

ADAPTING CURRICULUM-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

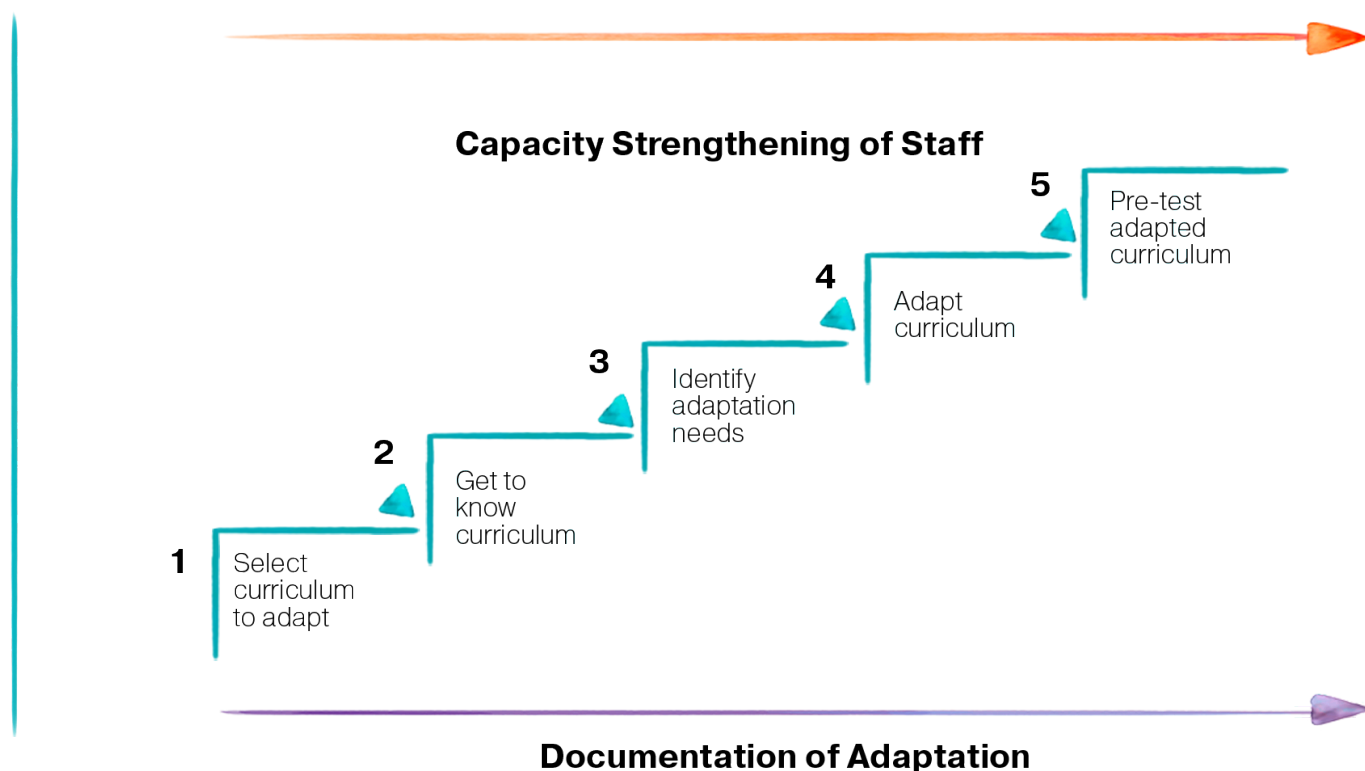


With the rise of evidence-based models to prevent violence against women and children (VAW/C),¹ there is increasing interest in how to adapt such programmes. But increasing pressure on practitioners to adapt and scale up violence prevention programmes—while simultaneously minimising costs—can lead to approaches that do not adequately account for new contexts or participants. It can also lead to implementation that compromises the core components that made the original programme effective.

WHAT IS ADAPTATION?

Adaptation involves changing a programme's design or implementation to improve its appropriateness for a new setting or group of participants while also striving to maintain programme fidelity by keeping the elements that made the original programme effective.²

Poor adaptation risks not only undermining resources or delivering an ineffective intervention but also potentially doing harm. Thus, understanding how to adapt programmes effectively is a critical component of violence prevention implementation. Within this context, comprehensive guidance on adaptation has recently been created for practitioners and other stakeholders, including the IPV-ADAPT+ framework.³ This complementary guidance note offers minimum steps to follow to adapt VAW/C prevention programmes, with a focus on adapting curriculum-based programmes. It is intended for practitioners but can also be useful for donors funding and researchers assessing the adaptation of programmes to prevent VAW/C.

