

Consensus Statement:
Evidence-based practice decision-making for mental and behavioral health care

Evidence-based practice of mental and behavioral health care is an ongoing, collaborative approach to making decisions about services, which includes the following components:

1) Evidence-based practice begins with consideration of the best available basic and applied empirical research evidence when making decisions about mental and behavioral health services.

The limitations of the available empirical evidence are also considered, especially given contextual factors such as developmental level, community/cultural needs, the settings in which the services occur, barriers to services, and the strengths and assets of individuals and communities. The limitations of the evidence base, however, do not impede the retention or adaptation of principles and techniques from the empirical evidence that remain relevant and applicable after consideration of the limitations.

2) Evidence-based practice includes ongoing measurement and evaluation of the impact of services and, if necessary, outcome-informed adjustments to services that are intended to maximize their effectiveness.

3) Providers serve as a guide for collaborative decision-making in evidence-based practice, integrating different sources of information, including recipients' values and preferences, as well as the provider's competence and the organization's capacity to provide effective services.