

Appendix C

Searching and Screening Tool



Purpose: This tool guides the team through the steps of searching for evidence that answers their EBP question and tracking the process. The team will first look for pre-appraised evidence in a best-evidence search. The results of that investigation will guide the next steps (a targeted or exhaustive search). Recording the evidence identification process creates confidence in the eventual project recommendations by demonstrating a thorough and unbiased approach.

Section I: Key Elements of the EBP Question

Identify the key elements of the EBP question (*from the Question Development Tool*).

Population	
Setting	
Topic or Intervention(s)	
Outcomes (as needed)	

Section II: Best-Evidence Search

Does pre-appraised evidence exist in the form of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), literature reviews with a systematic approach (LRSAs), or evidence summaries?

- ☐ Yes → Appraise using the Pre-Appraised Evidence Appraisal Tool (Appendix E1)
- Is the evidence suitable and adequate quality?
 - ☐ Yes → Complete targeted search for additional evidence based on search date in pre-appraised evidence to determine if relevant evidence has been published in the interim
- ☐ No → Skip to Section III (exhaustive search)

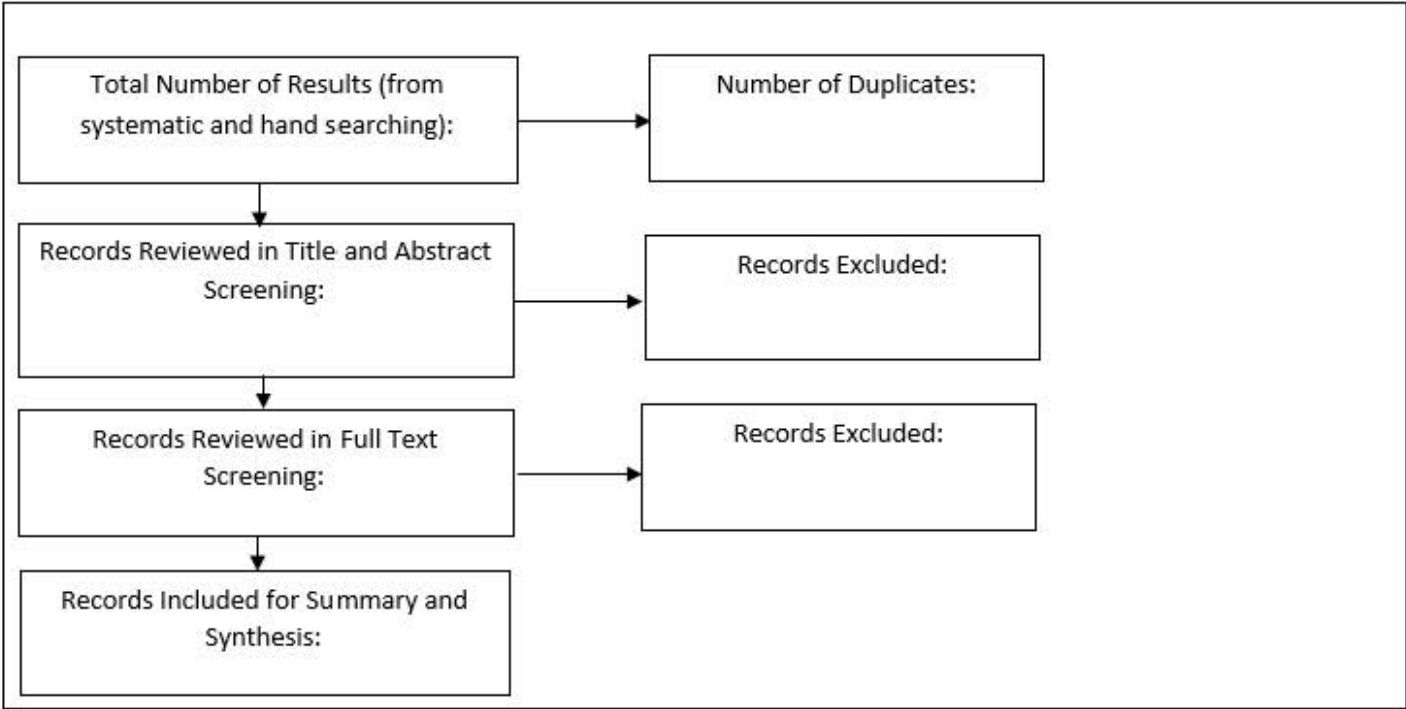
Section III: Exhaustive Search and Screening

Complete the table below using the population, setting, topic, or intervention(s), and outcomes identified in Section I. List the element and associated terms to build a full search concept.

EBP Question Elements	Possible Search Terms (<i>synonyms, alternative spellings, or brand names</i>)
1)	
2)	
3)	

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What databases will you search?		
☐ CINAHL ☐ MEDLINE (PubMed) ☐ Embase	☐ PsychINFO ☐ Epistemonikos ☐ Other:	
What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria?		
Inclusion:	Exclusion:	
What date limit will you use and why?		
What is the date the team conducted the search?		
What are the search strings and number of results from each database?		
Database	Search String	Number of Results
How will the team systematically screen the results to identify evidence that answers the EBP question and meets the inclusion/exclusion criteria? (Select all that apply.)		
☐ Use software or a web-based program to track (e.g., Google Forms, Excel, Abstrackr) ☐ Have at least two independent reviewers for each record ☐ Inclusion or exclusion disagreements are resolved by a third reviewer ☐ Other:		
Complete the screening flow chart below.		