FIGURE 01 STEPS TO ADAPT CURRICULA

WHY FOCUS ON CURRICULUM-BASED PROGRAMMES?

This guidance note focuses on adapting curriculum-based violence prevention programmes for several key reasons:

- ▶ Curricula are one of the most widely used violence prevention strategies worldwide, and there are a variety of curriculum-based models, including those that work with couples, parents, adolescents, entire households, faith leaders, women drawn from microfinance groups, schoolchildren, and teachers. Many of the VAW/C prevention models that are evaluated include a curriculum.
- ▶ Curricula are commonly used in gender-transformative approaches, as they can create safe spaces for individuals to reflect on and challenge harmful gender norms and to develop alternative, healthier perspectives.⁴
- ▶ When facilitated in groups, curricula can allow for rapport and solidarity among participants and between participants and facilitators. They can also enable changes in group attitudes and behaviours.⁵ Additionally, group solidarity can provide an important basis for individuals to work together to support wider change in their communities.



- ▶ Emerging evidence shows that programmes to prevent VAW/C should be participatory and experiential, encourage critical reflection, address power and gender inequality, build communication skills, and foster social and economic empowerment.⁶ A well-designed curriculum can help ensure that interventions include these common elements.
- ▶ Curricula can help maintain the consistency of content across a diverse array of facilitators. Clear, user-friendly manuals can support facilitators in implementing a curriculum as intended and in achieving the desired outcomes.⁷ `

RESPECT FRAMEWORK TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

UN Women and the World Health Organization's [RESPECT framework](#) assessed evidence on interventions to prevent VAW/C and identified curriculum-based group sessions as a promising evidence-informed prevention strategy. For instance, holding group-based workshops with men and women or couples to promote egalitarian attitudes and relationships is one of the primary strategies under the 'R' of RESPECT ('Relationship Skills Strengthened'). Empowerment training for women and girls—including life skills, safe spaces, and mentoring—is one of the main strategies for 'E' ('Empowerment of Women'). Implementing a life skills, school-based, and/or parenting curriculum is one of the main strategies for 'C' ('Child and Adolescent Abuse Prevented'), and group education with men and boys to change attitudes and norms is one of the main strategies for 'T' ('Transformed Attitudes, Beliefs, and Norms').



MINIMUM STEPS TO ADAPT CURRICULUM-BASED PROGRAMMES

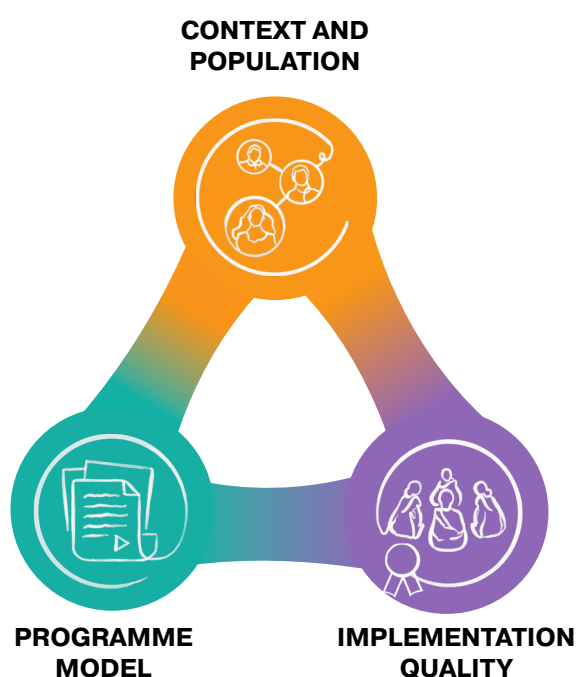
Traditionally, adapting a curriculum focuses on the selected programme's **design** and includes adapting the curriculum's objectives and theory of change; the pedagogy, exercises, and subjects covered; and accessibility, including whether it is understood and considered relevant and valuable. **Less attention is often given to implementation elements that make a curriculum-based programme effective, even though programme impact can change significantly depending on how a curriculum is implemented.**⁸ These elements include, for example:

- ▶ The quality of facilitators recruited and their training, supervision, and ongoing support
- ▶ The delivery modality (e.g., one on one, group-based, in-person, or remote)
- ▶ The level of participant attendance or take-home activity completion, which is influenced by implementation factors such as facilitators' skills, if a safe space is established, and rapport among group members

To ensure the intended impact, it is important to consider both the **design and implementation** elements that made the original curriculum effective. Adaptation of a curriculum is also heavily influenced by the wider environment, such as the:

- ▶ Demographics of the targeted participants, such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status
- ▶ Availability or motivation of participants to engage with a curriculum
- ▶ Social norms underlying VAW/C
- ▶ Presence of VAW/C services, laws, and policies

FIGURE 02 PREVENTION TRIAD



The minimum steps for adapting curriculum-based programmes presented in this guidance note encourage practitioners to consider interactions of (a) the programme model; (b) implementation quality; and (c) the fit for the particular context and population. These elements influence each other and should all be given equal emphasis when planning, modifying, and documenting reasons for adaptation, as illustrated in **the Prevention Triad**.

