

BACKGROUND

The Center for Public Health Systems Science (CPHSS) at Washington University in St. Louis is developing a set of user guides funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the 2014 *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*. The purpose of the User Guides is to help tobacco control staff and partners implement evidence-based best practices by translating research into practical guidance.



User Guides published since 2015

Guide Audience

- State and local tobacco control program managers
- National, state, and local networks, foundations, and other groups in tobacco control

Designing for Dissemination

Public health research findings are unlikely to be put into practice automatically. There is a growing need to design research with dissemination in mind. The Designing for Dissemination framework proposes activities across three domains:¹

- Systems (e.g., shifting funder priorities)
- Processes (e.g., engaging stakeholders)
- Products (e.g., tailoring how information is shared)

The User Guides illustrate how researchers can design tailored products to disseminate findings. By focusing on four key design principles: evidence-based, actionable, modular, and readable, researchers can create user-friendly documents that bridge the gap from evidence to practice.

NEXT STEPS

CPHSS has published five *Best Practices User Guides* on topics of importance to state and local tobacco control practitioners: *Coalitions*, *Youth Engagement*, *Health Equity*, *Program Infrastructure*, and *Health Communications*. Four additional guides are currently in development.

1 Brownson RC, Jacobs JA, Tabak RG, Hoehner CM, Stamatakis KA. Designing for dissemination among public health researchers: findings from a national survey in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2013;103(9):1693-1699.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The User Guides use four design principles to translate research evidence into practical guidance. Guides are designed to be:

<p>EVIDENCE-BASED</p> <p>Based on interviews with topic area experts, an extensive literature review, and review by practice and research experts</p>	<p>ACTIONABLE</p> <p>Relevant to the audience and providing steps and resources to get started with the topic</p>	<p>MODULAR</p> <p>Composed of stand-alone sections that can be used for different practitioners' needs</p>	<p>READABLE</p> <p>Written in plain language, available in print and online, and designed to be accessible by people with disabilities</p>
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Principles in Action

SURVEY RESULTS

CPHSS conducted a survey in spring 2019 to assess awareness and use of select tobacco control resources produced within the last seven years. More than half of the 97 national, state, and territorial tobacco control leaders who responded had at least 10 years of experience in tobacco control. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed about the quality of the user guides.

Level of agreement about quality of User Guides

Include evidence-based recommendations	EVIDENCE-BASED	100%
Help me to take action to implement best practices	ACTIONABLE	99%
Contain sections I can share with different partners	MODULAR	96%
Are easy to understand	READABLE	96%

RECOMMENDATIONS

State and local public health practitioners continue to request guidance on prioritizing interventions and selecting the best implementation strategies. They often have limited time and access to review research and may have varying levels of expertise in the topic area. Using dissemination-focused design principles, researchers can help practitioners with different skill levels and time constraints learn about and implement evidence-based recommendations.

Researchers can incorporate the four User Guide design principles to effectively translate evidence into practical guidance by taking these steps:

- Define the audience** – Identify relevant messages, communications channels, and potential barriers to use
- Involve practitioners** – Engage stakeholders throughout the design process to inform key issues and identify topics for future research
- Support action** – Identify areas where practitioners may need more resources, provide action steps or links to supporting materials, and update materials to keep content relevant
- Standardize document sections** – Break down information into stand-alone sections that are repeated across resources
- Ensure accessibility** – Use plain-language writing principles and learn about standards for accessible documents
- Evaluate products** – Include questions about product use and accessibility in evaluations

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