Drilling Down: An Analytical Look at Evidence-Based Practice Resources
February 6, 2014
2–3:30 p.m. ET

Webinar Chat Questions:

1. If you pull information from multiple EBPs, would it then be considered an EBP or not?

No, it would not. Evidence-based programs and practices must be *implemented with fidelity*. This means that all components of a program plan (such as the length of a program, dosage, curriculum, staff training, etc.) must be followed. However, there are many situations in which following an exact EBP plan is not feasible, or there are reasons the EBP might not be as effective in a specific context. In these cases, it is better to make program and policy decisions based on existing research evidence to the extent possible, but the new or combined program/policy *should* be evaluated in order to establish that it is effective.

2. How long does it normally take for a program to be evaluated?

The time it takes to evaluate a program depends on a number of factors, including the type of program being evaluated and the extent of follow-up data needed to determine whether short and long-term outcomes have been achieved. For example, changes in attitudes might be assessed immediately, while changes in behavior may require several months or a year follow-up. In addition to the type of program and outcome assessed, there are two very important considerations that affect the time it will take for a program to be evaluated: the time it takes for a program to be implemented correctly, and the time it takes to collect enough *quality data* to assess outcomes.

3. In which category are programs having mixed results (positive and negative impacts) classified by CrimeSolutions.gov?

If studies show both significant, positive findings and null findings (no effect), the reviewers determine a final study rating based on the preponderance of evidence. The research evidence for each outcome is rated and weighted. Generally, if a program has mixed results (for example, if research shows it is effective for boys but not girls), the rating is based on a preponderance of the evidence. If reviewers disagree, a CrimeSolutions.gov Lead Researcher conducts a dispute resolution to make a determination about the program’s classification. However, CrimeSolutions.gov will not assign a rating of Effective or Promising to a program for which there is strong evidence of a negative (harmful) effect. For more details about the review and rating process, including the scoring instruments used to assess the programs, visit the CrimeSolutions.gov *Program Review and Rating from Start to Finish* page.
4. **Is there a database for juvenile justice meta-analyses similar to the Campbell Collaborative?**

Not that we know of. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has conducted some juvenile justice specific meta-analyses ([http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/Reports](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/Reports)). Also, although the Cochrane Collaboration is focused more on healthcare-related topics, they have conducted a number of meta-analyses looking at specific areas related to youth problem behaviors ([http://us.cochrane.org/](http://us.cochrane.org/)). CrimeSolutions.gov’s Practices section uses meta-analyses to determine the effectiveness of broader strategies or techniques. This section includes a number of meta-analyses that have been conducted on juvenile justice topic areas, such as juvenile drug courts, formal system processing, juvenile awareness programs, juvenile boot camps, and other program types. About half of the practices rated by CrimeSolutions.gov are juvenile-specific. Each practices profile contains information about the meta-analyses used to determine the practice rating, including the number of studies examined. For more details about the review and rating process, including the scoring instruments used to assess the practices, visit the CrimeSolutions.gov *Practice Review and Rating from Start to Finish* page.

5. **When referring to delinquency prevention, does the age scope of interest include early childhood? Could I find effective early childhood programs here?**

Yes, absolutely! Early childhood programs can be found on all of these sites. There is a lot of crossover between the juvenile justice and child welfare fields, so many if not most juvenile justice resources will have useful information for practitioners working with young children. All four of the resources featured in our Webinar provide age (of target population) as a search category.

6. **Who are appropriate evaluators? Can you please provide examples?**

Appropriate evaluators have an advanced degree in either statistics or social science research, and have subject matter expertise related to the type of program or policy you wish to evaluate. They might be employed by or affiliated with state or local agencies, colleges and universities, consulting firms, nonprofit organizations, or professional associations, such as the American Evaluation Association.

For more information on selecting and working with an outside evaluation team, including specific factors to consider such as cost, research experience, cultural competency, and timeline, see NJJEC’s recent Webinar *Evaluation in Action: Lessons Learned from Colorado’s Juvenile Diversion Program* on the NJJEC Trainings page, and JRSA’s publication *Hiring and Working with an Evaluator*.

7. **What is the top score?**
The top rating given by CrimeSolutions.gov and the Model Programs Guide is **Effective**. The top rating given by Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development is **Model**. The top score given by the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices is **4.0**, though note that the score applies to either the Quality of Research or Readiness for Dissemination (for more information, see NREPP’s [FAQ page](#)). Note that while the ratings on CrimeSolutions.gov, the Model Programs Guide, and Blueprints relate to the *effectiveness* of the programs to change the desired behavior of the target population, NREPP does not rate overall program effectiveness—NREPP scores the quality of the research (outcome by outcome) and the programs’ readiness for dissemination and replication, not how well the program has achieved its overall desired goals.