The following are the minimum five key steps to adapt curriculum based-programmes, with both staff capacity strengthening and documentation to be completed throughout the adaptation process.

01 SELECT THE CURRICULUM TO ADAPT

A key consideration for Step 1 is overall feasibility. Curriculum-based programmes require consistent commitment by participants and facilitators, with evidence-based approaches to reduce VAW/C having a minimum of 12 to 15 three-hour sessions (typically facilitated every one to two weeks). In some settings, and with some groups of people, this may be extremely challenging or unrealistic. In such cases, other types of programmes may be more feasible and effective than a curriculum. Additionally, when planning curriculum-based programmes, it is important to carefully consider how to minimise potential barriers to participation and motivate engagement: for instance, by offering a stipend or childcare services. It can save substantial time and energy to consider such aspects of feasibility before selecting a curriculum to adapt.

Choosing a suitable curriculum is a step that is often rushed or dictated, without adequate time for careful reflection. For instance, a funder may want a particular curriculum adapted, or it may be tempting to choose a curriculum that is well-known or has proven successful in other settings without considering whether it suits your programme objectives, sociopolitical context, and organisational capacity. When selecting a curriculum, consider which types of violence you are trying to address, who your target population is, if the curriculum is the right fit for your setting, and what amount of up-front adaptation is likely required. **Fundamentally, you must identify the goal of the curriculum, the goal of your programme, and whether they match.**

ADAPTION TIP: KNOW THE RELEVANT CURRICULA

Familiarise yourself with relevant curricula that have been developed and evaluated to prevent VAW/C. A wealth of available materials and resources exist: for example, the [What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls website](#) has 15 VAW/C prevention curricula, and the [Prevention Collaborative Knowledge Hub](#) has several VAW/C curricula. Many of these curricula build on each other or use similar approaches and exercises—yet each may have distinct advantages and have been designed for different audiences.



It is also important to reflect on the organisational and staff capacity that exists for implementation and whether the curriculum is feasible in your context. Questions to consider include:

- ▶ **Are the goals of this curriculum relevant to the attitudes and behaviours your programme is trying to change?**
- ▶ **Has the curriculum shown evidence of achieving one or more of your overall programme goals, including preventing the type of violence you are trying to address?** Consider the kind of evidence that is available, whether it is available from more than one setting, and how credible or high-quality it is.⁹
- ▶ **Does the curriculum use content and methods likely to be accessible and appealing to your intended participants?** For instance, is there curriculum content or methods that might be difficult, risky, or counterproductive to implement in your context or with your participants?
- ▶ **Does your organisation have the funds, staffing, expertise, or other resources needed to implement the curriculum as originally designed (and to make any anticipated required adaptations)?**
- ▶ **Does your organisation have enough time to plan and deliver the curriculum?** This includes sufficient time during the inception period for adaptation, which can take several months—or longer if extensive modifications are needed.
- ▶ **Has this curriculum been implemented in a similar setting or with a similar group of people as your project?** This will help determine how much adaptation will likely be necessary, including the time and resources that should be dedicated to this process. It is also useful to determine if the curriculum has already been adapted to a similar context and to learn from this experience.



ADAPTION TIP: USE A DECISION-MAKING TREE TO SELECT A PROGRAMME TO ADAPT

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has a decision-making tree¹⁰ to guide the process of selecting interventions to adapt and suggests evaluating interventions using three questions:

1. Which is the most effective?
2. Which is the most appropriate given the available time and resources?
3. What is the best fit for your context?