Instructions for the Search and Screening Tool

Section I: Key Elements of the EBP Question

Identify the key elements of the EBP question (from the Question Development Tool).

Population	<i>Record the details of the population outlined in the EBP question.</i>
Setting	<i>If not captured in the population, record any additional details about the setting the EBP question pertains to.</i>
Topic or Intervention(s)	<i>Record the topic or intervention the EBP team is interested in investigating. If comparing two interventions, list them both here.</i>
Outcomes (as needed)	<i>If needed, list any specific outcomes of interest. Only list outcomes if you intend to make them a part of the literature search.</i>

Section II: Best-Evidence Search

Does pre-appraised evidence exist in the form of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), literature reviews with a systematic approach (LRSAs), or evidence summaries?

Some sources of pre-appraised evidence include Cochrane Library, Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), ECRI Guidelines Trust®, and Trip Database. See Chapter 7 for more information on which type of information to prioritize.

- ☐ Yes → Appraise using the Pre-Appraised Evidence Appraisal Tool (Appendix E1)
- Is the evidence suitable and adequate quality? *This is determined by a series of questions on the Pre-Appraised Evidence Tool. Complete the appraisal and come back here to answer the question.*
 - ☐ Yes → Complete targeted search for additional evidence based on the search date in pre-appraised evidence to determine if relevant evidence has been published in the interim
Locate the date the search was completed in the pre-appraised evidence. Complete a targeted search to specifically look for evidence that can provide moderate and strong support for decision-making that has been published since the authors completed their search. For a list of possible databases to query, see Section III.
 - ☐ No → Skip to Section III (exhaustive search)
- ☐ No → Skip to Section III (exhaustive search)

Section III: Exhaustive Search and Screening

Complete the table below using the population, setting, topic, or intervention(s) and outcomes identified in Section I. List the element and associated terms to build a full search concept.

EBP Question Element	Possible Search Terms (<i>synonyms, alternative spellings, or brand names</i>)
1) <i>Write the word or phrase that captures one element of the EBP question from the table in Section I</i>	<i>Brainstorm possible synonyms for the concepts, including alternative spellings, brand names, and alternative terms.</i>
2) <i>Repeat steps from element 1</i>	<i>Repeat steps from element 1.</i>

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3) Repeat steps from element 1	<i>Repeat steps from element 1. You may have more or fewer concepts than the boxes provided here. Remember, the team should not search on directional words such as “increase,” “improve,” etc., because it can bias the search.</i>	
What databases will you search? Highlight or select each of the databases the team plans to search. If a database is not listed, select “other” and record the name.		
☐ CINAHL ☐ MEDLINE (PubMed) ☐ Embase	☐ PsychINFO ☐ Epistemonikos ☐ Other:	
What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria? While this may be similar to the EBP question, it helps the team think through the details of exactly what they ARE and ARE NOT looking for. These discussions help to ensure the team has a mutual understanding of the focus of the project. The group should revisit the list throughout the process to provide further clarifications and refine evidence search results.		
Inclusion: <i>Record characteristics of the evidence the team wants to explicitly INCLUDE beyond the elements of the EBP question. They may relate to the type of evidence, the year it was published, or more granular specifics of the setting, population, or interventions.</i>	Exclusion: <i>Record characteristics of the evidence the team wants to explicitly EXCLUDE. Common characteristics include date of publication, type of publication, language, population, type of setting, or specifics of the intervention.</i>	
What date limit will you use and why?		
<i>Record the data limit the team will use for the search and the reason for selecting the parameters. Remember, data cut-offs are topic-dependent and require consideration and justification. Do not simply include the outdated 5-year cut-off without specific reasoning.</i>		
What is the date the team conducted the search?		
<i>Record the date the official search was run.</i>		
What are the search strings and number of results from each database?		
Database	Search String	Number of Results
<i>Record the database searched</i>	<i>Copy/paste the exact search string entered into the search field of the database.</i>	<i>Record the number of results retrieved</i>
<i>Record the database searched</i>	<i>Copy/paste the exact search string entered into the search field of the database.</i>	<i>Record the number of results retrieved</i>
<i>Record the database searched</i>	<i>Copy/paste the exact search string entered into the search field of the database.</i>	<i>Record the number of results retrieved</i>
How will the team systematically screen the results to identify evidence that answers the EBP question and meets the inclusion/exclusion criteria? (Select all that apply.)?		
☐ Use software or web-based program to track (e.g. Google Forms, Excel, Abstrackr) ☐ Have at least two independent reviewers for each record ☐ Inclusion or exclusion disagreements resolved by third reviewer ☐ Other:		
Select the strategy the team will use to screen the results of their literature search. This should represent a systematic and unbiased approach to ensure the final evidence is representative of the true state of the literature on the topic.		
Complete the screening flow chart below.		

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