

Readiness Tool:

Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP 10-14)

During program selection, it is important to research and compare possible evidence-based prevention programs to ensure that you are selecting the program that is the best fit for your community and available resources. This tool is intended to help you plan for the implementation of an evidence-based prevention program with a commitment to quality and long-term sustainability.

Program Selection: Is the program you selected a good fit for your community?

1. Does SFP 10-14 address the risk and protective factors prioritized by your community?

Protective Factors Targeted for an Increase by SFP 10-14

- Family management practices, including monitoring, age-appropriate parental expectations, and consistent discipline
- Effective and empathetic parent-child communication
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards for youth
- Family bonding and supportive family involvement
- Youth goal setting and positive future orientation
- Positive parent-child affect
- Emotional management
- Pro-social family values
- Peer pressure refusal skills

Risk Factors Targeted for a Decrease by SFP 10-14

- Child and family management practices, including harsh, inappropriate, or inconsistent discipline, indulgence, poor parental monitoring, demanding/rejecting behavior, and poor communication of rules
- Youth aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors and substance use
- Friends who engage in problem behaviors - Negative peer influences
- Poor social and stress management skills
- Family conflict
- Early initiation of problem behaviors
- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Poor school performance

2. Is SFP 10-14 appropriate for the population and demographic you plan to target?

- SFP 10-14 is a parent, youth, and family skill building program that is intended to target youth ages 10 to 14 and their primary caregiver(s). The program is taught in English, but is culturally sensitive to multiethnic families. It is appropriate for families who live in urban or rural areas.
- Caregivers need not be the biological parent(s). Often youth attend with step-parents, grandparents, foster parents, or other relatives or individuals that have guardianship.
- The program is generally offered to youth in grades 4th through 8th. However, students in 5th and 6th grade are developmentally most receptive to the curriculum concepts. SFP 10-14 is intended to ease the normal challenges faced by families as youth transition into adolescence and to also prepare youth as they move from elementary school to a middle school or high school environment.
- The program was not designed to target at-risk or highly dysfunctional families exclusively and it is generally more effective when groups consist of a variety of families with a mix of skill levels and family functioning.

3. Are the outcomes desired for your community the same as those indicated in the research of SFP 10-14?

SFP 10-14 is designed to impact the following short-term outcomes:

- Improved parenting behaviors, such as verbalization of rules and consequences, emotional control, better communication, more positive discipline, and increased involvement with their child
- Increased decision-making and life skills in youth, including stress management, goal setting, peer pressure resistance, and empathy
- Strengthened family bonds, including enhanced communication, more positive and supportive interactions, and the ability to jointly solve problems

SFP 10-14 has been shown to impact the following long-term outcomes:

- Youth participants showed lower rates of initiation and lifetime substance use for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, prescription narcotics, and methamphetamines
- Increased parenting competency and reduced substance-use related risk were associated with positive effects on school engagement and academic performance
- Youth participants exhibited fewer aggressive, hostile, and destructive behaviors
- Female participants developed fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety

SFP 10-14 research has demonstrated positive and enduring impacts through young adulthood (age 21) for program participants.

Implementation Planning Steps: Are the Systems and Resources Needed for Implementation Available?

4. Is there a single organization(s) that will coordinate and oversee SFP 10-14 quality? Are they respected in the community, fiscally responsible, and effectively organized?
5. Does the capacity exist to ensure the following key elements of SFP 10-14 implementation?

Staff:

Program Coordinator – The Coordinator assumes responsibilities such as coordinating staff training, scheduling programs, hiring and supervising facilitators and other staff, overseeing data collection and analysis, preparing outcomes reports for local stakeholders and funders, arranging program logistics (such as location, meals, childcare, transportation, and incentives), purchasing and preparing facilitation supplies, developing recruitment, referral, and marketing strategies, and guiding facilitators to ensure model adherence.

Facilitators - SFP 10-14 is intended to be delivered by three trained and certified facilitators. One facilitator leads the parent session and two lead the youth session. All three lead the family session.

Additional Staff – Other staff positions are recommended, such as an on-site arranger to set-up and clean-up, childcare providers, fidelity observers, and transportation providers.