‘Core components’ are elements assumed to be responsible for a programme outcome,¹¹ such as reductions in IPV or more gender-equitable attitudes. Core components can include the ‘what’, ‘how’, and ‘who’ of the approach: what knowledge, skills, and messages will be delivered through programme activities, how they should be delivered (e.g., instructional methods, setting, learning principles, and timing) and the characteristics of who should ideally lead an approach. Identifying core components that made the selected curriculum effective can help assess the extent to which that curriculum is a good fit for your setting.¹²



ADAPTION TIP: REMEMBER PARTICIPANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING A CURRICULUM

Consider which participants a curriculum was intended for, as this may be an essential component of what makes the curriculum work. For instance, you may be interested in adapting the Indashyikirwa couples curriculum implemented by CARE and RWAMREC in Rwanda, and has as a core component of working with both partners of the couple together.¹³ However, you might realise that this couples work is not feasible or appropriate in your setting and that a curriculum designed to work with men and women separately (e.g., Stepping Stones originally designed by Salamander Trust) is more appropriate.

It is possible to change the target participants as part of an adaptation, but significant departures from the original model require more effort and assessment. For instance, Zindagii Shoista (Living with Dignity) in Tajikistan implemented by International Alert, Cesvi and three Tajik NGOs, adapted the Stepping Stones and Creating Futures curricula to work with entire households, as the project team identified the importance of working with families rather than solely focusing on young women and men. This project was carefully adapted over 12 months based on formative research, piloted, and finally evaluated to assess the outcomes of these significant modifications. A rigorous evaluation of this project suggests the adaptation was successful, whereby violence against women that participated in the intervention dropped by 50 per cent and relationship and gender equality indicators significantly improved.¹⁴

02 GET TO KNOW THE CURRICULUM

Once you have selected a curriculum, the best way to get to know it—including the design and implementation factors critical to its success—is to contact or interview the curriculum’s original designers and implementers. They will likely have extensive lessons on what worked well (and what did not) and why, including lessons that are not always published.¹⁵ In some cases, original implementers may be available to offer a training or



walk-through of the curriculum, and they can ensure you have the latest version. While the original implementers may be unavailable to offer advice or technical support, trying to engage with them is an important best practice. You can also seek input from others who have experience with the curriculum, including previous programme participants, technical assistance providers, and funders.¹⁶ Additionally, it can be helpful to consult others who have already adapted the curriculum.¹⁷

During Step 2, take time to carefully review the selected curriculum in detail and other available programme materials, such as the theory of change, implementation guides, adaptation guidance, or fidelity briefs (see, for example, the [Indashyikirwa fidelity brief](#) and [guidelines for adapting Stepping Stones](#)). It is also valuable to review any evaluation data on the curriculum—including evaluations in different settings (if available)—to better understand what worked and how implementers mitigated challenges. **Understanding the theory and evidence underlying the curriculum is essential for implementation staff to understand why they are doing what they are doing and how to do it better.**¹⁸ To enhance this understanding, it is ideal for staff to experience the curriculum as participants, facilitated either by the original implementers or by other facilitators who can engage with the materials and facilitate effectively.

Take time to review each curriculum session with key staff who will be involved in implementation in order to understand the programme design and activities and to start identifying areas for adaptation. Getting to know the selected curriculum in detail is useful to identify **core components** of curriculum design and implementation and to reflect as an implementation team around why these elements are core and should not be compromised for the adaptation. However, note that any review may first require translating the original curriculum into your local language; if this is needed, it is important to involve a translator with a good grasp of the content and context to avoid misinterpreting key concepts.

ADAPTION TIP: TALK WITH THE ORIGINAL DESIGNERS

The [INSPIRE Guide to Adaptation and Scale Up](#), which focuses on programmes working to end violence against children, offers the following example questions to guide an interview with original programme designers or implementers:

- What was critical or most valuable to the success of your activity? What was most influential?
- What advice would you give another implementer to help them be successful?
- What factors were less important to the activity's success, but still supportive?
- What caused challenges? What would you do differently if you did it again?¹⁹



03 IDENTIFY ADAPTATION NEEDS

After familiarising yourself with the original curriculum and core components, the next step is to identify what adaptations are needed to help improve the selected curriculum's fit and **make it more appropriate and relevant for your context and intended participants.**²⁰ For instance, language, images, or activities in the selected curriculum may be outdated, irrelevant, or culturally inappropriate in your setting.²¹

During Step 3, it can be helpful to focus on identifying any mismatches between the original curriculum and your programme in the following areas:

- ▶ Characteristics of participants, such as language, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, risk factors, urban-rural context, age, and educational level
- ▶ Characteristics of programme delivery staff, such as staff capacities and experience with gender training, violence prevention, and participatory curriculum facilitation, as well as characteristics of the implementing organisation and the degree of management support
- ▶ Social factors such as social/community governance structures, power dynamics and community norms.

