



Program Evidence Tool

Overview

The *TEIP Program Evidence Tool* is a set of guidelines and worksheets that provide step-by-step support to identify and apply relevant sources of evidence to strengthen local programs.^Y

The Tool was developed in response to requests by health promoters for practical tools to facilitate the systematic search and application of reliable and relevant evidence.

Development of the TEIP Program Evidence Tool

In 2007 an extensive internet search of existing tools was undertaken. In addition, TEIP staff completed a five day course on *Evidence-based Practice for Health Professionals – Public Health Stream* at McMaster University.

To further guide the process, an Expert Advisory Committee, consisting of researchers and academics in the fields of health promotion, knowledge exchange and evaluation as well as frontline practitioners representing the intended audience for the Tool, was established.

Guiding Principles Informing Tool Development

- Address a broad range of evidence relevant to public health practice
- Minimize the need for critical appraisal skills and reliance on costly evidence sources
- Incorporate a knowledge exchange component
- Create user-friendly knowledge management worksheets
- Incorporate existing guidelines and tools, where possible
- Consider organizational and system-level supports for evidence-informed practice*

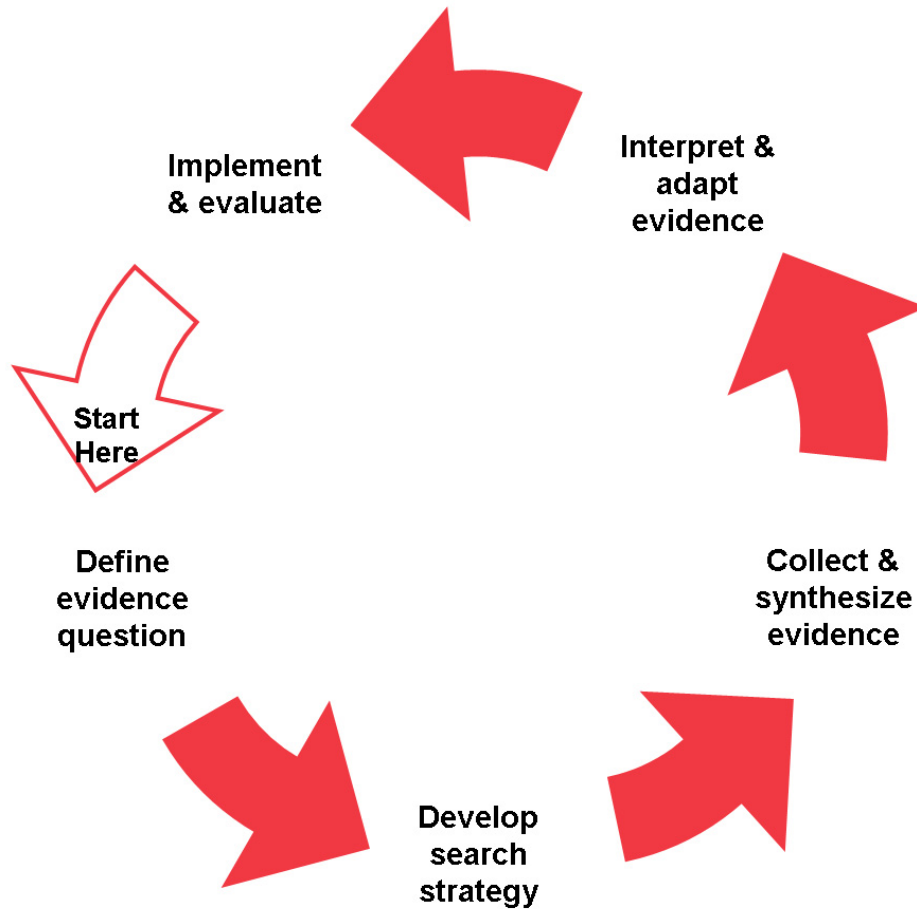
A draft version of the Tool was piloted in four Ontario communities. Feedback from a rigorous independent evaluation (*both formative and process*) guided the revision of the current TEIP Program Evidence Tool.

Organizational Support for Evidence-Informed Practice

Organizations can support or hinder staff capacity for using evidence to support decision-making. The *Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool* (See Evidence 101) can be used to build awareness of existing organizational supports and to develop a realistic plan to enhance those supports.

^Y TEIP Tools use generic processes that can be applied to a wide range of health promotion, chronic disease prevention and health protection programs, policies, initiatives and strategies. For convenience, the term “program” will be used to represent a variety of health promotion, prevention and protection initiatives.

* See *Evidence 101 - Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool*



Step 1: Define Evidence Question

The search for evidence begins with defining the question you wish to research - the Evidence Question. A well-defined Evidence Question addresses a priority issue and keeps the search focused and manageable.

Step 2: Develop Search Strategy

The search strategy sets out where you will look for evidence. The *Search Strategy Worksheet* addresses four distinct categories of evidence relevant to public health, each with different strengths and weaknesses:

- Academic/research literature
- Content advisors
- Grey literature
- Informed colleagues / practice networks.



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To reduce the need for critical appraisal skills, TEIP recommends sources of pre-quality assessed academic evidence.

Step 3: Collect & Synthesize Evidence

Knowledge management worksheets, such as the *Evidence Collection Spreadsheet* are used to summarize, synthesize and share the evidence collected. Electronic use of the spreadsheet permits multiple team members to contribute to evidence collection.

Step 4: Interpret & Adapt Evidence

The *Evidence Forum* is a knowledge exchange process. The objective is to determine how to apply the evidence findings.

Questions discussed at an Evidence Forum may include:

- Does the evidence suggest we should change our current approach?
- What should we do if there is conflicting evidence?
- Is the evidence strong enough, credible and consistent?
- What ideas should we adapt to our local context? How?
- What would be involved in changing our approach?
- What are the next steps?

Step 5: Implement & Evaluate

If the evidence suggests implementing a significant change from the status quo, it is important to identify potential challenges/barriers and key decision-makers who can help to mitigate these challenges.

The *Knowledge Dissemination Strategy Worksheet* guides one through the process of developing a succinct communications plan to create buy-in for desired change by identifying key implementation issues, gatekeepers and their information interests, communication preferences and potential motivators.

Finally, an action plan is developed to outline the timelines, action steps and persons responsible for moving the plans forward.

If major changes to a program are envisioned, it is important to build-in appropriate evaluation components such as formative, process and outcome evaluation.