SAFECOMMUNITIES

SAFE

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ACTIONGUIDE
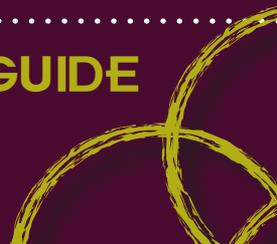
The Safe School ACTION GUIDE is a comprehensive resource to assist schools and community organizations with the preparation, selection, and implementation of an effective violence prevention program. It is a companion document to the PLANNING GUIDE and PROGRAM GUIDE.

## HOW IS SAFE SCHOOL PLANNING PUT INTO ACTION?

As outlined in the PLANNING GUIDE, once teams are established, assessments completed, strengths and challenges identified, and goals set, the planning team now examines options for addressing challenges and building on strengths.

There are countless strategies, programs and ideas to address challenges. Some work, and have a high level of evidence supporting them. Some may work but have no evidence, and others have no effect or actually make the problem worse. The following action steps will guide the planning team in implementing with success:

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

STEP 1
MATCH NEEDS TO RESOURCES

STEP 2
IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE PROGRAM

STEP 3
IMPLEMENT PROGRAM

STEP 4
MONITOR PROCESS

STEP 5
EVALUATE OUTCOMES
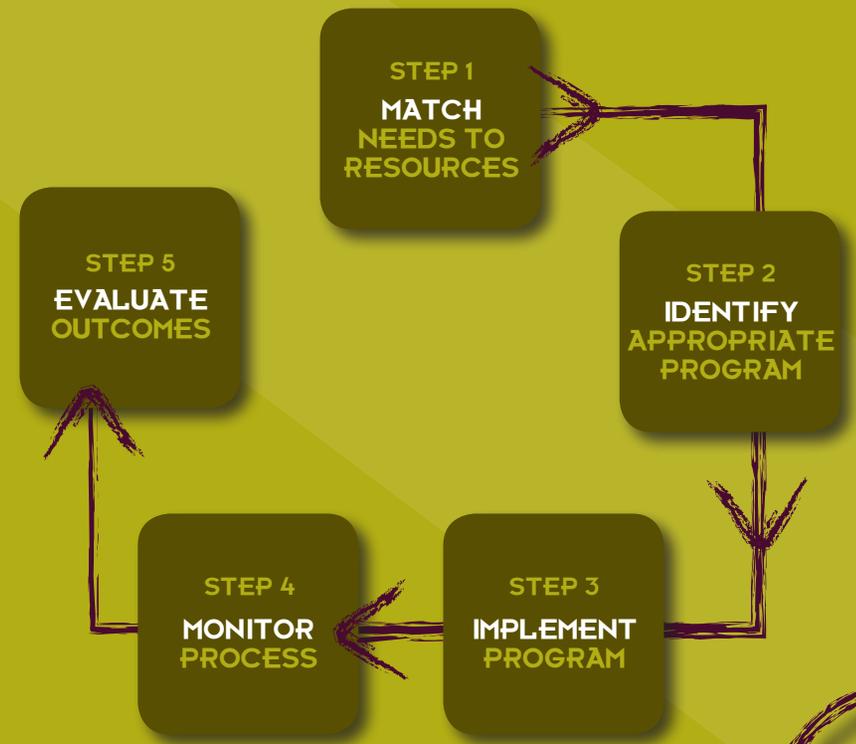
MATCH NEEDS TO RESOURCES

Each school community has its own unique climate that changes over time. A periodic assessment of the climate will enhance understanding of the school environment. Planners should look for strategies and programs that address needs identified in the school climate assessment and established as priorities.

IDENTIFY TARGET POPULATION

Age, race, socioeconomic levels and geographic location can all affect the best fit for a particular prevention program at a specific site. When selecting a program, look for one that has been evaluated in an environment with similar characteristics.

IDENTIFY RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES
- Is there adequate staff?
- Are volunteers needed?
- Does staff need training?

FINANCIAL RESOURCES
- Can the existing budget support chosen programs?
- Is grant funding necessary?
- Are donations and sponsorships from the community needed?

PHYSICAL RESOURCES
- Are facilities available for training?
- Is space adequate to implement selected programs?

IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE PROGRAM

In the past decade, a variety of programs that address violence prevention issues have emerged worldwide. From bullying programs to mentoring programs, the options can be overwhelming.

With the increase in public awareness about youth violence and the importance of a data-driven approach to prevention, there are a growing number of lists and programs. A variety of lists exist that promote effective and promising interventions for drug and violence prevention. Blueprints for Violence Prevention's list of model and promising programs meet the strictest scientific standard of program effectiveness (www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints).

IMPLEMENT PROGRAM

The quality of program implementation is as critical to meeting prevention objectives as are fit and effectiveness. The following guidelines will contribute to successful implementation:

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS:
- Clearly written, standardized materials
- Formal training for staff
- Technical assistance to help with implementation problems
- A theory-driven approach
- Limited complexity
- A fidelity checklist

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION CHARACTERISTICS:
- Buy-in from all involved
- Strong leader
- Clear lines of authority
- Low staff turnover

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MONITOR PROCESS

The quality of program implementation is critical to program success. Monitor the following:

- All recommended components and sessions

- Student and staff engagement

- Parent participation

- Program satisfaction among those involved in the implementation

- Obstacles that prevent complete implementation

- Changes over time using a climate survey

EVALUATE OUTCOMES

All violence prevention programs should be evaluated. Planning for an evaluation should take place early in the process of identifying and implementing prevention programs. The following will assist in determining how successful the program will be in meeting identified needs:

- Consult with experienced research evaluators from universities, state departments of education and justice, among others, to develop an appropriate evaluation

- Conduct an outcome evaluation when effects cannot reliably be predicted or choose a program with demonstrated effects, such as Blueprints for Violence Prevention programs

- Measure overall program effects on violence or related behaviors

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For detailed information about developing a safe school plan, please refer to the Safe School PLANNING GUIDE.

When your team is ready to choose an appropriate program for your school, the Safe School PROGRAM GUIDE summarizes the most effective programs and lists them by program type, target population, setting, risk factors and effectiveness.

SAFE COMMUNITIES • SAFE SCHOOLS PARTNERS:

Colorado Attorney General's Office
Safe2Tell
Center for the Study and Prevention of
 Violence

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SAFE SCHOOL ACTION GUIDE

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado at Boulder

1440 15th Street Boulder, CO 80302
T: 303.492.1032 F: 303.492.2151
colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools

University of Colorado
Boulder