

Examining Adaptations of Evidence-Based Programs Under Natural Conditions

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Adaptation Research

There is tension between fidelity and adaptation, but little empirical evidence to guide policy and practice.

- Considerable evidence linking fidelity to better outcomes.
- Few (if any) EBPs can confidently identify critical core elements
- As a result, a strong emphasis on maintaining fidelity as EBPs go to scale
- High levels of fidelity achieved in controlled trials, but considerable adaptation and great variability under natural conditions
- Some argue that adaptation, especially cultural tailoring, can be positive and may in fact improve program uptake and effectiveness
- However these arguments have been primarily conceptual and philosophical – there is a need for empirical research on EBP adaptation under natural conditions

The Current Study

- The Pennsylvania Evidence-Based Programs Initiative is funded by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to promote large-scale adoption of evidence-based prevention programs
- Since 1998, nearly 200 replications of a menu of EBPs throughout the state

A TEST-BED FOR TYPE 2 TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

- In 2001, PCCD formed a partnership with Penn State's Prevention Research Center to provide technical assistance to grantees and study the process of program dissemination, leading to the creation of the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) in 2008

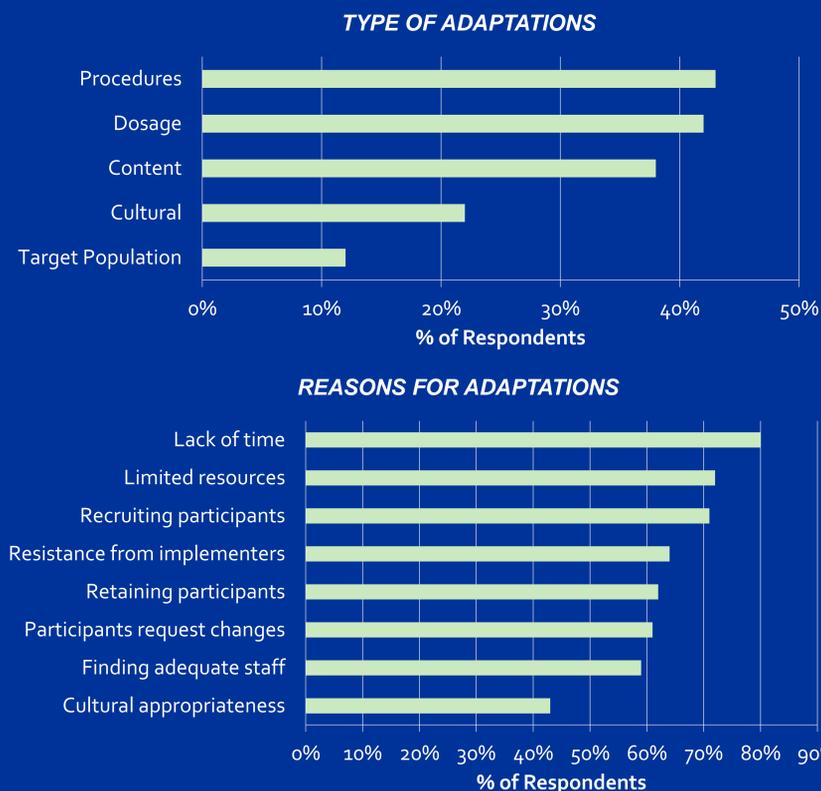
ANNUAL WEB-BASED SURVEY

- Annual survey completed by PCCD-funded grantees both during and after grant funding
- Survey asked whether adaptations were made to the program and if adaptations were made, respondents were asked to qualitatively describe the adaptation

PARTICIPANTS & MEASURES

- 104 of the 240 respondents reported making adaptations and completed questions about the adaptations made
- Participants were asked to select from a list what types of adaptations were made and the reasons for making these adaptations (respondents were able to select multiple responses)
- 68 of the 104 respondents (65%) provided qualitative data
- 25 of the qualitative descriptions did not provide enough information to code; of the 43 remaining qualitative descriptions, 5 included multiple adaptations
- In total there were 49 codeable *qualitative* descriptions of adaptations and 104 *quantitative* responses.

Types of Adaptations and Reasons for Making Adaptations

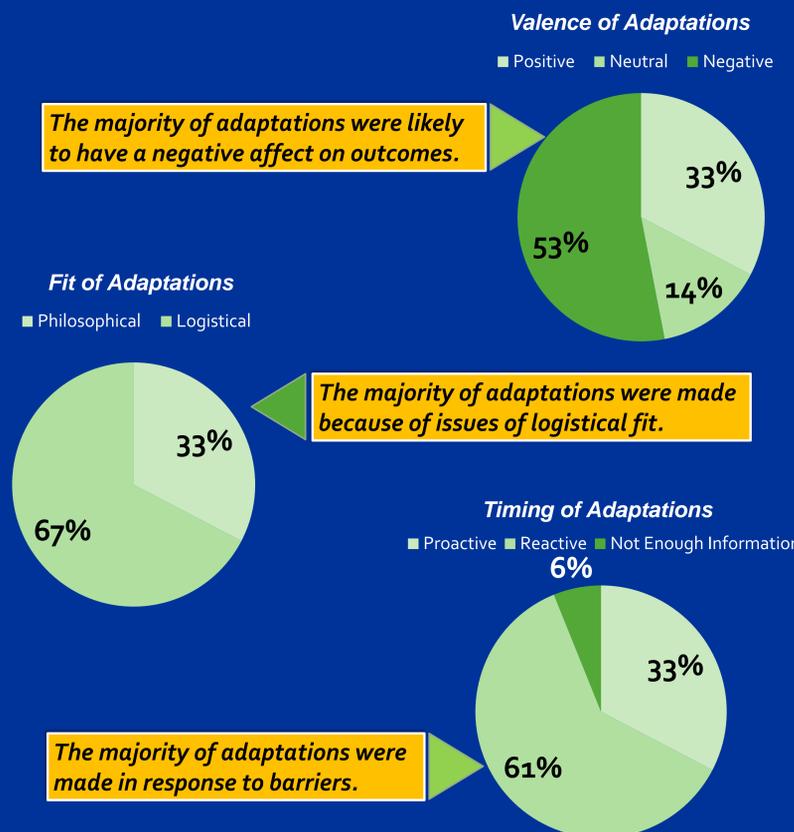


A New Conceptual Typology for Understanding Adaptation

DESCRIPTIONS OF ADAPTATION WERE CODED ON THREE CONSTRUCTS

- **VALENCE** – THE PREDICTED AFFECT ON PROGRAM IMPACT
 - Positive – predicted to strengthen program effectiveness
 - Neutral – predicted to have no impact on program effectiveness
 - Negative – predicted to reduce program effectiveness
- **FIT** – REASONS FOR MAKING THE ADAPTATION
 - Logistical Fit – issues of compatibility in program design and real world conditions
 - Philosophical Fit – issues of cultural or value differences
- **TIMING** – WHEN WERE THE ADAPTATIONS MADE?
 - Proactive – adaptations planned before implementation began
 - Reactive – adaptations made in response to barriers

Results: Coded Adaptations



The majority of adaptations were likely to have a negative affect on outcomes.

The majority of adaptations were made because of issues of logistical fit.

The majority of adaptations were made in response to barriers.

Summary and Future Directions

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- The majority of adaptations were made to the procedure, dosage and content of the program
- Lack of time, limited resources and difficulty recruiting participants were listed as the most common reasons for making adaptations
- The majority of adaptations made had a negative predicted valence and were made reactively because of issues of logistical fit

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Establish reliability of coding system
- Analyze changes in adaptation over life course of program
- Linking adaptation with program outcomes

