

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND CLINICAL PROGRAMS**

### **WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES?**

A best practice refers to a technique, method, or course of action that experience and/or research shows will lead to a desired result. Best practices rely on various ideas and strategies that are documented, accessible, repeatable, and efficient. As a result, a blueprint can be developed which is likely to lead to success if duplicated.

**STAND!** For Families Free of Violence programs include the integration of the best available therapy research with the best available clinical expertise in the context of client needs and well-being. Types of best practices utilized include:

- Evidence-based practices
- Promising practices
- Program-related models

### **WHAT IS AN EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE?**

An ‘evidence-based’ practice refers to the use of research and scientific studies as a base for determining the best practices in a field. Evidence-based practices are intended to provide transparency and to assure the public that techniques and procedures will provide the best possible interventions or treatments.

**STAND!** For Families Free of Violence utilizes the following evidence-based practices:

***Art Therapy*** uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. It is based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight.

***Play Therapy*** builds on the natural way that children learn about themselves and their relationship to the world around them. Through play therapy, children learn to communicate with others, express feelings, modify behavior, develop problem-solving skills, and develop a variety of ways of relating to others. Play provides children with a safe psychological distance from their problems and allows expression of thoughts and feelings appropriate to their development.

***Sand Tray Therapy*** is designed as a non-threatening approach to assist clients in identifying issues they are struggling with. This type of evidence-based therapy utilizes a

container filled with sand and a variety of miniature items. This allows the client to develop their own scene in the sand and speak to the scene in a metaphor.

***Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)*** is a type of psychotherapeutic treatment that helps patients to understand the thoughts and feelings that influence behaviors. CBT is commonly used to treat a wide range of disorders, including phobias, addiction, depression and anxiety.

***Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)*** is a treatment for trauma-exposed children aged 0-5. CPP is intended to help children and caregivers reconnect and heal. This focus on the parent child relationship helps lessen anxiety and leads to more confident and trusting relationships.

***Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)*** is an evidence-based psychosocial treatment model recognized by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that is designed to treat post-traumatic stress and related emotional and behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Initially developed to address the psychological trauma associated with child sexual abuse, the model has been adapted for use with children who have a wide array of traumatic experiences, including domestic violence, traumatic loss, and the often multiple psychological traumas experienced by children prior to foster care placement.

The ***Family Development Matrix (FDM)*** project is funded by the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP). It provides an integrated family assessment tool to help agency staff identify which services families need. Through the implementation of this model agencies are able to document and track the well-being and stability of families.

***Motivational Interviewing (MI)*** is a goal-directed, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavioral change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence. MI has been applied to a wide range of problem behaviors related to alcohol and substance abuse as well as health promotion, medical treatment adherence, and mental health issues.

***Nurturing Parenting Programs (NPP)*** are evidenced-based programs designed for the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of child abuse and neglect. NPP instruction is based on psycho-educational and cognitive-behavioral approaches to learning and focuses on "re-parenting," or helping parents learn new patterns of parenting to replace their existing, learned, abusive patterns.

***Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)*** is an evidence-based psychological method that helps clients quickly process and heal from the emotional distress that remains following traumatic incidents.

The ***Triple P Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)*** is a multilevel system of family intervention that aims to prevent severe emotional and behavioral disturbances in children by promoting positive and nurturing relationships between parent and child.

## WHAT IS A PROMISING PRACTICE?

A 'promising practice' is determined when evaluation data suggests a positive impact of a program is found in the attitudes or behaviors of an individual, though no experimental evaluation has occurred. Further, to be highlighted as 'promising', programs need to be formalized enough to be accessible to outside agencies (i.e. curriculum available to all online or otherwise).