8. I've found it difficult to find evidenced based curricula that can be incorporated into a community based mentoring program. Is there a place to find evidenced based curricula?

You may find helpful information on the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring and MENTOR websites. In addition, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recently began working on a National Mentoring Resource Center with MENTOR. The new initiative will support evidence-based resources, tools, and curricula, to the extent that they are supported by research evidence.

9. Is there any research specific to implementation of any of these programs within a school environment?

Yes, these resources indicate where the program was evaluated (what setting or local context) and are searchable based on setting. In addition, Model Programs Guide and CrimeSolutions.gov staff are working on additional resources to assist practitioners with translating and implementing programs into different settings, including possibly school environments.

10. Is there any research on creating a comprehensive juvenile justice program?

We assume this question relates to system-level change or reform that impacts all aspects of the juvenile justice system. Some of the “practices” included in CrimeSolutions.gov and the Model Programs guide, such as formal system processing, refer to systemic changes in approaching youth involvement in the justice system. Further, OJJDP is working on a Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative to develop ways to apply evidence-based practice knowledge to system-level reform.

11. If Blueprints is only promising and effective programs, how do we know what/if other programs have been evaluated and found ineffective? From the other 3 sites?
The Blueprints website provides a matrix showing which programs have been federally and privately reviewed here. You can use this matrix to compare which programs have and have not been included as promising or effective on the Blueprints website. Both CrimeSolutions.gov and the Model Programs Guide use a No Effects rating for programs that have been reviewed and found to have no effects or harmful effects. NREPP rates Quality of Research for individual outcomes, and includes a description for each outcome about whether the evidence supports the intervention as effective for that specific outcome.

12. Will you direct folks to the websites of the various evidence based programs?

CrimeSolutions.gov, the Model Programs Guide, NREPP, and Blueprints all include contact information and website location, if available, for all programs. Information on the researchers who conducted the evaluations of programs may also be available.

13. Finding an effective program is all well and good, but obtaining training and materials seems essential. Is there any way to screen for those programs that have web and/or printed manuals available? (For those of us with limited resources and/or geographical isolation, live training is often not possible).

NREPP provides a Readiness for Dissemination score for each of its programs. The score includes availability of implementation materials, training and support resources, and quality assurance procedures. Both the Model Programs Guide and CrimeSolutions.gov provide information about trainings and online materials, as they are available, in each program profile. Contact information for technical assistance providers is also provided, when available. Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development includes a Training and Technical Assistance section in its program reviews that provides information about training modules available (or required) for implementation. Note that for many programs, training materials are proprietary.

14. There was some mention at the beginning of the training about “essential components” of programs, along with a caution that you can’t just pick out the parts of effective programs that you like. Is there research being done about “component analysis,” so that we can eventually figure out the relative effect sizes of program parts?

Some program designs, training curricula, and implementation plans will specify essential components or elements versus those that may allow some variation; however, this is not common. There is also research on components under broader “practices,” or general strategies and techniques that are critical for effectiveness in programming. CrimeSolutions.gov includes practice ratings, and the ratings are specific by outcome when multiple outcomes are included in the research. Information on moderator analyses, which are additional tests done during a meta-analysis to see if any factors (like the length of a program or characteristics of program participants) strengthened the likelihood that a program type improved outcomes, are discussed on the practice profiles when that information is available. In addition, these
resources along with Blueprints and NREPP provide an opportunity to compare the characteristics of multiple similar programs to look for common components—in a way, conducting your own components analysis. Examples might include wraparound approaches to therapy or using a matching process to ensure a productive relationship with a mentor. Finally, some researchers have been using meta-analyses to attempt to identify effective program components. More information on this can be found here.

15. A best practice done poorly is a poor program. Would you address importance of ongoing program evaluation as a critical element of implementation of an EBP?

This is an excellent point! Continual process evaluation is necessary to ensure an evidence-based program or practice follows its plan with “fidelity”—treatment dosage, staff training, case planning, and target population characteristics are just a few things to consider. Some projects use outside “fidelity checkers” whose sole responsibility is to ensure the program is being implemented as designed. Consistent review of outcome data will also ensure that results are as expected, and provide an opportunity to make improvements in practice or data collection if necessary. For more information, consult NJJEC’s Webinar series Assessing Project Performance: Building Blocks of Evaluation and Performance Measurement.