

Promoting Quality Implementation in Prevention Programs

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This is the second of two special issues of the *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation (JEPIC)* that are the result of the joint efforts of the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) of the American Psychological Association. Once again, we would like to express our thanks to both organizations for their support of this project. We especially appreciate the members of the organizations who were willing to share their knowledge about how to improve the measurement of the quality of implementation in prevention programs.

It is our hope that these special issues will provide researchers and practitioners with a better understanding of the complex issues involved in implementation and in measuring the implementation process, and that they also will encourage researchers and practitioners to attend more closely to how well programs are implemented. An increasing concern in the field is

that if we do not attend carefully to examining implementation, we cannot be certain what we actually did, how well we did it, or whether the outcomes were a result of our efforts. On the other hand, carefully monitoring the implementation process can help us understand program strengths and weaknesses, why certain things happened, give us continuous feedback for improvements in program delivery, and enhance the validity of the outcome evaluation (e.g., Zins, Elias, Greenberg, & Weissberg, 2000). One concrete outcome that we would like to see is more research reports that provide an in-depth description and discussion of the implementation process. Editors and reviewers for journals, as well as funding agencies, could lead the way in making this recommendation a reality. As a result, the field may be able to increase its confidence in the results of intervention outcomes and also achieve more success with replications of these efforts.

We are fortunate to include articles by a number of the leading researchers in the field, and we believe that the current contents supplement those of the previous issue of *JEPC* (Vol. 11, No. 1) quite well. In the first article, Kevin Everhart and Abe Wandersman describe how empowerment evaluation principles can be applied to decrease barriers in implementation. Next, Celene Domitrovich and Mark Greenberg present an interesting examination of implementation based on reviews of effective programs. In the fourth article, Maurice Elias, Linda Bruene-Butler, Lisa Blum, and Tom Schuyler, who are long-term investigators and practitioners in the social-emotional competence area, discuss some key questions about implementation that many consultants face. Two of the articles present examples from the field that deal with implementation issues. The first is by Aleta Meyer, Steve Danish, Elizabeth Fries, Valerie Polk, Robert Nicholson, and Erin Carroll, and the second by Donald Unger, Elizabeth Park, Peter Antal, Patricia Tressell, Kellie Rigney, Karen DeRasmo, and Joanne Kassess.

Once again, we hope you enjoy reading this volume as much as we enjoyed organizing and editing it.

REFERENCE

- Zins, J. E., Elias, M. J., Greenberg, M. T., & Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Promoting social and emotional competence in children. In K. Minke & G. Bear (Eds.), *Preventing school problems—promoting school success: Strategies and programs that work* (pp. 71–100). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.