STAND! For Families Free of Violence utilizes the following promising practices:

Originating in Austin, Texas in 1988, *Expect Respect* is a comprehensive prevention program designed to raise awareness of dating violence, teach skills for healthy relationships, develop youth leadership, and increase safety and respect on school campuses. Expect Respect is recognized as a promising practice by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

The *Family Justice Center Model* is a multi-disciplinary team of professionals who work together, under one roof, to provide coordinated service to victims of family violence. The basic partners include police officers, prosecutors, and community-based advocates.

*Second Step* is a research-based national promising practice program recognized by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Second Step involves a violence prevention curriculum intended to give families and educators the tools they need to instill positive social and emotional skills that allow children to succeed. Organized by grade level, the program teaches children empathy, problem-solving skills, risk assessment, decision-making, and goal-setting skills.

## WHAT ARE MODEL PROGRAMS?

A model program is a successful program implemented by one agency that can be used by another agency when designing their own programs to address similar issues within their respective community. Models may not be based in research, however their evaluation methods help determine their success.

STAND! For Families Free of Violence utilizes the following model programs:

The *Blue Print for Safety* is a model based on the research and practice work of Dr. Ellen Pence, a scholar and social activist who helped establish the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Minnesota during the 1980s. The Blueprint is anchored in six foundational principles: 1) Adhere to an interagency approach and collective intervention goals, 2) Build attention to the context and severity of abuse into each intervention, 3) Recognize that most domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing

engagement with victims and offenders, 4) Establish sure and swift consequences for continued abuse, 5) Use the power of the criminal justice system to send messages of help and accountability, and 6) Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.

**Harm Reduction Psychotherapy (HRT)** is based on the belief that alcohol and drug problems, including substance abuse and dependence, develop in individuals through a unique interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. HRT is a non-judgmental approach to helping people experiencing alcohol and drug problems to reduce the negative impact of substance use, abuse or dependence in their lives.

The **Promoting Gender Respect** program is intended to develop the knowledge and leadership skills of middle school boys to respond to and to prevent bullying and gender violence. In order to support the leadership of middle school boys, additional strategies of partnering with organizations, and engaging influential adults have also been developed. Promoting Gender Respect is currently in the demonstration project phase of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Safe and Active Communities Branch (formerly EPIC), Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) with the expectation of becoming a national model for teen dating and violence prevention programs.

Based on the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Proud Parenting Program, **Proud Fathers** is a model program designed to train young men on the importance of being a father. Primarily reaching out to young men ages 16-24, the program aims to help young fathers be supportive, nurturing parents.

The **Strengths-based Approach** to service delivery demands a different way of looking at individuals, families and communities. All must be seen in the light of their capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values and hopes, however dashed and distorted through circumstance, oppression and trauma. The strengths-based approach requires establishing a roster of resources existing within and around the individual, family or community.

**Wrap-around Services** is a philosophy of care that results in a unique set of community services and natural supports that are individualized for a child and family to achieve a positive set of outcomes. The family meets with a wrap-around facilitator and together they explore the family's strengths, needs, culture, goals, past successes, and expectations. The family and team decide how the family will continue to get support after they have formally transitioned out of wrap-around. The team also establishes how the family will return to wrap-around, if necessary.

## **OTHER PRACTICES:**

**Victim assistance providers** provide intervention, risk reduction, and prevention services to both direct and indirect victims of crime. Typical services and tasks performed by

victim assistance providers include crisis intervention, assessment of basic victim needs, assistance with compensation and restitution applications, court accompaniment, information and referral, intermediate and long-term support services, case planning, staff supervision, consultation with other professionals, education and risk reduction, legislative reform and social change, and administration of victim service policies, programs, and activities.

***Victim-defined Advocacy*** is a resource tool initiated by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. In partnership with the US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) has worked to end violence against women and children around the world. Victim-defined advocacy begins with an understanding of the needs, resources, perspectives and culture of each victim. As part of that process, a working relationship or partnership is built in which the victim's perspective and the advocate's information, resources, and assistance are combined to enhance the victim's safety strategies. The advocate and victim will then work together to implement those strategies, modifying them as the victim's life and circumstances change.

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