Step 4

Fit

Contents

Tip sheet

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Focus question

What actions should be taken to ensure that the selected program fits with your community context?

Step 4
Fit

Step 4 Fit walks you through a compatibility appraisal so you can be confident that the programs under consideration are appropriate for your community, organization, stakeholders, and potential participants. For example, you would probably not implement a program designed for urban African American youth among youth in a rural migrant-worker community. In the course of this step, you'll examine material you gathered in Step 1 Needs & Resources and build on your work in Step 2 Goals & Outcomes and Step 3 Best Practices to assess the suitability of the program you already have or evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs (EBPs) you are considering. The tasks will help you identify best practices and prevention strategies that match or fit your youth population and specific goals and outcomes. You'll also consider **adaptations** for a better fit.

Key point

As you work through Step 4 Fit and Step 5 Capacity, you may realize that a program is not that good a match for your prospective participants or organizational capacities. You may want to adapt it, or you may choose another potential program to explore further.

The exact meaning of "community" partly depends on the geographic scope of your work. Your organization could be instituting a program in a school, clinic, city, or region. Whatever its scope, the program needs to harmonize with many aspects of the community:

- Culture
- Values and practices
- Readiness for a program of this nature
- Organizational mission and philosophy
- Characteristics and context of the youth you are serving (e.g., age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, language, urban/suburban/rural, level of need)
- Priorities of key stakeholders (e.g., funders, program partners, policymakers, service providers, community leaders)
- Existing programs and services that may be doing some of the same activities with some of the same youth

Take note

Even if you are currently implementing a program, don't give in to an urge to bypass this step. Taking the time to make sure you know how well your program really fits with your participants could help strengthen your program, maximize the use of resources, and improve results.

Materials

- Copies of the Step 4 tools, **Program Fit Assessment** and **Culturally Appropriate Programs Checklist**.
- Summaries of the evidence-based curricula under consideration
- Copies of the tip sheet, **Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance**, p. 4-8
- Completed Step 2 tools, **BDI Logic Model** and **SMART Desired Outcomes**

Step 4 Checklist

By the time you finish this step, you will have progressed from learning the term "fit" to applying the concept to your selection process. You'll be able to:

☐ Understand what "fit" means.

☐ Assess the fit of your prospective programs in light of several important aspects of your youth participants, organization, and stakeholders.

☐ Decide if a program fits your participants, organization, and stakeholders.

☐ Determine whether adaptations are needed.

☐ Identify the type and depth of appropriate adaptations you want to make.

☐ Continue narrowing the selection of programs to implement.

Fayetteville Youth Network (FYN) Starts Step 4

The FYN work group began to examine how their leading candidate EBP—Making Proud Choices! (MPC)—fits with their participants, the values of their organization, and the larger community. They examined Becoming a Responsible Teen (BART) in a similar fashion. They carefully worked through the questions in the Assessing Program Fit tool. They had a copy of the MPC curriculum in front of them as they worked and used several other resources to help them, including the Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance, to highlight safe and unsafe adaptations. As decisions were made about program fit with youth, FYN, and the community, all potential adaptations to MPC were noted in the Program Fit Assessment tool.

Reasons for assessing fit

Evaluating a program's fit increases the chances it will be appropriate to and accepted by the community and participating youth. If your program does not fit with the culture and values of your youth, organization, and stakeholders, it will be harder to implement and may be less effective. To ascertain fit, you need to grasp the full context in which your program will operate. The resulting benefits affect all participants and constituents because they:

- Make your program and strategies work for participating youth as well as your community

- Complement the efforts of other groups in the community, reducing duplication, and perhaps boosting results for multiple groups

- Build strong relationships with other providers, funders, and stakeholders

- Ensure sufficient participation in a program meaningful to those that attend

- Allow you to choose and adapt the right program, increasing your chances of making the changes you want to see

Often small changes to an EBP can and should be made to increase fit, especially when it comes to working with your particular youth participants. Thinking about possible adaptations now will help you implement the program with fidelity and avoid making changes to the program on the spur of the moment, which might diminish its effectiveness. Understanding fit can help you select appropriate adaptations.

Take note

Just as a good fit makes it more likely that a person will choose to wear a particular piece of clothing, good program fit can increase the chances that the program will be appropriate for and accepted by the participating youth and the community.