When making adaptations, remain cautious about cutting any sessions from the original curriculum and reflect on why the content is included. Also try to maintain an open mind toward innovating in your setting. For example, some organisations may assume communities are more resistant or conservative than they actually are. Questions to identify adaptation needs include:

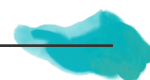
- ▶ **How do the participants that the curriculum was designed for and evaluated with differ from your likely participants (e.g., in age, developmental level of children/adolescents, or literacy level)?** For example, low literacy levels might make fully engaging in a curriculum that relies on written materials difficult and require modifications to deliver the content in other ways.²²
- ▶ **How do cultural beliefs, norms, values, language, and other factors differ between the original participants and your participants?** For instance, certain sensitive content may require modifications in your setting so that participants are more comfortable, such as separating men and women for discussions of sexuality. The timing of sessions is also important; it may be helpful to move more sensitive topics to later in the curriculum, after rapport and trust have been built.



- ▶ **How do characteristics differ between your organisation and the organisation that implemented the original curriculum?** Consider staff experience and capacities, partnerships, funding, and the ratio of supervisors to facilitators.
- ▶ **How can you maintain integrity for the meaning of key concepts, including both translations' literal (e.g., technical aspects) and cultural resonance (e.g., appropriate idioms and metaphors)?** Are there key terms or concepts that require more care when translating to the new context/ language to avoid misrepresentation? This could include, for example, being careful that 'positive discipline' is not translated to mean 'corporal punishment'.
- ▶ **How do your settings and communities differ, including laws, regulations, policies, and availability of services?** For instance, limited transportation might make face-to-face meetings difficult, which could require modifications in the format (e.g., telephone- or internet-based) or setting (e.g., home-based).²³
- ▶ **What potential adaptations may be required in terms of curriculum activities' timing and location?** What is the most appropriate day and location allowing intended participants to join? How can you minimise barriers to engagement for some participants (e.g., women with young children and people living with disabilities)? Are there participants who might have limited time during a particular season, such as migrant labourers and farmers? Are there major holidays, festivals, or other periods—like fasting periods or elections—that need to be taken into account? What does this mean for the implementation schedule? Is your organisation able to be responsive to preferences (e.g., if participants prefer to meet in the evening or on weekends)?
- ▶ **Are there local practices or beliefs not covered in the original curriculum that you should add because they have a major bearing on the type of violence you are trying to address (e.g., myths around sexual, reproductive, and menstrual health) or because they represent key emerging issues (e.g., online abuse)?**

Activities that can be conducted to identify adaptation needs include:

- ▶ **Review existing research on relevant contextual information, including predominant social norms related to gender and violence; risk and protective factors for violence; the nature of VAW/C; women and girls who are at particular risk of violence; the sociocultural, policy, and**



legal environment related to violence; and other factors relevant to your adaptation of the curriculum.

For instance, if you are implementing a parenting curriculum, it would be helpful to examine local norms around parenthood, gender roles in areas such as caregiving and discipline, and learning from previous VAW/C projects in your setting.



Conduct or commission formative research on the topics above.

Formative research ranges from qualitative data collection (e.g., focus groups or social norms vignettes²⁴) to quantitative data collection (e.g., surveys) to brief validation exercises (e.g., spending one day in a select project community with a list of targeted questions). Formative efforts may be warranted if there is limited research or organisational experience with VAW/C in your setting or with your intended participants, and/or if there are particular questions relevant to adaptation that you are unable to answer with existing knowledge. You may be able to rely on insights from your implementation staff, but it is important to document and validate these insights and to ensure they represent diverse perspectives, including from your intended participants. If you are primarily relying on staff knowledge, it is important—at a minimum—for staff to validate their own assumptions through site visits or informal conversations with community members.



Host an adaptation workshop with implementing partners, key stakeholders, and/or representatives of the intended participants to review the curriculum content.

This can identify local content and practices to build upon for curriculum adaptation—such as proverbs, phrases, songs, exercises, themes, images, and names—as well as potential implementation issues, such as the feasibility of engaging participants and the appropriateness of intended facilitators. Hosting an adaptation workshop is also helpful for getting the language right—for instance, by asking if terms are translated properly, if the language level is appropriate, and if the meaning is conveyed properly.



Conduct or commission a rapid scoping exercise of potential barriers and motivators to participant engagement, such as appropriate recruitment strategies, timing, the location and frequency of sessions, stipends, childcare options, and the identity of facilitators.

This can involve talking to representatives of your intended participant groups and asking about their preferences. These insights are particularly important with curriculum-based approaches given the need for participants to regularly attend and engage with curricula to support processes of change. Such insights can also identify



potential safety issues that can be addressed in the curriculum or monitoring plans and help determine appropriate entry points. For example, schools may have welcome meetings for all parents at the beginning of the year, which could be an opportunity to recruit parents for a parenting curriculum.



