

Domains of Program Quality: Use of Evidence

Social service organizations use best practice research and evidence in program design, implementation, and evaluation to maximize their ability to achieve positive service outcomes with limited resources, thereby increasing their positive impact on the lives of people in their community. An organization's **use of evidence** includes reviewing the best available research that already exists in their field, incorporating best practices, collecting evidence of their own organization's effectiveness, and contributing their data and research to the knowledge base of "what works" in their field.

Best Practices for Use of Evidence

Identify High-Quality Research

High-quality studies analyze control and intervention groups that have no differences prior to the intervention being studied. The study will have valid measurements that are able to measure for desired information and can analyze that gathered data effectively. High-quality studies present a thorough summary of all outcomes of the intervention provided, even undesired outcomes, and track long-term outcomes. Additionally, high-quality studies demonstrate that the intervention produces desired outcomes in multiple sites and detail how to replicate their strategies.

Ensure Alignment with Target Outcomes & Populations

Research about "what works" is most useful to program design, implementation, and evaluation when it yields studies of interventions that are aligned with the organization's target outcomes and population. Priority studies include those conducted in communities that match the organization's target demographics and environment and/or seek to address the same target outcomes.

Implement With Fidelity

Existing evidence from the field provides a roadmap for organizations seeking to do similar work but also requires fidelity to these proven models in order to achieve comparable results. Practitioners can maintain fidelity by closely adhering to the details of implementation discussed in the research, following any fidelity guidelines that may have been created by the researchers or model designers, and making use of technical assistance or implementation support when available.

Monitor Implementation & Results

Effective evidence gathering relies on using a measurement system created by practitioners to gather data, collecting baseline information, securely storing data, and having a team tasked with continuous evaluation of data gathered from service provision. This team will sort and/or aggregate that data and analyze the data. Data gathered becomes the evidence used to draw conclusions about what aspects of the interventions work and which could improve. In this way, data becomes the tool through which a practitioner's implementation of evidence-based practices improves because it monitors a practitioner's progress toward the goals and performance objectives set at the beginning of their process on-site and on waitlists.

[Read more](#) about the Use of Evidence.

Use of Evidence Case Studies

- [Wise Guys](#)