Information to get you started

To start assessing your candidate programs, you need to assemble some basic information about each program, such as content, activities, dosage, and setting. The information should include data on the age, sex, and race/ethnicity of youth participating in the evaluated version of the program. It should cite evaluation results demonstrating other outcomes consistent with the goals of the program. If you are considering an existing non-EBP, fit is just as important and the same process can be used.

It's a fact

Making Proud Choices! (MPC) is an effective EBP.

Content: Curriculum designed for African American, Hispanic, and white youth aged 11 to 13. The program emphasizes safer sex, including information about abstinence and condoms.

Activities: Eight sessions led by two adult or peer co-facilitators who are trained in basic facilitation skills. Participants learn through group discussion, games, brainstorming, role-play, videos, and behavioral skills exercises.

Dosage: Eight sessions lasting 60 minutes each

Setting: Middle school and youth-serving, community-based organizations.

Effectiveness: MPC has been shown to delay the initiation of sexual intercourse, reduce frequency of sex, and reduce the incidence of unprotected sex.

If you don't know the basics of the programs you are considering, you may be able to get information from the developers, organizations currently using it, websites, published articles, or surveys mentioned in Step 3 Best Practices.

Before moving too far ahead in examining the fit of your program, it is important to understand the *core components* and what you can and can't change about EBPs. *Core components* are the essential elements of an evidence-based program believed to make it effective that should be repeated or replicated to maintain program effectiveness. This information will help you to determine if the changes you want to make to achieve fit would maintain or compromise the **integrity** of the program. If the changes are too substantial, you should consider selecting another program.

EBP adaptations

As we briefly discussed in Step 3 Best Practices, the first thing to consider is implementing an EBP with fidelity. This involves delivering the program "as is" or adapting the program while maintaining the *core components*, elements that are essential to program effectiveness. Removing core components or deviating from a verified curriculum risks reducing the effectiveness of any EBP you try to adapt. Maintaining them increases the likelihood that the program will generate the same outcomes.

Once you understand how a program you're considering works and what its core components are, you're in a position to anticipate the effect of potential changes. EBPs constitute a recipe of activities that address determinants. Let's compare implementing an EBP to making cookies. Cookie recipes call for flour, eggs, oil, and sugar. If you take out any one of these core ingredients you will not produce cookies. These ingredients are similar to the core components of an EBP. If you take out a core component, you are not implementing the EBP with fidelity, and it is unlikely that you will get the results that you want.

It's a fact

Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is an evidence-based youth development program in which the core components include service learning activities (which entails supervised community service), discussion of the service learning activities, and discussion/activities about social development and learning tasks. Removing any one of these core components could undermine the science base of the program and reduce effectiveness.

On the other hand, there are thousands of cookie variations. Whether you toss in raisins, chocolate chips, nuts, sprinkles, or coconut, it's still a cookie. Cookie variations are like EBP elements that can be changed, such as names of characters in role-plays or settings where role-plays are staged. The role-plays themselves are essential to your program, but the names of the characters and the settings are flexible.

While there is no single standard for making decisions about adapting EBPs, we offer a simple model for determining appropriate adaptations:

> **Green Light Changes** are considered safe, easy changes that good facilitators make to help a program connect with the audience (i.e., to fit the program to the youth's culture and context). The changes do not alter the determinants

(risk and protective factors) addressed in the program. They are generally minor changes, like changing the location of a role-play to one familiar to your youth participants. Most programs can be improved by tailoring these minor elements to better reflect the population being served, and you should feel comfortable making them.

IMPORTANT: Green-light changes do not alter or diminish the core components.

Yellow-Light Changes are more complex and you should proceed with caution before making them. They are changes that require expert assistance to avoid compromising the integrity and fidelity of the program. Before you incorporate a yellow-light change, you should obtain the advice of a skilled curriculum developer and a person who understands behavioral health and health education theory (e.g., a professor or another researcher). Substituting a program video for one that fits more closely with your population and addresses the specific determinants of the original video is an example of a yellow-light change that must be made carefully and thoughtfully.

Red-Light Changes, such as reducing or eliminating activities, substantially compromise the core components of the program, and we strongly advise against making them. For example, programs often provide opportunities for youth to practice new skills as a critical step in changing behavior. You can expect optimal outcomes *only* when the participants practice new skills for the full amount of time that the program states. Reducing or eliminating practice components is very likely to compromise the integrity of the program. (e.g., removing a condom demonstration when condom activities are a core component of the original curriculum).