Curriculum: Iowa State University Extension distributes the SFP 10-14 curriculum. For start-up, the developer recommends purchasing a minimum of 3 basic teaching manuals, a set of DVDs, and a set of 30 posters. In 2013, the estimated cost for these materials was \$873 plus shipping and handling. It is recommended that the curriculum be purchased prior to and be available for the initial facilitator training. A supplemental and optional curriculum with four optional booster sessions can be held three to twelve months after the general curriculum sessions. Curriculum materials can be viewed online at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp/inside/order.php>

Supplies: Examples of the supplies outlined in the manual include televisions, DVD players, scissors, glue, poster paper, and sticky notes. A list of facilitation kit supplies by weekly session can be accessed on the EPISCenter website: <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/strengthening/resources>

Delivery Location: The program can be delivered at any convenient community location, such as a school, house of faith, or community center. At least two rooms (one for the youth and one for parent component) are required for each weekly session, with family sessions taking place in the larger of the two rooms. Additional rooms for childcare and the family meal are recommended. A storage space for the facilitation supplies is also necessary.

Costs: A budget checklist is available on the EPISCenter website at: <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/strengthening>

6. How can the population that SFP 10-14 was designed for be recruited?

- SFP 10-14 is taught to approximately 10 participating families over seven weeks, with sessions usually offered in the evenings. It is recommended that sessions start with a family meal. So, each weekly session is approximately 2.5 hours.
- School district support (administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors) and approval to conduct in-school recruitment leads to higher enrollment numbers.
- Relationships with potential referral sources, such as the juvenile court, children and youth services, and juvenile probation, are imperative to recruiting enough families for each program.
- Prior to program selection, the existence of other parenting programs that may result in recruitment competition or duplication of services should be assessed.
- Participation incentives can promote recruitment and retention of participants.

Resources for Start-up Planning and Implementation:

<http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/strengthening>

Implementation Steps: Can the Expectations for Quality and Model Adherence be met?

7. Can the lead organization identify skilled individuals to participate in the required training?

- It is recommended that a minimum of 15 diverse community representatives be identified to become facilitators.
- The required 3-day training is coordinated through the EPISCenter in collaboration with Iowa State University. In 2013, training cost \$4,000 plus travel expenses. More information can be accessed at: <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sfptraining>

The EPISCenter can provide additional guidance on key aspects of quality such as preparation of the facilitation kits, recruitment strategies, and promotion of model adherence and high quality delivery by the facilitators.

Steps for Assessing Program Impact: Does the Capacity for Reporting Outcomes and Fidelity Data Exist?

Data Collection:

- Pre surveys are administered to youth and parent participants in week 1 during the parent and youth sessions
- Post surveys are administered to youth and parent participants in week 7 during the family session
- Retrospective surveys are administered in week 7 to participants that did not complete a pre survey

Data Entry/Analysis:

- A person(s) is to be designated to enter the data from the completed surveys into the SFP 10-14 Spreadsheet for Outcomes Analysis and Reporting.

Fidelity Monitoring:

- Fidelity observers are expected to watch a minimum of two parent, two youth, and two family sessions per 7-week program and to use the EPISCenter fidelity observation forms to assess facilitator model adherence and delivery effectiveness.
- All observers should be certified by Iowa State University as facilitators.
- The SFP 10-14 Coordinator is responsible for guiding the facilitators in model adherence and should share feedback from the completed observations.

Reporting:

- A person(s) is to be designated to complete the quarterly PCCD Egrants reporting requirements.
- Summarized data is to be shared with the local collaborative board quarterly. Written reports are to be prepared for stakeholders and potential sustainability sources annually.

Evaluation and Reporting Resources:

<http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/strengthening/outcomemeasurementtools>

Steps for Sustainability:

How will Program Resources be Identified to Sustain Beyond Start-up?

Analyses have found economic returns of up to \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing SFP 10-14 and a cost benefit of up to \$5,923 for each youth participating in SFP 10-14. These long-term savings can only be realized if SFP 10-14 is sustained beyond the initial start-up expenses of training and curriculum are incurred.

- 8. Can funds/resources be identified to sustain key implementation elements of the program beyond the initial seed funding?**
 - Designate those responsible for sustainability planning at start-up and select staff comfortable and capable of approaching potential funding sources.
 - Identifying funding for staff time should be a high priority, especially the Coordinator position.
 - Determine how supply costs, such as the restocking of the facilitation kits, can be funded.
 - Develop a strategy for providing facilitator training to address attrition, such as having individuals trained as agency trainers.
 - Seek to build relationships with community partners that can contribute staff time, delivery space, evaluation services, and resources.

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