

## Essential Tips

# Documenting Use of Evidence-Based Practices



Whenever you tap into an evidence-based or best practice approach in an intervention with an individual, it should be identified in the progress note. This demonstrates provider competency and helps ensure the person you're working with has the best opportunity to move towards recovery. When documenting use of an evidence-based practice, it is important to do more than just mention the practice; details should also be provided that demonstrate the appropriate use of the model.

Consider this example:

*Therapist used Motivational Interviewing to talk with Jose about reducing his drinking. Jose said he didn't want to stop drinking yet.*

This example does not demonstrate the writer's knowledge of Motivational Interviewing or the appropriateness of the intervention.

A better version of this note would say:

*Therapist used the Readiness Ruler from Motivational Interviewing to talk with Jose about his interest in taking steps to reduce his drinking. Jose acknowledged he was at a 4 out of 10 readiness to cut back on drinking, but could imagine himself shifting to a 5 or 6 if he thought he really could be successful.*

Of course, this requires the provider to both understand and have the skills to use the evidence based practice.

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## Two Rules



- **Rule 1:** When using best-practice, or evidence-based approaches such as Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), or structured models such as Seeking Safety, provide details in the note that demonstrate an understanding of the model.
  - Which technique or strategy is being used?
  - What is the behavioral or emotional challenge being targeted?
  - What evidence is there that the strategy is successful with this individual?
  
- **Rule 2:** Make sure that the practice being used is appropriate for the challenge being addressed and the individual being served. For example, it would not make sense to use *Seeking Safety*, which addresses trauma and emotional regulation for adults, as a tool to respond to challenges faced by a child who is having problems making friends because of poor social skills.

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