The full version of the General Adaptation Guidance and program-specific Adaptation Kits for All4You!, Becoming a Responsible Teen, Draw the Line/Respect the Line, Reducing the Risk, Safer Choices, Safer Sex Intervention, and SiHLE can be found at:
http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.adaptationshome

Tip sheet ahead

The snapshot of the **Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance** (p. 4-8) can help you make informed, appropriate adaptations to your selected EBP.

If you want more information, we've also included a longer version of the guide at http://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/index.htm.

⭐ Snapshot of General Green-Yellow-Red Light Adaptation Guidance

Green-light adaptations are those you can feel comfortable making to an EBP. Yellow-light adaptations require some skill and expertise to make while retaining EPB effectiveness. Red-light adaptations should be avoided, because they will likely change EBP core components. Use this general guide as you consider adapting your selected EBP.

Green Light Adaptations
Updating and/or customizing statistics and other reproductive health information.
Customizing role play scenarios (e.g., using wording more reflective of youth being served).
Making activities more interactive, appealing to different learning styles.
Tailoring learning activities and instructional methods to youth culture, developmental stage, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation.

Yellow Light Adaptations
Changing session order or sequence of activities.
Adding activities to reinforce learning or to address additional risk and protective factors.
Modifying condom activities to accommodate the level of demonstration and practice appropriate for audience (e.g. leading students in an activity where they order steps of proper condom use printed on cards – instead of practicing proper condom use on a model).
Replacing or supplementing videos (with other videos or activities) or replacing activities with videos.
Implementing the program with a different population or in a different setting.

Red Light Adaptations
Shortening a program.
Reducing or eliminating activities that allow youth to personalize risk or practice skills
Removing condom activities entirely. Learning to use a condom, like any other skill, takes practice. If you wish to see a change in condom use behavior, you must include a condom demonstration and as much of the practice activities as possible.
Contradicting, competing with, or diluting the program's goal.
Minimizing or eliminating strategies built into the curriculum that promote effective classroom management.
Replacing interactive activities with lectures or individual work.
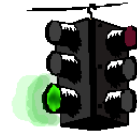
How to assess fit

To assess the program's fit, you need to understand the values and traditions of the target youth's culture. We highly recommend that you involve youth and adults from the community in analysis and assessment activities, such as interviews and discussion groups. You might also find it helpful to have the information from your Step 1 assessment handy. We'll start by addressing fit for each group individually and then we'll consider EBP adaptations.

1. Assess fit with the participants.

2. Assess fit with the organization.

3. Assess fit with the stakeholders.

4. Consider adaptations that would improve fit.

5. Narrow the field of possible programs.

Key point

Avoid making assumptions about a culture. Invite youth and/or community members from diverse groups to help you learn more and think through appropriate cultural adaptations.

Ascertaining the amount of fit also involves determining whether your community is ready and willing to support a particular program. This will involve speaking with community leaders and key stakeholders, and sharing what you learn. The tasks involve using the **Program Fit Assessment** tool to examine each program you're considering and ascertain the amount of fit with participants, your organization, and stakeholders. If you are already implementing a program, the tool can help you find areas for improvement.

Tool

You'll need to print the **Program Fit Assessment** tool at http://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/index.htm, and use it to work through the tasks in this section. We use the fictional FYN to illustrate its use.

Once you determine which aspects of a program fit and which don't, you can use the tip sheet, **Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance** (p. 4-8), to help you complete the last two columns on the tool as you contemplate appropriate changes for improving all-around fit. There's no single solution that makes a program fit perfectly. You may need to understand competing interests first, and then balance them. For example, a program might fit with tech-savvy youth, but many youth you serve may not have access to all the same gadgets. If you're considering a number of programs, identifying necessary changes and any expenses, complications, or difficulties you'll have incorporating them can help you narrow the field before proceeding to Step 5 Capacities.

Take note

Important considerations are the cost and feasibility of adaptations under consideration. If it looks like the program requires a lot of time, money, and effort to adapt, perhaps you can find one that is a better fit (i.e., requires fewer changes).

