

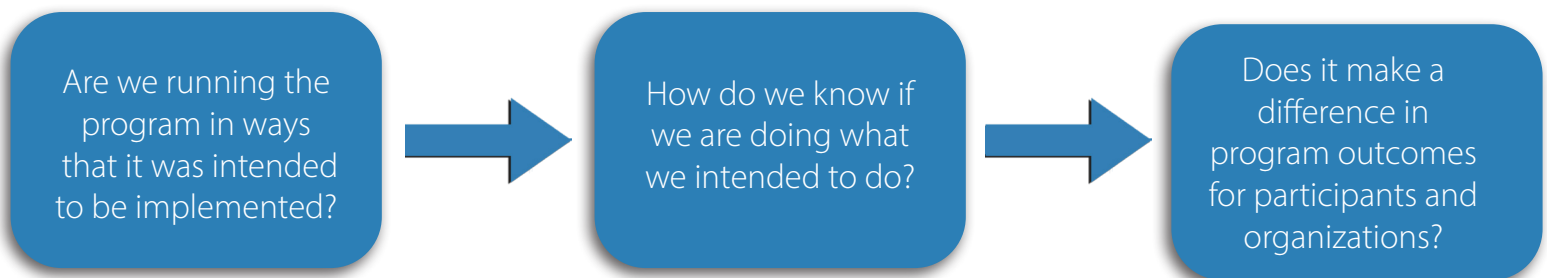


# Webinar Series

## Maintaining Program Integrity: *Strategies and Recommendations for Community-based Programming*

In September 2019, Dr. Leena Augimeri, Co-Founder and Director, SNAP® Scientific and Program Development at the Child Development Institute, Co-Founder of the Stop Now And Plan (SNAP®) evidence-based model and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto, presented a webinar for the Community of Practice Addressing Youth Dating Violence. This webinar explored the challenges encountered and lessons learned during Stop Now And Plan (SNAP®)'s 20+ year scaling journey, including practical tips and strategies that other scalable programs/models can consider. This document highlights one important aspect of program implementation - program integrity/program fidelity. For other valuable "lessons learned" you can watch the webinar [Click here to watch the Webinar](#) | [Click here to download the Slides](#)

### Program Integrity



Program integrity is a measurement approach to determine the accuracy and consistency with which an intervention is implemented (Wilkinson, 2006). An intervention implemented with high integrity is consistent with the intervention manual and training from the program developers or consultants (Augimeri, Walsh, & Slater, 2011). Measurement of program integrity helps to determine whether the program outcomes could be attributed to the intervention, as opposed to external forces and supports. In community settings, measuring program integrity is especially important to make decisions around program fit, need, sustainability, and scale-up.

Research supports that when an intervention is delivered with high integrity, more successful outcomes are obtained for intervention participants. Program developers consult previous evaluations of the program, relevant empirical literature, historical experience with programming, and so on to establish the guidelines and criteria to measure integrity (also commonly referred to as fidelity) for their respective programs.

### Tools to Measure Program Integrity

1. Create a program integrity checklist. Facilitators are to complete this checklist after every session. To create this checklist:
  - a. Identify activities and components that adhere to the program principles and orientation for each session
  - b. Monitor whether these activities and components are being implemented and to what degree (e.g., missed, partial or fully completed)
  - c. Program manuals should provide clear and distinct direction on how to implement the session activities and components. Additionally, facilitators should be trained on these activities and components as well as receive ongoing consultations on them if possible.

2. Measure participants' responsiveness
  - a. Monitor participant attendance and engagement for each session
  - b. Measure outcomes pre- and post-program (i.e., what the program intends to change in participants)

## Predictors of Successful Maintenance of Program Integrity

- Facilitators' preparedness, experiences, and skills (general and program-specific principles and theoretical orientation)
- Multi-purpose and ongoing program training
  - **Program-specific training**
    - Learning about the program's philosophy, goals, and principles
    - Explicit and hands-on learning to implement specific session activities, discussions, and related components
  - **Specialized training**
    - Some organizations may need specialized training to respond to the unique needs of their respective participants (e.g., trauma-informed, cultural safety)
  - **Implementation training**
    - Participant recruitment and developing referral mechanisms
    - Building partnerships with relevant community stakeholders and engaging caregivers, schools (if applicable)
    - Dealing with potential implementation challenges
  - **Booster or refresher training**
- The program's fit with the needs and diversity of participants
  - Before training and implementation, program developers should identify adaptations that need to be made to make the program applicable to diverse participants within an organization. If the program structure and activities do not align with participants' needs and their lived realities and experiences (e.g., cultural relevancy), then facilitators would experience increasing challenges to adhere to the program integrity while simultaneously honoring participants' diversity and needs.

## Enhancing the Capacity of Program Facilitators

1. Provide continuous consultation (and/or additional program resources) support to help facilitators
  - a. Adhering to program integrity
  - b. Completing checklists and measures to collect data about program integrity and outcomes
  - c. Dealing with and resolving program implementation issues
2. Create a community of practice for facilitators
  - a. Connecting facilitators with other program facilitators in and outside the organization, if possible to discuss successes and lessons learned about implementation and adhering to the program integrity
3. Train facilitators about program adaptations versus integrity/fidelity
  - a. The reality is that facilitators may need to make changes or adaptations to programming in the moment. Therefore, there should be program guidelines to assist facilitators in understanding the type of adaptations that could be made in sessions without changing the content and scope of the program and thus, potentially modifying its outcomes for participants. Caution and careful consideration should be taken so that key program ingredients are not significantly altered.

Monitoring program integrity should be a continuous process. Considering the diversity of youth and individuals participating in community programs, integrity/fidelity should be measured every time the program is delivered within the organization (not just a one-time administration). Along with measuring program integrity, organizations are to keep track of barriers that make it challenging for facilitators to adhere to program integrity consistently. This information about implementation challenges is essential for organizations in making decisions about the program's fit, acceptability, and fit for scaling up.

## References and Related Readings

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*This document was created by Maisha M. Syeda, Ph.D., Centre for School Mental Health, Western University based on the knowledge from the SNAP National Expansion in Canada: Important Learnings Along our SNAP Scaling Journey webinar by Dr. Leena Augimeri.*



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