Conduct a needs assessment with a sample of potential participants to assess elements such as their current knowledge, literacy levels, previous exposure to the curriculum topics, and preferred manner of learning. This can help identify any mismatches between the adapted curriculum and your intended participants.

ADAPTION TIP: APPLY AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH WHEN IDENTIFYING ADAPTATION NEEDS

When identifying adaptation needs, it is important to pay attention to what 'intersecting issues emerge for women and girls in your specific context and how these are connected to violence.'²⁵ This can help identify vulnerabilities among intended participants and group dynamics that may impede inclusion. For example, formative research for the Indashyikirwa programme in Rwanda revealed deep stigma and discrimination among community members and service providers against women who were not formally married to their partners. Implementers made special efforts to mitigate potential discrimination against couples who were informally versus formally (e.g., legally) married. Indeed, many couples formalised their marriage after participating in the couples' curriculum because of the rights that formal marriage conferred. The programme facilitated these efforts by hosting collective wedding ceremonies to reduce the cost of marriage.



During this step, it is crucial to map existing services for survivors of violence and to assess the quality of these services. Where quality services are available, facilitators should be trained in referral pathways and how to make referrals that are ethical, sensitive, and effective. Where quality services are unavailable or limited, further adaptations may be necessary: for example, training facilitators in psychosocial support and supporting facilitators in mitigating risks related to vicarious trauma.

Even after carefully adapting a curriculum, some adjustments will likely be required during implementation. Contexts are always evolving, and it is important to respond to unforeseen risks and challenges.²⁶ Nevertheless, identifying adaptation needs up front will help ensure the curriculum fits the context and realities of participants from the beginning. If a programme does not fit the context in which it is implemented, implementers are more likely to make reactive adaptations, which can lead to poor implementation quality²⁷ and/or potential harm.

04 ADAPT THE CURRICULUM



In Step 4, you are ready to adapt the curriculum design and implementation based on the adaptation needs you identified in Step 3. You are now in a good position to make edits and changes to the original curriculum content, including elements like language, examples, names, images, activities, laws, and policies. You are also ready to adapt planned implementation of the curriculum, such as the profile and training of facilitators; location, timing, and frequency of curriculum sessions; and recruitment strategies for participants. We advise involving a diversity of staff in these decisions, with the understanding that reaching a consensus on adaptations can be challenging and time-consuming. Pretesting the curriculum (Step 5) can further consolidate adaptation decisions.

During this process, it is important to review and possibly refine the programme theory of change and the monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure they still hold given any new information from the activities completed through Step 3 (including formative research, community consultations, feasibility scoping, and/or an adaptation workshop). In this step, it is also helpful to obtain and integrate feedback on the adapted curriculum and the approach from the original programme developers, participants, and/or key stakeholders.²⁹ Also continue to reflect on whether the adapted curriculum maintains the core components of what made the original programme effective.

ADAPTION TIP: ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY

Implementation fidelity is the extent to which a new, adapted programme keeps the core elements and pathways that made the original effective. Consider these elements when assessing implementation fidelity:

1. Adherence (the extent to which programme components are delivered as per the curriculum, including its content, methods, and activities)
2. Exposure (e.g., number of curriculum sessions and the attendance, frequency, and duration of sessions)
3. Quality of delivery (including facilitators' preparedness, their use of relevant examples, and their ability to respond to questions, communicate clearly, and facilitate a participatory process rather than use didactic methods)
4. Participant responsiveness (how participants respond to and engage with the curriculum)
5. Programme differentiation (the process of identifying core components and elements responsible—or believed to be responsible—for a curriculum's effectiveness)²⁸

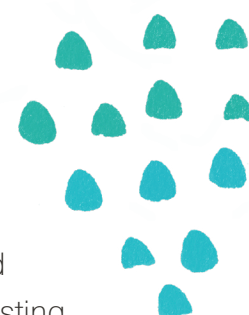




Your work assessing the existing literature, reviewing programme documentation, and talking with the original curriculum developers during Step 2 will help you assess implementation fidelity.³⁰ Remember that some adaptations are necessary to make a curriculum fit your context, and this is more important than following the original model exactly. Evidence-based curricula that are new to a specific context or population are in themselves innovations, and every implementation of a curriculum model is necessarily unique. When implementing a curriculum with a community that differs significantly from the setting where the original curriculum was tested and implemented, a new understanding of which elements are core components may emerge.³¹

05 PRETEST THE CURRICULUM

Pretesting your adapted curriculum is advisable before more widespread piloting or implementation. In a curriculum pretest, you can test the adapted materials and approach with a small subset of your intended participants. This is a valuable activity to assess the relevance of the adapted curriculum for participants and to foresee any barriers to engagement. Pretesting also allows facilitators to practice and can help identify further adaptation and/or training needs before implementing a full pilot. Pretests can be done more rapidly than the actual roll-out of the curriculum. For instance, if you have a 20-session curriculum that you plan to implement once weekly for 20 weeks, you could condense this to four times weekly over five to six weeks for the pretest.