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1. Assess fit with potential participants

The assessment you conduct here will help you identify the right program. Even if the program isn't a perfect fit as it stands, the results may imply appropriate green-light changes you could make to improve the fit. Answering these questions will tell you if a program is likely to work with your potential participants or any other youth to whom you offer it:

> *Have youth similar to ours been helped by the same program?*
>
> *Are the planned activities socially and developmentally suitable for our youth?*
>
> *Are the planned activities culturally and linguistically appropriate?*
>
> *Would the youth we plan to serve enjoy this program and attend it?*

You want to know if and how program activities and delivery methods fit with your youth population. Consider the upper section of the **Program Fit Assessment** tool once you have the following information:

1. Gather the same basic information about *characteristics* of your chosen youth participants, as you did about the programs: age, sex, and race/ethnicity. Include their level of literacy, education, and health literacy, geographic location, and setting (e.g., rural/suburban/urban) if

known. This should be available from your work in Step 1 or easily compiled.

2. Learn about the *social and cultural context*. Involve youth and other community members in the process and learn more about their values, practices, beliefs, religion, customs, rituals, and language—especially characteristics relevant to your program. The program may address peer norms, but you need to know if your youth participants' norms are similar to those of the youth participants in the original program. For example, diverse groups may view teen parenthood differently. Some youth may come from cultural or ethnic backgrounds where teen pregnancy is perceived less negatively and is relatively common. Also keep in mind that programs are not implemented in a vacuum and that the social context in which youth reside may play a significant role in program implementation details and potential outcomes (e.g., socioeconomic status).

3. Identify issues arising from *special situations*, such as youth in foster care, alternative schools, or juvenile detention.

It's a fact

Research ties culture-related assets and protective factors to positive sexual health outcomes for Latina youth, including high aspirations and strong family relationships.[1] Understanding such connections or perceptions in different cultures can improve success in implementing programs and may aid in engaging families.

Once you know more about the context in which your youth live, you can determine whether the program is appropriate as written or if adaptations would be needed to help the candidate program fit more appropriately with your youth. This is just as relevant for non-EBPs as it is for EBPs.

Tool

The **Culturally Appropriate Program Checklist**, located on the CDC Teen Pregnancy website, can help you make sure that all parts of a program are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

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[1] Sue Alford, "The Sexual Health of Latina Adolescents—Focus on Assets" (Advocates for Youth, 2006). www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/latina.pdf

2. Assess fit with the organization

Organizations work toward their mission by accomplishing goals. Whether an organization grows tomatoes or operates a hospice, a clear line of sight between mission and goals eliminates doubts about purpose, focuses action, and improves the quality of decisions made by staff, volunteers, and other participants. Thus, an organization's philosophy and values must be congruent with those embodied in any program it implements. Staff members are much more likely to deliver the program with fidelity if they believe it fits with their organization's vision and mission. Consider the middle section of the **Assessing Program Fit Tool** once you have the following information:

1. Review each candidate program's goals, and determine if they are compatible with the **mission of your organization**.

2. Find out what your **board, staff, and leadership** think of the candidate programs. Involving staff and volunteers in the selection or adaptation process ensures a good fit with the range of motivations for belonging to or working for your organization.

3. Consider the **program context/setting** in which the original EBP was delivered (and tested) versus the one you plan to use. If the program used a school but you plan to use a broader community setting, would you be undermining an important contributing factor to success? Perhaps not, but you should consider the possibility.

4. Determine how realistic the **program dosage**—the number and duration of sessions and activities—is within the scope of your organization, program setting, and timing.

3. Assess fit with stakeholders

The next level of fit to consider expands your circle of support to the larger community and specifically calls attention to the priorities and values of key stakeholders, such as funders, policymakers, service providers, and other community leaders. Consider the lower section of the **Program Fit Assessment** tool once you have the following information:

1. Review **other local programs** to determine if a group in the community is already implementing similar efforts. Information you collected in Step 1 Needs & Resources should help you answer a few questions:

Would our candidate program complement or conflict with existing programs in the community?

Would it make sense to collaborate on EBP-related efforts?

What void will our program fill in the community?

2. Assess the **potential participant and the community level of readiness**. Depending on the answers to the following questions, you may need to rethink your starting point and spend some time building readiness regardless of which program you ultimately select:

   Are our potential participants and community really ready for the activities in these candidate programs?

   Will the community support them?

   Do they already have the health literacy skills to understand and apply information and recommendations in the program?

   Is something more basic required first to build their health literacy skills?

