers to ensure appropriate training, implementation, and model adherence.
 - Establish systems for outcome measurement and to monitor the extent of model adherence over time. Use the collected data to monitor implementation quality and model fidelity, to assess participant impacts, and to report to and generate support from community stakeholders and sustainability sources.

The Goal

Evidence-based programs aim to not only impact outcomes for individuals, but to change the population prevalence rates of a problem. The ultimate goal is to reduce current and future costs for expensive societal interventions, such as out-of-home placement, justice system involvement, drug and alcohol treatment, and social service and welfare usage. Evidence-based programs also have the potential to increase the health and well-being of youth, which promotes productivity as future citizens and increases tax revenue.