

SELECTING EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS (EBIs)

What is an Effective Behavioral Intervention (EBI)?

An Effective Behavioral Intervention, or EBI, is an activity or group of activities based on behavioral theory which are intended to motivate individuals and/or their social groups to change their behaviors. HIV prevention EBIs, for example, are intended to help people change their HIV risk behaviors thus lowering their chances of getting infected with HIV or giving HIV to someone else. For example, HIV prevention EBIs may educate people about using condoms, increase communication skills to support safer sexual and needle sharing activities, or increase positive, healthy behaviors like participating in HIV testing or HIV treatment. These interventions can also provide a person or a group of people with referrals to resources like linkage to medical care or needle exchange programs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a listing of all the effective behavioral interventions (EBIs) for HIV prevention that have been identified by the Prevention Research Synthesis project (PRS) at the CDC.¹ For information about all the EBIs currently being diffused by the CDC, see <http://www.effectiveinterventions.org>.

Who are Effective Behavioral Interventions (EBIs) for?

EBIs target specific populations of people, with specific behavioral risk factors, in specific settings. As there are over 30 different EBIs, there are likely to be EBIs for most groups at high risk of HIV infection. EBIs have been developed for a variety of genders, ethnicities, ages, and sexual orientations. In addition, there are EBIs intended to reduce HIV risks from both sexual and drug injection behaviors, and EBIs for a wide variety of settings, from schools to community centers, from clinics to jails.

Levels of Interventions

Individual Level Interventions work with individuals in one-on-one settings, usually through counseling type interventions. While individual level interventions typically reach smaller numbers of people than other types of interventions, they are also the most intensive interventions and can support very difficult behavior changes.

Group Level Interventions focus on groups of people through providing education, risk-reduction counseling, skills building, and support in a group setting. Some group-level interventions use peers as leaders of intervention activities. Group-level interventions can be very useful in providing peer support, allowing for the exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences, and changing social norms.

Community Level Interventions focus on changing social norms in communities. When they are successful at changing community norms, community level interventions can have an extensive impact, especially when used in combination with individual and group level interventions. Community level interventions typically combine the use of mass media, community-wide events, peer opinion leaders, and social marketing.

Structural Level Interventions focus on changing laws and policies. Structural level interventions have the broadest reach of all the levels of interventions and can affect the largest numbers of people.

4 LEVELS OF EBIs

INDIVIDUAL
GROUP
COMMUNITY
STRUCTURAL

Selecting Evidence Based Interventions

Selecting and beginning to implement EBIs in your community for the first time can be overwhelming. To make the process easier, the CDC has put in place its **Diffusing Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI)** project, which can be found at <http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/en/HighImpactPrevention/Interventions.aspx>. For each EBI, the CDC has created a step-by-step guide and tools that walk you through how to implement the intervention. The CDC also provides training and technical assistance for the EBIs. EBIs can be used as they are, or further adapted for specific populations.

¹ The Adaptation Guide: Adapting HIV Behavior Change Interventions for Gay and Bisexual Latino and Black Men, available at http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/Libraries/General_Docs/CS218684_CDC_Adapt_Guide_v1.sflb.ashx

4 Basic Steps to Selecting EBIs: ²

1. Examine the existing EBIs that address the HIV risk behaviors of your population. Identify as many interventions as you can that address your population’s HIV transmission behavior and the reasons behind this behavior. Not every intervention you look at will be a good match for your population. You may also want to look at the interventions that will need little or no adaptation for your setting and population. You can review CDC procedural guidance and research articles on the EBIs that you might be interested in implementing at <http://www.effectiveinterventions.com>.

2. Conduct a comprehensive community assessment. Your community assessment should include epidemiologic data, as well as assessing the needs of your specific population, their willingness to, and barriers to, participation in various types of interventions. Try to use a variety of different data sources in order to get broad representation of the community. The community assessment could include any or all of the following: surveys, interviews, focus groups, published articles and research, reports by local organizations, and direct observation. Conducting a comprehensive community assessment can assist you selecting an intervention that your population will embrace and appreciate, and one that will ultimately best impact your community’s HIV prevention needs.

3. Assess your agency’s capacity. Questions to answer include:

Do we have the capacity to...

- *Initiate new programs and services?
- *Engage the targeted intervention population?
- *Institute and manage the EBIs that were initially considered?

Take a look at your agency’s resources and abilities, now as well as what you anticipate in the near future. This will help you to select an intervention that is appropriate for your staff, that your agency can afford, and that your agency has resources to implement. Specific agency capacity assessment tools can be found at <http://www.effectiveinterventions.org>. These tools include **program implementation plans**, which are step by step outlines of how to implement specific EBIs; **agency readiness self-assessment tools**, which are checklists of the organizational capacity you may already have as well as other resources available in your community; CDCs **procedural guidance** for each EBI, which provide information to help Community Based Organizations (CBOs) come up with a plan for delivering interventions; **fact sheets**, **starter kits**, **administrator’s preview guides** and **technical assistance guides**.

4. SELECT the right EBI for your community and your agency based on your knowledge of available EBIs, the needs of your target population, and your agency’s existing capacity.

Steps to Selecting EBIs

1. Examine Existing EBIs
2. Assess your population
3. Assess your agency
4. Select appropriate EBI

Additional Resources

- CDC Compendium of Evidence-Based HIV Behavioral Interventions, <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/research/prs/ma-chapter.htm>
- The Adaptation Guide: Adapting HIV Behavior Change Interventions for Gay and Bisexual Latino and Black Men, http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/Libraries/General_Docs/CS218684_CDC_Adapt_Guide_v1.sflb.ashx
- Further support for selecting, adapting, or implementing Effective Behavioral Interventions is available through the CDC or your State or Local Health Department. The National Network of STD/HIV Prevention Training Centers also offers training courses on selecting and adapting effective behavioral interventions. More information is available at: <http://depts.washington.edu/nnptc>
- Capacity for Health offers free, individualized capacity-building assistance. For more information, contact Capacity for Health at 415-568-3308 or c4h@apiahf.org.

² Adapted from http://www.sharedaction.org/webinars/selecting_DEBIs_PHS/lib/playback.html and *The Adaptation Guide: Adapting HIV Behavior Change Interventions for Gay and Bisexual Latino and Black Men* available at http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/Libraries/General_Docs/CS218684_CDC_Adapt_Guide_v1.sflb.ashx