3. Informally survey **key stakeholder priorities**. If funders and other partners do not share your vision, you may end up wasting time trying to persuade them to support your plans. At the same time, get to know those who disagree and learn their priorities so that conversation remains productive.

Online

Resources for assessing community readiness.

Community Readiness Model, Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University: **www.triethniccenter.colostate.edu/communityReadiness_home.htm**

The Community Toolbox, Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, Chap. 2, Sec. 9: **http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1014.aspx**

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4. Consider adaptations that would improve fit

Though an EBP may not match the characteristics of your participants exactly, it may not require much alteration to achieve an acceptable fit. Of course, you *don't* want to make changes that compromise the intent or internal logic of an EBP. For example, *sharing* information about ways to say no to sex is not the same as

practicing them during a role-play. As you consider possible adaptations, keep the following factors in mind:

- Costs incurred while making changes in the curriculum

- Staff training requirements

- Adaptation feasibility

- Materials needed

Enter potential adaptations on the **Program Fit Assessment** tool for each candidate program. Adaptations could be associated with any of the three stakeholders affected by the program choice: youth, organization, or community.

Youth

- Alter a proposed program to make it appropriate for the special needs, and the social and cultural context of your target population.
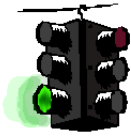
Possible green-light change

If most of your youth participants are of Asian heritage, you could alter wording or content of behavioral messages so they are suitable to the specific Asian culture as long as the underlying message stays the same.

Organization

- Change a program to work in a new setting.

- Change the dosage, but assess its effect on your ability to deliver a program with fidelity. For example, you might not be able to deliver a 20-session program when one month is allotted for it. This type of adaptation is discouraged.

Possible red-light change

Shortening programs or reducing or eliminating activities are potential red-light changes that could compromise outcomes.

Stakeholders

- Adapt the program in order to successfully launch it among existing stakeholders.

- Alter program strategies to get stakeholders ready, given their priorities.

Memory flash

If you believe you must make yellow-light adaptations, talk first with someone—perhaps a university professor—experienced in curriculum development, EBPs, and health education theory.

Do not make red-light adaptations to an evidence-based program.

5. Narrow the field of possible programs

With the completed **Program Fit Assessment** and **Culturally Appropriate Programs Checklist**, discuss any adaptations you will need to make to improve each potential program's fit. Reconsider each program in light of the following with regard to youth, organization, and stakeholder priorities:

- High cost

- Redundancy

- Incompatible time commitments

- Yellow- or red-light adaptations needed

No matter how appealing a program looks on paper, selecting the wrong one for your community may lead to ineffective programs. If an ill-suited program alienates any of the three stakeholder groups, it may be difficult to garner support for future efforts. Therefore, you should be careful to review a range of programs, determine those that are most appropriate, and make informed adaptations if necessary. It is critical that you implement your program with fidelity.

Save it

Keep all the assessment and adaptation materials in a place where you can get to them when you need them.

FYN performs a Program Fit Assessment

With MPC and BART being the EBPs under consideration, FYN gathered information about its three stakeholder groups and used the **Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance** to assess program fit for their stakeholder groups and

to consider the need for appropriate adaptations. Below, we describe FYN's assessment for MPC only (for brevity); however, they similarly assessed BART as they further explored their program selection.

First, FYN considered MPC with respect to the age and background of their potential youth participants:

> MPC was originally implemented with male and female African American youth, 11-13 years of age, living in an urban setting. Program materials indicate that MPC can be adapted for other racial/ethnic groups, other age groups, single sex groups, and other geographic settings, though the attitudes and myths addressed in the program must be relevant to the new population. Because the age, culture, and racial/ethnic composition of FYN middle school is similar to that specified in the program, there's no need to change learning activities or instructional methods.

> Based on recommendations in the program materials, FYN concluded it would be helpful to survey or talk with FYN middle school youth to gather additional information. They wanted to make sure that MPC delivery accurately addressed the attitudes and beliefs of the youth and that the language and examples were appropriate to their experience. These changes are considered appropriate green-light changes.

