

OPA EVALUATION TA



Documenting Adaptations Tip Sheet

This tip sheet guides Teen Pregnancy Prevention grantees conducting evaluations on how to adapt a program. It explains what adaptations are and why it's important to document them.

What is an adaptation?

An adaptation is a change to a program's content, delivery, or core components.¹

Minor adaptations are changes to the program that make it a better fit for the population served, more current, or more engaging, but they do not significantly change the program's core components or compromise program fidelity.

Major adaptations are changes to the program that alter the program's core components. A major adaptation could compromise fidelity of the program and might reduce the impact of the program on intended outcomes. As an implementer, you should be extremely cautious about making major adaptations to a program with an existing evidence base.

What are examples of *minor adaptations*?

Reason	Examples of minor adaptations
To better meet the needs of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating examples for the target audience • Customizing role-play activities • Modifying language to make it more culturally appropriate • Adding icebreakers and energizers to make the program's activities more interactive • Extending the length of sessions to provide more time for group activities or group processing
To implement in a different setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing as an after-school program instead of in-school • Implementing during a summer program.

Grantees should always check with the program developers for program-specific guidance on adaptations.





Recommended steps to *adapt* a program

STEP 1

Understand the program and identify adaptation challenges. Assess the fit of the program to the target population and the context in which you are implementing.

Determine whether there are any implementation challenges that might require adaptation to better align the program and needs of the target population or to address contextual limitations.

STEP 2

Select and plan adaptations. Use existing resources, such as summaries from focus groups or fidelity logs, to identify adaptation options that would address the identified challenges, and choose an option that does not alter the program's core components. Program developers often have guidelines on adaptations, so check the developer's website, curricular materials, or reach out directly to the developer for suggestions.

You can plan an adaptation before or after program implementation begins. It is important to follow these steps regardless of whether an adaptation was planned before or after program implementation.

STEP 3

Obtain the project officer's approval on the adaptations. Reach out to your project officer to discuss your proposed adaptation and determine the appropriate steps for approval. OPA has guidance available regarding documentation that needs to be submitted as part of the decision process. Documentation includes describing the planned adaptation, the rationale for the change, a statement (ideally from the developer) of why this adaptation will not compromise the fidelity of the program, and a summary of implications related to data collection, analyses, and reporting.

STEP 4

Pilot, document, and monitor adaptations. Pilot the full adapted program or just the proposed adaptations on a subgroup of participants to gather feedback on the adaptations and adjust as needed. Document adaptations using the information that follows to guide what information you should track. Monitor and assess the success of adaptations using a fidelity monitoring tool. If feedback and other implementation or outcome data indicates that the adaptation is not achieving its intended goals, then consider removing or refining the adaptation.

Why is it important to document program adaptations?

- To monitor program implementation and fidelity
- To identify successes and lessons learned from the adaptations
- To support continuous quality improvement
- To help others in the future who might be interested in implementing the program using the same adaptations

What should I document for approved program adaptations?

Maintain a tracker with the following information for each approved program adaptation:

- ✓ Describe the adaptation.
- ✓ Denote whether the adaptation is major or minor.
- ✓ Include the start and end (when appropriate) date of implementation.
- ✓ Indicate the type of adaptation (setting, facilitator, method, sequencing, cultural, and so on).
- ✓ Provide a reason for the adaptation.
- ✓ Note whether a similar adaptation has been implemented in other settings.
- ✓ Document whether and how the adaptation fits within the logic model.
- ✓ Document approval from developer and project officer.
- ✓ Describe the plan for implementing the adaptation.
- ✓ Address how the organization will document and assess whether the adaptation addressed the challenge.
- ✓ Document if the adaptation met its intended goals.

Additional resources

“Adaptations for Evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs.” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, is available at https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/adaptations_for_tpp_programs.pdf.

“General Adaptations,” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, is available at https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/general_adaptations.pdf.

“Making Adaptations TipSheet,” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/prep-making-adaptations-ts.pdf>.

“How Much Change is Too Much Change? Preserving Fidelity While Making Informed Adaptations,” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, is available at https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/fidelity_and_adaptation_20130216.pdf.

Endnote

¹ This definition of program adaptations is available in Office of Population Affairs’s resource on general adaptations here: https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/general_adaptations.pdf.

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