It is important to carefully consider how to compensate and motivate participation given the higher level of dedication and commitment needed for pretests. Pretests can be done with just one group of participants and can involve all facilitators (by rotating the staff who facilitate) or rely on a subset of facilitators. If there are considerable demographic differences among your target participants (e.g., if you are implementing in some very rural and some urban areas or with youth and adults), you may want to conduct a pretest with a subset from each group.

Pretest methodologies include:



Observe and take field notes of tested curriculum sessions to assess elements such as participants' engagement, comprehension, and gender dynamics and facilitators' quality and fidelity to the curriculum content.



Conduct debrief interviews with facilitators after each tested curriculum session to assess areas such as curriculum implementation, successes, challenges, and suggestions for improvement.



Hold debrief focus groups with pretest participants after each tested curriculum session to obtain input on elements such as curriculum comprehension, anything they liked or did not like (and why), perceptions of facilitators, and suggestions for improvement. Focus groups are especially useful to obtain group consensus on issues or to identify predominant social norms related to the curriculum content.



Conduct in-depth interviews with a sample of pretest participants to assess (for example) their motivations for engagement, experiences of recruitment, recommendations to improve the content and approach, and relevant processes of change, including around violence, gender norms, and relationship dynamics and skills. Probing on the processes of change will likely not mirror the kinds of change generated through proper implementation but can offer insights on potential change processes in response to the curriculum. Interviews are particularly useful when asking for more sensitive or personal information.



Conduct in-depth interviews with facilitators to document practice-based knowledge,³² including what worked well, what could be improved, relations with participants, and whether facilitators feel they have adequate training and support to facilitate the curriculum.

Decisions on pretest methods should consider available time and resources and your organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity (including if it would be valuable to partner with consultants or research organisations).

Pretest data should be well documented and compiled, ideally into one final pretest report. The pretest findings can then be evaluated to make recommendations to refine the content and approach of your adapted curriculum. Yet, not all of the suggestions for curriculum changes identified through the pretest will be possible. Feedback generated through the pretest can be evaluated according to the following criteria:³³



Importance: Are the recommended changes likely to improve programme effectiveness, reach the target participants, and/or address the concerns of multiple participants?



Feasibility: How practical are the recommendations for participants, facilitators, or donors?



Congruence: How consistent are the recommendations with the programme's core components and goals?



Remember, the goal of an adaptation is to meet the unique needs of your community within an existing programme, not to invent a new programme based on every participant's concerns.

We recommend having a validation workshop with implementation staff and key stakeholders to review the pretest findings and make decisions around how to further revise the curriculum content and approach. The final output of Step 5 is to revise the adapted curriculum considering the pretest findings. Having followed this step-by-step process, your organisation should now be ready to start piloting or implementing your adapted curriculum!

ADAPTION TIP: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CURRICULUM PRETEST AND PILOT

Pretesting a curriculum is about testing individual curriculum sessions—starting and stopping if necessary—and allows for a continual process of learning and refinement.

Piloting a curriculum is doing a full run-through of exactly how you envision implementing your curriculum. Piloting provides the opportunity to refine implementation and make logistical changes as needed before wider implementation.







EFFORTS THROUGHOUT THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

STRENGTHENING STAFF CAPACITY

The careful selection and recruitment of appropriate facilitators is fundamental to the success of any curriculum, as is providing quality training, support, and care to facilitators. A curriculum's ability to transform unequal gender norms depends heavily on the skills of facilitators and the techniques used to promote shifts in perspectives around gender, power, and violence.³⁴ Facilitators need sufficient time to reflect on their own values, biases, and understanding of gender; to learn the curriculum content; and to learn and practice facilitation skills.³⁵ Supervisors and other staff involved in the programme should also have a deep understanding of the programme's goals and content and should have space to go through their own journeys of change. Facilitators may also need considerable support implementing participatory education and unlearning more didactic ways of imparting information.