> FYN concluded that core MPC activities could remain **unchanged** with respect to youth participants.

e.g. Program Fit Assessment

Does the program… Fit with the youth's…	Yes / No	What steps can be taken to increase program fit? If adaptations are needed, list affected activities and describe adaptations.	Green- Yellow- or Red-Light adaptation
Literacy and/or education level?	*Yes*		
Age?	*Yes*		
Sex, Gender Identity?	*Yes*		
Culture?	*Mostly*	*Adapt language used in modules 2 and 6 of the curriculum to incorporate terms our youth commonly use.* *Adapt the attitudes and beliefs covered to include those held by our participants.*	*Green* *Green as long as EBP components remain intact.*
LGBTQ	*Yes*		
Special circumstances (foster care, juvenile delinquents, etc.)?	*Yes*		

Then, FYN considered how MPC would fit with their organization:

MPC was developed for delivery in both middle schools and in youth-serving community-based programs. FYN is a community-based organization with experience delivering its substance abuse prevention programs in after-school settings. FYN already has good relationships with local schools and other community organizations on which to proceed with its plans.

MPC was originally implemented with groups of 6-8 youth over two weekends in two 4-hour sessions. However, the program could be done with larger groups as long as the activities remain interactive. The program may be implemented in other formats (e.g., eight sessions of 60 minutes each, four two-module sessions, two 4-module sessions, etc.). All eight modules must be implemented in order. Participants may be broken into small groups to practice skills. If class periods are shorter than one hour, MPC can be spread over more than eight sessions in order to cover all the material. When considering group size, program materials indicated the importance of all activities remaining interactive and allowing participants to participate and practice new skills (core pedagogical components).

FYN determined that more time and/or additional facilitators might be needed. Since the program allowed for peer facilitators to help deliver the curriculum, FYN viewed this as a good opportunity to involve youth as leaders, which would, in turn, help increase some important protective factors.

FYN concluded that with only minor, appropriate green-light changes in the implementation schedule and format, MPC could fit with their organization.

Does the program… Fit with the organization's…	Yes / No	What steps can be taken to increase program fit?	Green- Yellow- or Red-Light adaptation
Mission?	*Yes*		
Board support?	*Yes*		
Staff support?	*Yes*		
Leadership support?	*Yes*		
Context/setting?	*Mostly*	*We plan to implement MPC in the middle school as a voluntary after-school program.*	*Green light. This is an approved context change for this EBP.*
Program dosage?	*Yes*		

Then, FYN considered MPC in light of other stakeholders:

> MPC's program design contained no special requirements involving stakeholders. Based on what was learned during the data collection and resource assessment phase, FYN determined that delivering a teen pregnancy prevention program would address an unmet need in the community and yet not interfere or duplicate work other organizations were doing. It would, in fact, complement existing programming.

> However, FYN also knew that trying to introduce a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum into the schools might be controversial for some members of the community. They concluded that, if selected, MPC would be best conducted in an after-school setting with parental permission.

Does the program… Fit with stakeholder's…	Yes / No	What steps can be taken to increase program fit?	Green- Yellow- or Red-Light adaptation
Other programs?	Yes	*To build our relationship with local Planned Parenthood and in recognition of their resources, we plan to invite a guest speaker from their clinic to cover the factual information in module 6.*	
Readiness for prevention intervention?	Yes		
Priorities and values?	Yes	*We decided to change the name of the "How to Make Condoms Fun and Pleasurable" activity to avoid controversy in the community. But the content will remain the same, because it is critical that youth get to talk about strategies that increase the likelihood that they will use condoms with their partners.*	*Green-light*

Finally, the work group used the **Culturally Appropriate Programs Checklist** tool (see next page) to examine MPC's content relevance for the diverse cultures at FYN middle school, including LGBTQ youth. While FYN felt confident about staff knowledge and MPC's fit with its youth, they decided to adapt some of the language used in the curriculum to incorporate terms commonly used in the school.

After thoroughly reviewing MPC, the work group members did a similar assessment of BART (not shown). With a few green-light adaptations, BART fit the organization, community, and other stakeholders. It fit the FYN youth less well, however, since it was designed for a high school age group. The curriculum would likely require more substantial adaptation to make it appropriate for 8th graders.

