Chapter 2
Evidence-Based Practice

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Devotion and Prayer

- Deuteronomy 31:8 *The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

- *Rest assured that the Lord Himself will go before us. For some, they will have to deal with the fallout of daily family tension from everyone cooped up together. For others, they face job loss and immense financial stress. And others will have to face the loss of family members and dear ones. Through every trial we face, we can know that God walks with us. Our job is to remain In-step with His Spirit, and not let discouragement take over.*

Overview

- Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

- Nature of EBP

- Steps in EBP

- Distinguishing the EBP Process from Evidence-Based Practices

- Problems in and Objections to EBP

Definition of Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work

- Evidence-based practice is the process of applying **extant scientific evidence**, **client perspective**, and **clinical expertise** to make decisions about the care of the individual social work treatment.

Some Attributes of Evidence-Based Practice

- Critical thinking

- Career-long learning

- Flexibility
  – Integrating scientific knowledge with practice expertise and knowledge of client attributes
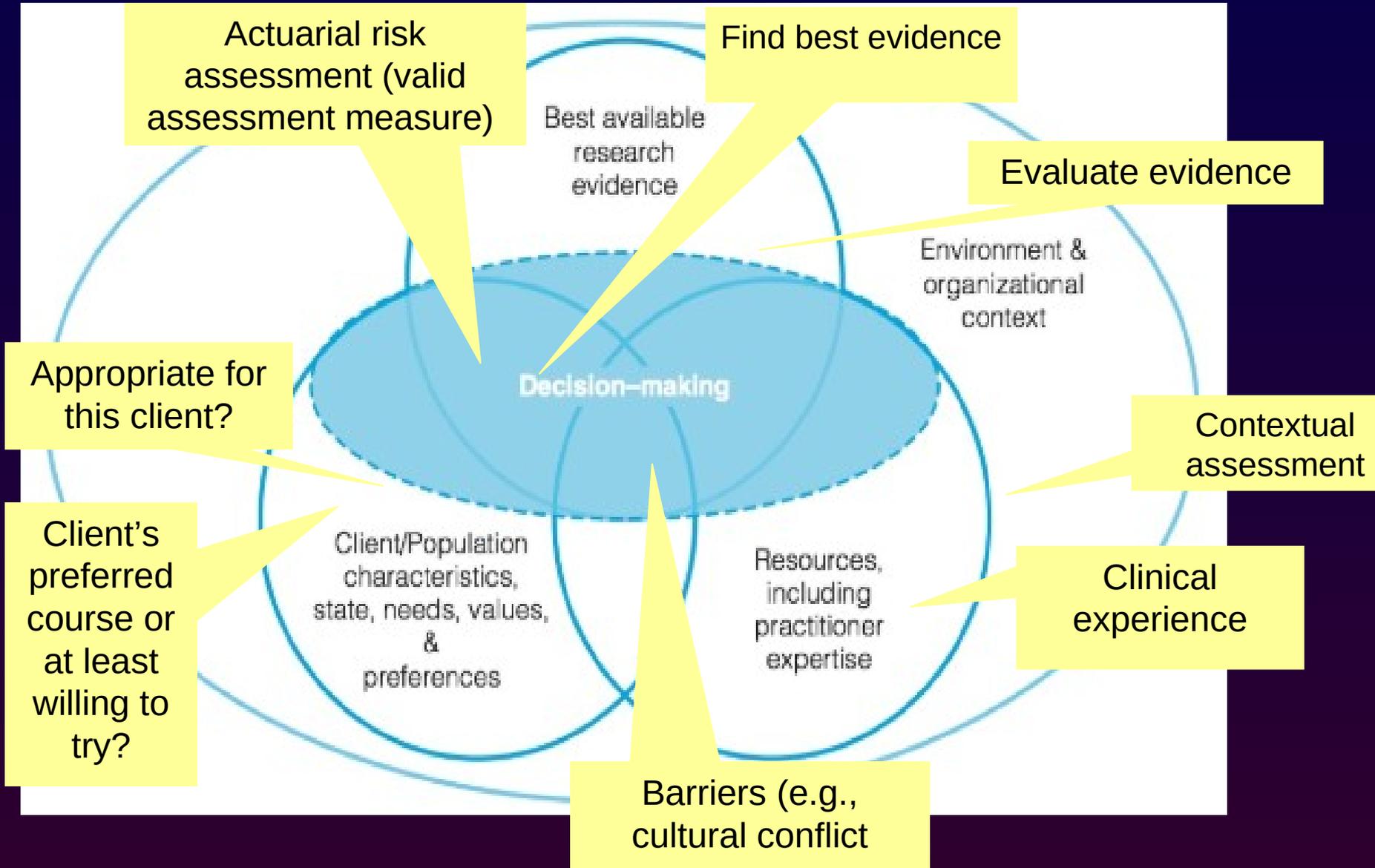
Critical Thinking in EBP

- Evidence-based practitioners will:
  - Think for themselves
  - Consider whether beliefs or assertions of knowledge are based on sound evidence and logic
  - Think open-mindedly, recognizing and questioning unstated assumptions underlying beliefs and assertions
  - Be willing to test their own beliefs or conclusions and then alter them on the basis of new experiences and evidence
  - Formulate appropriate questions and then gather and appraise evidence as a basis for making decisions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xiv75BLGtrs

Transdisciplinary EBP Model

Actuarial risk assessment (valid assessment measure)

Find best evidence

Evaluate evidence

Best available research evidence

Environment & organizational context

Decision-making

Appropriate for this client?

Contextual assessment

Client's preferred course or at least willing to try?

