



U Choose to Know

Summer 2018

Fidelity is a Delicious Pie

Consider this: fidelity is like a delicious pie. Say your favorite pie is your grandmother's special apple pie. Her recipe uses frozen pie crust, Gala apples, and brown sugar. You decide to make it one day, but want to make your own pie crust and have only Honeycrisp apples and regular sugar on hand. Will your pie be delicious? Probably. Will your pie be your grandmother's? Nope. Fidelity means sticking to the *original* recipe to get the *original* intended outcome.

We talked a bit about fidelity in our curriculum training, but what does it mean now that you (or your colleagues) have experience implementing an evidence-based program with students? What does fidelity mean for how to implement your evidence-based program?

If we want our students to have these *exact* outcomes, we need to implement the curriculum *exactly* as it's written. Does this mean following the curriculum word for word? No. Fidelity means not changing the key ingredients - or, as we call them, the core components - of the program. We can break our core components into three categories: content, pedagogy, and implementation.

Content: What is being taught:

- Knowledge about HIV, STIs, unintended pregnancy and its consequences, condom use, problem solving, negotiations and refusals, and contraceptive methods
- Activities that help students think through behavioral beliefs, such as how sexual activity could interfere with their hopes and dreams
- Skills-building activities
- Activities that help students think about values, attitudes, and how they perceive risk



There are some circumstances when making changes, or adaptations, to the program is okay. Adaptations can be broken down into three categories: Green, yellow, and red.

Green adaptations - Changes which are ok to make.

- Updating statistics or medical content to ensure accuracy
- Increasing the interactivity of lessons
- Making lessons more culturally appropriate

Yellow adaptations - Changes to be made with caution and in consultation with program leaders.

- Adding activities
- Changing videos

Red adaptations - Changes you should never make.

- Removing activities
- Adding information or activities that contradict the program goals
- Diluting the content of activities
- Removing interactivity

Pedagogy: How the content is being taught:

- Teaching lessons in the order the curriculum dictates
- Implementing activities using the strategies outlined in the curriculum (ex. small groups or role-play)
- Addressing different learning styles

Implementation: The logistics of the program and classroom:

- Group size (6-12 participants)
- Confidentiality
- Keeping the theme and key messages of the program

How do you know if you're implementing with fidelity? Just like any other lesson plan you develop and deliver, it can be a matter of trial and error: What worked? What could have gone better? Be sure to fill out your fidelity log, which can help you keep track of your implementation to make sure you're including all of the important ingredients in your programmatic recipe and if the changes (i.e. adaptations) you made improved the session or not. Developers often have fidelity logs available online, but don't forget the UChoose project's fidelity logs are online for your use.

More information about fidelity and adaptation will be forthcoming in an implementation guide, which will be developed specifically for this project. In the meantime, take a look at the resources below, which will help you learn more about fidelity and adaptations:

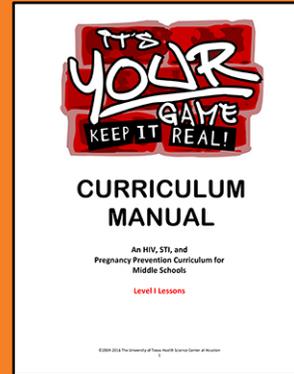
- ETR Associates have developed several excellent resources on adaptations, including the [General Adaptation Guidance: A Guide to Adapting Evidence-Based Sexual Health Curricula](#).
- The Office of Adolescent Health published a tip sheet, [Maintaining and Monitoring Fidelity for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs](#).
- The Family and Youth Services Bureau published [Fidelity Monitoring Tip Sheet](#) on fidelity monitoring, which nicely outlines what fidelity is and how programs can ensure they implement their programs with it.



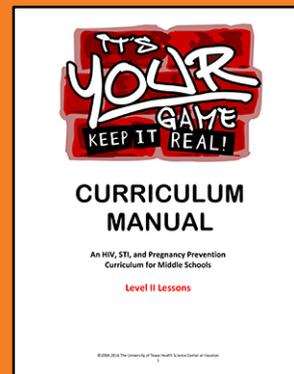
For more information,
visit uchoosebaltimore.org.

REMEMBER...

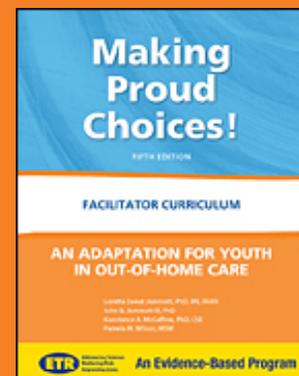
UChoose project's fidelity logs are online for your use:



[It's Your Game...Keep it Real](#)
(7th Grade)



[It's Your Game...Keep it Real](#)
(8th Grade)



[Making Proud Choices:
An Adaptation for Youth in
Out-of-Home Care](#)

If you aren't sure if you should make an adaptation, be sure to get in touch with:

[The Baltimore City Health
Department](#)

[Healthy Teen Network](#)