Strengthening staff and facilitators' capacity takes place throughout the adaptation process:

-  During Steps 1 and 2, staff should receive support in understanding the different curriculum options, including the one that is eventually decided upon.
-  During Step 3, staff should receive support in identifying the curriculum's key components and reflecting on why they are core components.
-  During Step 4, facilitators should receive training on implementing the adapted curriculum.
-  During Step 5, facilitators should receive training and support to facilitate the pretest.

Ideally, all facilitators should be involved in the pretest, which provides opportunities for them to practice and a chance to assess their understanding of the curriculum content and their facilitation skills. The pretest may identify additional capacity-building needs for staff before wider implementation of the adapted curriculum. All staff can be involved in Steps 4 and 5—for example, in interpreting the pretest data and applying it to refine the curriculum. Logistically, though, it may be preferable to work with a few facilitators during the adaptation and pretest process and only hire and train a full team of facilitators after having the final adapted curriculum and being ready for full implementation.

ADAPTING FACILITATOR CRITERIA AND CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The criteria for staff recruited to facilitate your curriculum, and necessary capacity-building activities, may also need to be adapted to your setting. For instance, the team (J-PAL, the Addis Ababa University School of Public Health, Ethiopian Public Health Association, and EngenderHealth) implementing the Unite for a Better Life programme in Ethiopia decided that instead of hiring facilitators from Addis Ababa who would have greater experience with facilitation and VAW prevention programming, it would be more appropriate in their setting to hire facilitators from the programme communities. This meant relaxing the educational and experience requirements during hiring and offering capacity-building activities beyond what might be done in similar programmes. Facilitators also went through the full programme as participants.





DOCUMENTING YOUR ADAPTATION RATIONALE AND PROCESS

It is invaluable to document the adaptation process and the rationale for adaptations made throughout this step-by-step process. If your adapted curriculum is successful, you may want to replicate it in other settings, and others will benefit from understanding the adaptation choices you made. Conversely, if the adapted curriculum does not achieve the desired results, you or others can use the documentation of the process to understand what happened and identify ways to improve the adaptation.

Documentation throughout adaptation can help assess fidelity to the original model, monitor any potential risks or harm, and keep track of changes made and how these might impact your programme outcomes.³⁶ Documenting the process of adaptation can capture reactive adaptation—unanticipated but required adaptation in response to the evolving context (e.g. COVID-19 restrictions)—and help your organisation develop appropriate indicators for your monitoring and evaluation framework. Finally, the adaptation process itself can offer important learning. While it is common for practitioners to pretest adapted curricula, pretest data or final reports are rarely shared externally, which is a loss to the field of VAW/C prevention.

Existing tools can support the documentation of your adaptation process. Here are two to consider:

- 1. FRAME (Framework for Reporting Adaptations and Modifications-Enhanced)** is intended to facilitate understanding of the relationship among the process, types, and reasons interventions are modified and of programme effectiveness. It includes eight aspects: '(1) when and how in the implementation process the modification was made, (2) whether the modification was planned/proactive (e.g., an adaptation) or unplanned/reactive, (3) who determined that the modification should be made, (4) what is modified, (5) at what level of delivery the modification is made, (6) type or nature of context or content-level modifications, (7) the extent to which the modification is fidelity-consistent, and (8) the reasons for the modification, including (a) the intent or goal of the modification (e.g., to reduce costs) and (b) contextual factors that influenced the decision.'³⁷
- 2. The Modification Matrix** is a simpler tool to list planned and actual modifications, including the justifications for the changes or factors that went into the decisions behind the modifications.³⁸ This matrix includes a list of modifications needed; the



aim of planned modifications (e.g., to make a session on gender constructs easier to understand); planned revisions or additions to the text, topics, activities, materials, or approach; actual modifications; and notes on justifications and decision-making considered in the revisions. A column for the page or session number where the modifications are needed can be included for adaptations to a curriculum. It may be helpful to have two separate modification matrices: one for changes planned to the content of curriculum sessions or materials, and another for changes in curriculum delivery and implementation.³⁹

IMPLICATIONS

The level of effort it will take to complete this step-by-step process depends on your organisational and financial capacity, familiarity in your implementation context, and the extent of required adaptations. We recommend planning for at least 12 months for this process. This aligns with increasing evidence from practice that there should be a sufficiently long inception phase (around one year) to enable proper adaptation and testing and proper staff selection and training for effective violence prevention programmes.⁴⁰ While adaptations of VAW/C prevention curricula do not have to be highly complex, a certain rigour of adaptation should be planned for and funded. This is critical to ensuring effective, ethical implementation of curriculum-based models to prevent VAW/C.



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