Implementer Perspectives on Adaptations to an Evidence-Based Intervention for Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Prevention

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This study examined how implementers:
- Consider, select, implement, and document adaptations
- Determine the effectiveness of adaptations
- Interpret fidelity of implementation
Methods

- Data: TDV prevention initiative sites
- Informant interviews
  - 20 participants representing 7 sites
  - In person or by phone
  - Recorded; notes taken
  - Data coded and analyzed

Interview themes:
- Curriculum fit
  - Student, setting, implementer
- Adaptation process
  - Adaptation rationale, description, process, outcomes
- Fidelity
  - Definition, effects on goals
Methods, continued

- **Online focus group**
  - Implementers (10) from 6 TDV prevention initiative sites
  - Three days to participate
  - New scenario each day

- **Data analysis**
  - Coding using Nvivo
  - Content analysis

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**Scenarios: issues affecting implementation**

- **Day 1:** Logistics
- **Day 2:** Students’ learning styles/abilities
- **Day 3:** Students’ social abilities/cultural context
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context

Rationale for adaptations:
- To fit students better
- To reflect their own skills and beliefs
- To deal with resource constraints
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

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“We have had some young men that are not fully there yet – into the dating scene – they are playing video games and hanging out with their friends…..”
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

“…we have a lot of implementers who are comfortable acting, and our 7th graders respond better to acting or reading…. the curriculum allows for that because several of the characters come back and implementers will bring them to life, like use a mustache or blue wig, so the kids automatically remember the character from the last time.”

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- Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context
- Made adaptations to curriculum

Process for adaptations:
- In-the-moment
- Planned
“We usually try to assess the kids in Lesson 1, and then talk about how we will adapt when we are looking at the next lesson.”

Process for adaptations:
- In-the-moment
- Planned

between the curriculum and the context

curriculum content or pedagogy
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

- Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context
- Made adaptations to curriculum

Process for adaptations:
- In-the-moment
- Planned

Types of adaptations:
- Adaptations to curriculum content
- Adaptations to pedagogy

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“[The students] have a very strong connection… to their cultural background… If I say, “Zoe” or “Fred”, those names don’t mean anything so they don’t want to be interested in the scenario… my kids look at me, like, who is that pretend person? And it doesn’t resonate with them, and the story doesn’t hit their life at all.”

- Planned

Types of adaptations:
- Adaptations to curriculum content
- Adaptations to pedagogy
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context

Made adaptations to curriculum

Process for adaptations:
- In-the-moment
- Planned

Types of adaptations:
- Adaptations to curriculum content
- Adaptations to pedagogy

Made adaptations to curriculum
Results:
Implementers’ Adaptation Process

“Sometimes we’ll change activities…. Maybe we’ll change the role plays to make it like a talk show.”

Process for adaptations:
- In-the-moment
- Planned

Types of adaptations:
- Adaptations to curriculum content
- Adaptations to pedagogy
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

- Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context
- Made adaptations to curriculum
- Assessed student responses

Student assessment:
- Gauging and observing student engagement and behavior
- Testing student knowledge
Results: Implementers’ Adaptation Process

“Less behavior issues mean that there is more engagement, so it’s working. If my kids are fully engaged, sitting, listening, watching… or if the kids are sitting back with their hands folded and they are not engaged or running around saying, ‘This is stupid, I don’t want to do it.’ I think engagement is a good way to gauge.”

Student assessment:
- Gauging and observing student engagement and behavior
- Testing student knowledge
Results: Rationale and Process for Adaptations

- Identified mismatches between the curriculum and the context
- Made adaptations to curriculum
- Assessed student responses

Feedback loop: Experience informs ongoing and future implementation
Results: Approaches to Fidelity
Results:
Approaches to Fidelity

STRICT FIDELITY
Deliver curriculum as written
Results: Approaches to Fidelity

 STRICT FIDELITY
 Deliver curriculum as written

 DON’T DELETE
 Add or change the content, but don’t delete
“But for me… there is fidelity to the specific objectives to teach the students X, Y, and Z, but if you have changed the activities, you have met fidelity. Fidelity is to the information, not to how it was delivered.”
Results: Approaches to Fidelity

- **STRICT FIDELITY**: Deliver curriculum as written
- **DON’T DELETE**: Add or change the content, but don’t delete
Results: Approaches to Fidelity

**STRICT FIDELITY**
Deliver curriculum as written

**DON’T DELETE**
Add or change the content, but don’t delete

**FIDELITY TO THE UNDERLYING CORE CONCEPTS**
Be “true to the material” and the students
“…it means not changing a lot of the core materials, not changing the core messages, not just cutting random activities, but thinking about the goal of the lesson. If we run out of time, making sure those objectives are being met.”
Results: Approaches to Fidelity

STRICT FIDELITY
Deliver curriculum as written

DON’T DELETE
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FIDELITY TO THE UNDERLYING CORE CONCEPTS
Be “true to the material” and the students
Limitations

- Self-report/social desirability bias
- Sample size—20 interviews in 7 different communities; 10 online focus group participants
- Selection bias—did not interview all implementers; possible that only the “all star” implementers participated in interviews
- Sample overlap—some of the same people in the online focus group as in the interviews
Implementers consider *adaptations as necessary* to maximize the chances of *achieving outcomes* similar to those demonstrated in research *in their context.*
Implementers consider adaptations as necessary to maximize the chances of achieving outcomes similar to those demonstrated in research in their context.

Their approach to fidelity is more likely to be based on doing whatever is needed to help their students achieve these outcomes than on adherence to the curriculum.
Implications for Implementation Science: Future Adaptation and Fidelity Supports

- Our findings suggest the need for:
  - Real-time adaptation guidelines
  - Student responsiveness as an indicator of fidelity
  - Curriculum development that anticipates likely adaptations

- Further research could:
  - Unpack implementers’ assessment of implementation situations
  - Compare perspectives on program theory
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