e.g. **Culturally Appropriate Programs Checklist**

	Yes / No	This is what we plan to do
Community relevance Have you verified the relevance of the materials you plan to use (e.g., applicable, understandable, specific)? Have you modified them to make them more relevant?	*Yes*	
Informed review Have the curriculum and materials been reviewed by members of the community or knowledgeable others?	*Yes*	*We'll also make sure peer facilitators have a chance to review the curriculum and have conversation with staff if there are questions.*
Cultural sensitivity throughout Is the curriculum culturally sensitive throughout and not just in certain sections?	*Mostly*	*A committee will examine the material to help ensure cultural and LGBTQ sensitivity.*
Social infrastructure considerations Does the program take into account language, environment, values, socioeconomic status of the community members in its materials and programming?	*Yes*	*We're making sure facilitators know about the types of sexual behaviors in which youth are engaging and their attitudes about sex, as well as the language they use to talk about these behaviors, to make sure these activities are relevant as possible to participating youth.*
Staff experience Are all your program staff members knowledgeable? Do they have expertise working with the community?	*Yes*	
Cultural competence training Has the program staff received specialized training in cultural competence?	*Yes*	*Will do a refresher before program implementation to enhance understanding of the target population and new curriculum.*

Applying Step 4 when you already have a program

You *cannot* take fit for granted, even if you have been implementing your program for a while. You will likely increase your program's relevance and effectiveness if you consider ways to make it fit your various stakeholder groups better, especially with the population you are working with. Consider your current program, from several angles:

Discuss program fit. Assemble a small work group, and go through the areas of program fit together. In an afternoon's conversation, you may discover several creative ideas for updating your work.

Take a fresh look. Use the **Program Fit Assessment** tool to explore the overall fit of the program. Perhaps your work group can think of adaptations related to fit that would improve your program.

Update adaptations. If you are using an EBP, use the Green-Yellow-Red Light General Adaptation Guidance (p. 4-8) to review changes you have made. Make sure that your adaptations retain the original meaning of the curriculum.

The full version of the General Adaptation Guidance and program-specific Adaptation Kits for All4You!, Becoming a Responsible Teen, Draw the Line/Respect the Line, Reducing the Risk, Safer Choices, Safer Sex Intervention, and SiHLE and be found at:

http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.adaptationshome

CQI and sustainability at this stage

Taking time before you implement a program to make sure it fits for all stakeholder groups increases the likelihood that your community will continue to support it and participate in it. Aspects of fit may change, influenced by any number of factors, like the economy, funding, or shifts in your organization's operations. By staying on top of potentially relevant internal and external influences, you'll be better able to continuously improve fit as well as respond to factors that could affect the longer-term sustainability of your work.

Lessons learned

Later on, when you get to Step 9 CQI, we'll help you determine whether your selected program continues to fit with your participants, organization, and community. In Step 10 Sustainability, you'll ensure that adaptations as well as staff training and learning about the continued use of the program are relevant and up-to-date.

Right now, here are some questions to think through any lessons learned during your fit assessment that will help you later on.

Do we have organizational support for our program?

It's probably easy to ascertain whether the staff closely associated with your program support it, but are you sure you know whether other staff in your organization support it? How about buy-in from administrators and management? The more everyone understands the potential benefits of your program, the more likely your program can be sustained over time. It is especially important to demonstrate your program's compatibility with the work your organization is already doing.

How do we communicate the benefits of our program?

You can facilitate better fit within your organization and with your stakeholders and community by telling people your story, explaining the need for this program, and underscoring what everyone will get out of it. Training can be used to help infuse the entire organization with knowledge about the program. Ongoing training and communication are necessary to keep information fresh and to reach new staff and volunteers coming into the organization.

Do we have a variety of champions that support our work?

Champions are people who understand what you're trying to do and want to help. A champion can be a program manager, administrator, or a board member. You can have champions throughout an organization; you also might have someone out in the community who supports your program and organization—a funder, school superintendent, or policy maker. Champions can help spread the word, support high quality implementation, and provide links to a variety of resources.

Save it

Keep taking notes about your findings in the Lessons Learned tool.

Getting ready for Step 5

Step 5

Capacity

After reviewing prospective programs with fit in mind, you might have a clearer idea which programs are still good possibilities. If none of your prospective programs have weathered the fit test, you may need to go back to Step 3 Best Practices, and conduct additional research to find a new set of EBPs to consider. Knowing more about fit now may also help you more quickly zero in on potential programs if you do circle back to Step 3 for more research.

In Step 5 Capacity, we show you how to examine the current capacities of your organization to make sure you can do a good job implementing the candidate programs. Step 5 is the final reviewing step before you select a program and move onto planning and implementing a program and establishing your evaluation criteria.