Client/Population characteristics, state, needs, values, & preferences

Resources, including practitioner expertise

Clinical experience

Barriers (e.g., cultural conflict

Steps in Evidence-Based Practice

- Step 1: Formulate a Question to Answer Practice Needs

- Step 2: Search for the Evidence

- Step 3: Critically Appraise the Relevant Studies You Find

- Step 4: Determine Which Evidence-Based Intervention Is Most Appropriate for Your Particular Client(s)

- Step 5: Apply the Evidence-Based Intervention

- Step 6: Evaluation and Feedback

Step 1: Formulate a Question to Answer Practice Needs

- Four common types of EBP questions

  1. What intervention, program, or policy has the best effects?

  2. What factors best predict desirable or undesirable consequences?

  3. What's it like to have had my client's experiences?

  4. What assessment tool should be used?

Examples of EBP Questions

- Questions about the effectiveness
  - Is the Housing and Urban Development VA-Supported Housing Program effective in decreasing homelessness among chronically homeless military veterans?

- Questions about predictors of desirable or undesirable consequences
  - What characteristics of foster parent-child matches are most and least likely to result in successful and unsuccessful foster care placements?

- Questions about understanding client experiences
  - What is it like for homeless females to stay in an emergency shelter?
  - How would 911 survivors describe the influence of 911 on their lives?

- Questions about assessment tools
  - What measure of PTSD symptoms is most accurate in assessing the effectiveness of interventions for treating PTSD?

CIAO

- When evaluating the effectiveness of intervention

- Formulating questions if one or more interventions are specified to in advance

  - C: client characteristics

  - I: intervention being considered

  - A: alternative intervention (if any)

  - O: outcome

CIAO question Examples

- C: Sexually abused Native Alaskan girls aged 8 or less

- I: Receive nondirective play therapy

- A: Or directive play therapy incorporating exposure therapy techniques

- O: Which will result in fewer trauma symptoms?

Step 2: Search for the Evidence

- Computerized library searches

- Searches of professional literature databases

- Internet search engines

- Search terms

- Approaches to searching:
    - Top-down
    - Bottom-up
    - Approaches are not mutually exclusive

Useful Library Search Engines

- a. Medline
- b. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
- c. PsychLit
- d. EMBASE
- e. Social Science Citation Index
- f. ERIC
- g. CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)
- h. DARE (Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects)
- i. PubMed
- j. Google Scholar
- k. Medscape
- l. Findarticles.com
- m. ScienceDirect

Step 3: Critically Appraise the Relevant Studies You Find

- Requires knowledge of research methods and designs that will be addressed in future chapters and class sessions

Step 4: Determine Which Evidence-Based Intervention Is Most Appropriate for Your Particular Client(s)

- Even evidence-based interventions are not effective with <u>every</u> client or situation.

- Consider:

  – Quality of the evidence

  – Client characteristics and context

  – Values and expectations of the client

Step 5: Apply the Evidence-Based Intervention

- Obtain training in the intervention and readings on how to implement the intervention including treatment manuals

- Arrange for consultation or supervision

- Formulate measurable treatment goals with client to aid in evaluation intervention effectiveness

Step 6: Evaluation and Feedback

- Collaborative measurement and evaluation of set treatment goals

- Ongoing discussion of evaluation and outcomes with client

- Share what you have learned
  - Communicate findings with relevant colleagues

Dan's Example- EBP Process

1. Asking well-formed questions about the behavior of concern
2. Tracking down the best scholarship and research that address the behavior
3. Identifying scientifically supported interventions and assessing their fit with the school
4. Analyzing and critiquing material
5. Sorting the best evidence according to the school system
6. Evaluating the best evidence to determine how well the interventions address student behavior
7. Implementing the scientifically supported interventions with fidelity
8. Evaluating the outcome of this process to improve the next set of behavioral interventions

Distinguishing the EBP Process from Evidence-Based Practices

- *The EBP process includes the above 6 steps*

- *Evidence-based practices are specific programs, policies or interventions that have been empirically supported*

Objections to EBP

- *EBP is an overly restrictive cookbook approach that denigrates professional expertise and ignores client values and preferences*

  - Based on a misconception of EBP as a list of empirically supported practices and not as a process

  - False because it overlooks integration of practice expertise

Objections to EBP

- *The therapeutic alliance will be hindered*

  - Some argue use of manualized interventions supported by evidence from RCTs may inhibit relationship building

  - False- this criticism ignores the integration of practice expertise in the EBP process

  - It also overlooks the fact that treatment manuals typically emphasize the importance of the therapeutic relationship as part of the manualized intervention

Objections to EBP

- *EBP is merely a cost-cutting tool*

    - Based on fear that third-party payers will use EBP to limit the type of intervention and length of intervention

    - False- some interventions supported by research are more costly

    - Overlooks process definition of EBP

Objections to EBP

- *Evidence is in short supply*

  - Lack of high-quality treatment studies relevant to social work practice

  - However, paucity of relevant evidence increases importance of monitoring outcomes

  - Moreover, some interventions are harmful

  - Piece of mind knowing that you looked

Objections to EBP

- *The EBP process devalues qualitative research*

  - Based on misperception that EBP applies only to effectiveness questions

  - But it also applies to qualitative studies pertaining to the question: What's it like to have had my client's experiences?

Objections to EBP

- *Real-world obstacles prevent implementing EBP in everyday practice*
  - Superiors do not understand/appreciate EBP
  - Insufficient and limited resources: Training Supervision, Technology, etc
  - Time constraints limit ability to use EBP model
    - Can be alleviated by:
      - » Team approach
      - » Assigning steps 2 and 3 of the EBP process to student field placement interns