

# Direct Education Fidelity

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1 WHAT IS FIDELITY (OF PROGRAM DELIVERY) AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

In a nutshell, teaching a program with fidelity means you include the elements important to expect positive change. Program elements that are key to fidelity are called critical or required elements.

For example, if a program's evidence base (i.e., its evaluation results) found positive change occurred when teaching at least six lessons, you can't necessarily expect the same positive results if only four lessons are taught. Teaching six lessons is a critical element for fidelity.

### 2 HOW ARE FIDELITY AND AN EVIDENCE BASE CONNECTED?

An evidence-based program is one that results in positive, significant change for learners. There are certain components of the program that are critical to include when you teach it, so that you can expect similar changes that occurred when the evidence base was established. If you do not include those critical elements, you are not delivering the program with fidelity and cannot expect similar positive change.

*Choosing an evidence-based intervention PLUS delivering it with the required program elements = Best chance for positive impact!*

#### **Is the intervention you plan to use evidence-based? If so, what area showed significant change?**

Michigan SNAP-Ed requires all interventions to be evidence-based. An evidence-based resource produced significant positive change in a specific area(s), such as participant knowledge, skills, or behaviors. If the type of change established by the evidence base is not consistent with program goals, choose a different intervention that resulted in the type of change desired.

For example, if an evidence-based program showed positive change in attitudes but not behaviors, selecting that program isn't an ideal choice if your goal is behavior change. Another example: If the program has an evidence base for increasing fruit intake, that doesn't mean you can expect an increase in vegetable consumption, willingness to try new foods, or physical activity.

*Note:* All resources in the SNAP-Ed Toolkit are not necessarily evidence-based.

#### **What should I consider when I search for an evidence-based program to use with participants?**

Ask:

- Did the program developers establish an evidence base? If so, what areas changed? Are those areas consistent with your goals?
- Was the evidence base established with the same audience you plan to offer the intervention to? If the intervention impacted behaviors of middle schoolers, it doesn't mean it will impact behaviors of third graders or adults.
- Lastly, what critical elements need to be included to implement with fidelity? Critical elements for several SNAP-Ed interventions are listed in fidelity assessment logs provided by Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF). See FAQs #5-8 for more details.

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### HOW DO I KNOW WHICH PROGRAM ELEMENTS ARE CRITICAL TO MAINTAIN FIDELITY?

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Check the intervention/curriculum's Lesson/Educator Guide, marketing information, developer's website, or the SNAP-Ed Tool Kit. For some interventions, it is difficult to find information on critical elements to program with fidelity. Sometimes very general information is provided, such as "this program changed children's food choices." See FAQ #6 for interventions that have a MFF fidelity assessment log.

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### WHICH PROGRAM ELEMENTS ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH FIDELITY?

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Typically, the number and length of lessons are critical program elements. Is the order of the lessons important? It might be if lessons build upon each other. Or is there a specific frequency of delivery (such as weekly or monthly)? Is the physical activity component or food tasting required or optional?

The MFF fidelity assessment logs highlight critical elements to include for several interventions and areas that are optional/supplemental.

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### WHO SHOULD USE THE MFF FIDELITY ASSESSMENT LOGS?

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Anyone using one of the six interventions that MFF developed logs for! Fidelity assessment logs are located on the [MFF SNAP-Ed Partner Portal](#) (Evaluation section). If you do not have access to the Partner Portal, contact your organization's SNAP-Ed program lead to access and share the logs with you.

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### WHICH INTERVENTIONS CURRENTLY HAVE A FIDELITY ASSESSMENT LOG?

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|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Cooking with Kids®        | 4. Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities™ |
| 2. Food Smarts               | 5. Linking Lessons – Schools™            |
| 3. Grow It, Try It, Like It! | 6. Pick a Better Snack™                  |

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### WHAT WILL FIDELITY LOG INFORMATION TELL ME?

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Reviewing the information collected with fidelity assessment logs will help you learn if your program delivery was consistent, aligned with the developer's intentions, and whether you can expect similar positive results associated with the evidence base.

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### WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH COMPLETED FIDELITY ASSESSMENT LOGS?

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- Logs are designed for use with your local organization and your SNAP-Ed program lead may have specific guidance for how to use completed fidelity assessment logs.
- Identify the areas you consistently meet fidelity criteria across lesson series. For elements not meeting fidelity criteria, consider how to address these areas considering your program context.
- Share results with other educators and look for commonalities (if others used the log). What circumstances make it difficult to include all of the critical program elements?
- MFF staff do not need to see fidelity assessment logs; there are no fidelity assessment reports produced unless specific arrangements are made with your evaluator or MFF program manager.

Additional fidelity resources are available on the [MFF SNAP-Ed Partner Portal](#) (within the Evaluation section for [Subrecipients](#) and [Community Impact Projects](#)).