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Discovering what kids need to succeed



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Practicing the Assets Model Action Strategy: INVIGORATE, EXPAND, AND ENHANCE PROGRAMS

To be effective, it is important that all programs build assets according to “evidence-based” information. *Evidence-based asset building strategies are those that have been proven to work through research.* It’s like building a house; it’s smart to follow all the building codes because those codes have been shown to keep the house and residents safe. Also, using evidence-based strategies is helpful because others have already worked out all the details for you, just like having blueprints when building a house.

Assets-oriented programs are those that specifically aim to build within youth one or more of Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets®.

For this exercise, please choose one of your programs: _____

1. FOR THE CHOSEN PROGRAM, FIRST THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE NOW ...	
<i>... on building assets with participating youth</i>	<i>... on using evidence-based approaches</i>
To what extent, if any, is your program “asset-oriented”? One way to think about it is to answer: Are there certain parts of your program that are “asset-oriented”? Answer:	To what extent, if any, is your program “Evidence- Based”? One way to think about it is to answer: Are there certain parts of your program that are “evidence-based”? Answer:
2. THEN ASK, HOW CAN THIS PROGRAM BE INVIGORATED?	
Is there an opportunity to introduce/invigorate assets in this program? If so, where? For example, could enrollment criteria be changed to be more inclusive? Could the curriculum/ program activities be modified to be more aligned with an assets-orientation (e.g., give youth more of a voice; establish strong adult-youth relationships)?	Is there an opportunity to introduce/expand evidence-based practices into this program? If so, where? For example, could a component be added to an existing prevention program for junior and high school students that increases any of the following: study habits and academic support; communication; peer relationships; self-efficacy and assertiveness; drug resistance skills; reinforcement of antidrug attitudes; or strengthening of personal commitments against drug abuse?
Tools to use: List of Assets, List of Action Strategies	Tools to use: List of NIDA Best Practice Principles



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How you might make your strategies more “evidence-based” and more “asset-oriented” will depend upon where you are starting.

Where you are now:

Possible next step:

- *My strategy does focus on assets, but could be more evidence-based* ➡ *Add a new evidence-based component*
- *My strategy is evidence-based, but does not really focus on assets* ➡ *Add a new component that builds Developmental Assets*
- *My strategy is neither evidence-based, nor focused on assets* ➡ *Add components that build assets and are evidence-based*
- *I do not have a strategy that builds assets or is evidence based* ➡ *Adopt a brand new evidence-based, Developmental Assets program*

Once your coalition has decided on an evidence-based approach to introduce or invigorate assets building in your program, A-GTO Step 4 will help your coalition determine if the type of strategy you are planning “fits” with your organization’s philosophy. A-GTO Step 5 will help your coalition see if there is sufficient capacity to implement the strategy with quality. What you learn in Steps 4 and 5 may be important to address before moving forward—e.g., if there is insufficient fit or capacity. A-GTO Step 6 will help your coalition develop a plan to implement the program. A-GTO Steps 7 to 10 will help your coalition evaluate and sustain this effort.