

Definitions of Frequently Used Terms Related to Best Practice

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Best practice:

A mental health practice that is generally accepted as a successful intervention currently believed to improve consumer outcomes. Evidence-based practices are a type of best practice that has been established and supported by scientific evidence. The terms "best practice" and "evidence-based practice" are often used interchangeably.

Consumer outcomes:

Those aspects of consumers' lives that interventions are meant to improve or successfully manage. These are often translated into specific measures that can provide information about the effectiveness of a program. Some examples of outcomes include employment, reduced hospitalization, and reduction of psychiatric symptoms.

Emerging best practice:

Interventions or services that have shown benefit to consumers, but have not yet been established as evidence-based practices through rigorous scientific research.

Essential elements:

The crucial components of an evidence-based practice. These are the components that create the benefits or outcomes for consumers. The more essential elements of a practice that a program implements, the greater the improvements in consumer outcomes.

Evidence-based practice:

An evidence-based practice is an intervention for which there is consistent scientific evidence showing that it improves client outcomes.

Fidelity scale:

A tool to enable evaluators to examine/measure how closely a specific program adheres to the essential components of a model evidence-based practice. The closer a program adheres to the evidence-based model, the more likely the program will obtain the model's identified benefits for consumers.

Target population:

The consumer population that an evidence-based practice or other intervention is designed to help. A specific practice may not be effective with certain populations, such as people with certain diagnoses or personal traits.