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1. Title:

Making Research Accessible: A Repository of Program Reviews and the Provision of Technical Assistance

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3. Key words:

Registry of Programs, Implementation support, Evidence Based Programs

4. Abstract text:

Although evidence-based programs have emerged as a promising way to promote well-being, barriers exist in implementation of such programs. Barriers include lack of time to find evidence and lack of expertise among some practitioners in reading and evaluating evidence.

Recently, a new information repository was developed as part of a partnership among the United States Department of Defense, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, and Penn State University.

The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State University (Clearinghouse) assists professionals who work with military families to identify evidence-based approaches that can be used to improve the health and well-being of military families. Assistance is provided in two primary forms: a repository of information on the evidence base of programs and the provision of technical assistance.

The Clearinghouse contains a repository of information on more than 1000 programs. The programs residing on the Clearinghouse cover a wide range prevention and treatment programs. These include parenting, communication, child and youth behavior, prevention of alcohol and substance use, and mental health treatment. Programs are reviewed through systematized criteria and placed in categories of Effective (RCT), Effective (quasi), Promising, Unclear (+), Unclear (Ø), Unclear (-), or Ineffective based on the empirical evidence of the program.

The Clearinghouse provides professionals with information about programs and encourages them to make informed decisions based on their needs, situational factors, and resources. A team of Implementation Specialists provides Technical Assistance, support and guidance during the program selection, implementation, and evaluation. Professionals reach us through Live Chat, phone, and email.

Results indicate that the majority of programs have limited or no evidence of effectiveness. Professionals working with military families have limited time to dedicate to identifying evidence-based programs. This may make them particularly vulnerable to programs with good marketing strategies but no evidence of effectiveness. Access to systematic reviews of prevention and treatment programs in the area of behavioral health has the potential to greatly increase the number of evidence-based programs being utilized by those serving military families.