Stages of Implementation Analysis: Where Are We?

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The mission of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)
is to contribute to the best practices and science of implementation, organization change, and system reinvention to improve outcomes across the spectrum of human services.

When creating Implementation Teams to provide supports that are effective, integrated, efficient, and sustainable, the first task is map the current implementation landscape. The goal is, build on current strengths and collect information to inform planning the best path toward developing implementation capacity in this provider organization.

Background

Human service provider organizations (e.g. child welfare units, child care settings, community centers, education settings, healthcare clinics, residential care facilities) are attempting to make use of interventions (e.g. evidence-based programs and other innovations) to improve outcomes for children, families, individuals, and communities. For the past few decades policy makers, researchers, and technical assistance providers have focused on *interventions.*

The same attention and support has not been given to *implementation* of interventions. Consequently, in most cases human service organizations have been left to their ingenuity to figure out how to make use of evidence-based programs. In a few instances, evidence-based program developers have created a purveyor group that can provide effective supports for implementation of that intervention. The lack of attention to implementation methods has led to what some have termed the quality chasm: we know what to do, but we are not making use of that knowledge to improve outcomes in human services.

The National Implementation Research Network encourages policy makers, practitioners, and communities to make greater use of evidence-based programs and other innovations (collectively called "interventions" in this document). The United States far outspends any other country on human services yet our outcomes rank near the bottom of the 30 or so most developed countries globally. Evidence-based interventions hold the promise of better outcomes.

Common sense tells us that children, families, individuals, and communities cannot benefit from interventions they do not experience. Thus, the promise of evidence-based interventions will not be realized unless they are used fully and effectively in practice, every day for everyone who could benefit. The growing science of implementation and documentation of implementation best practices provide guidance for effectively and efficiently supporting evidence-based programs in human service provider organizations. To realize benefits on a

socially-important scale, policy makers and directors of provider organizations must invest in creating effective implementation supports for practitioners.

Implementation supports for interventions

Implementation capacity is embodied in Implementation Teams. An Implementation Team consists of three or more full-time individuals who know interventions well, are skilled specialists regarding implementation science and best practices, and are well-versed in the many uses of improvement cycles to continually advance practices, organizations, and systems.

Implementation Team members do the work of implementation in organizations and systems. To create an Implementation Team, current positions are re-assigned, functions are re-purposed, team members develop new competencies, and reporting relationships are re-aligned so no new costs are added. Implementation Teams are built into organization and system structures to provide lasting and sustainable supports for using a variety of evidence-based interventions and other innovations fully and effectively. Implementation Team members conduct ImpleMap interviews.

Readers are encouraged to visit the National Implementation Research Network website (http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu) and the State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-based Programs website (www.scalingup.org) for further information about implementation science, Implementation Teams, and infrastructures to support implementation on a large scale.

Stages of Implementation Analysis

EBP or Evidence-Informed Innovation:

This tool provides the team with the opportunity to plan for and/or assess the use of stage-based activities to improve the success of implementation efforts for EBPs or evidence-informed innovations. The tool can be used to assess current stage activities (e.g. "We are in the midst of Exploration") or past efforts related to a stage (e.g. "We just completed most of Installation? How did we do? What did we miss?). For activities scored as "Not Yet Initiated" the planning team may wish to:

    a) Examine the importance of the activity in relationship to achieving success

    b) Identify barriers to completion of the activity

    c) Ensure that an action plan is developed (sub-activities, accountable person(s) identified, timeline, evidence of completion) and monitored

A 'strength of stage score' can be computed for each stage to help guide and measure effective use of stages.

Stage-Related Activities for Exploration ☐ Current ☐ Past	In Place	Initiated or Partially In Place	Not Yet Initiated
1. Form Implementation "Team" or Re-Purpose/Expand a Current Group			
2. Develop communication plan to describe the exploration process (e.g. activities, participants, timeline, benefits, risks) to key stakeholder groups			
3. Analyze Data to determine need and prevalence of need			
4. Select Targeted Areas to address Need (e.g. child, adult, family outcomes)			
5. Review and identify programs, practices, interventions that match target area and address need			
6. Review and discuss "eligible" programs and practices (use the Hexagon) in relation to:			
a) Need			
b) Fit			
c) Resources – Sustainability			
d) Strength of Evidence			
e) Readiness for Replication			
f) Capacity to Implement			
7. Select programs/practices for continued exploration based on assessment results from above			
8. Develop methods to promote exploration and assess "buy-in" for range of impacted stakeholders			
9. Analyze information and results of exploration activities			
10. Work group makes recommendation to appropriate level (e.g. state level team, local partners, alliance, funders)			
Average % in Each Category - Strength of Exploration Score:			

What should we do to further strengthen our Exploration Process? Are there Exploration Activities we need to revisit? And what are the "next right steps"?

Stage-Related Activities for Installation ☐ Current ☐ Past	In Place	Initiated or Partially In Place	Not Yet Initiated
1. Identify structural and functional changes needed (e.g. policies, schedules, space, time, materials, re-allocation of roles and responsibilities, new positions needed)			
a) at provider/agency level			
b) at local level (e.g. collaborative groups)			
c) at District or County level			
2. Make structural and functional changes needed to initiate the new program, practice, framework			
a) at provider/agency level			
b) at local level (e.g. collaborative groups)			
c) at District or County level			
3. Development of selection protocols for "first implementers"			
a) at provider/agency level			
b) at local level (e.g. collaborative groups)			
c) at District or County level			
4. Selection of "first implementers"			
a. Agency administrators			
b. Practitioner/Front line			
c. Other:			
5. Identification of Training Resources, logistics			
6. Training of first cohort of implementers			
a) Practitioners			
b) Agency administrators			
c) Trainers:			
d) Coaches:			
e) Other:			
7. Develop coaching and support plans for practitioners			
8. Evaluate "readiness" and sustainability of data systems at consumer level (e.g. child, adult, family)			
9. Evaluate "readiness" and sustainability of fidelity data system			
10. Analyze and problem-solve around the sustainability of training, coaching, data systems			
11. Establish communication links to report barriers and facilitators during next stage (e.g. Initial Implementation)			
Average % in Each Category - Strength of Installation Score:			

What might we do to further strengthen our Installation Process? Are there Installation Activities we need to revisit? And what are the "next right steps" to engage in or revisit Installation Activities?

Stage-Related Activities for Initial Implementation ☐ Current (monitored at least bi-weekly for first 4 months) ☐ Past	In Place	Initiated or Partially In Place	Not Yet Initiated
1. Communication plan(s) developed to inform stakeholders of "launch dates", activities, and convey support			
2. Communication protocols developed for identifying barriers and adaptive challenges and problem-solving at each "level" (e.g. weekly implementation team meetings to identify issues, create plans, review results of past problem-solving efforts, forward issues to next "level" as appropriate)			
3. Leadership develops support plan to promote persistence			
4. Written coaching plan developed at relevant levels (e.g. school, teacher; agency, practitioner)			
5. Coaching system in place (see Best Practices for Coaching Systems)			
6. Data systems in place for measuring and reporting outcomes			
7. Data systems in place for measuring and reporting fidelity			
8. Document that reviews initial implementation challenges			
Revision recommended for Implementation Drivers based on review of challenges and with sustainability considerations			
a) Recruitment and Selection			
b) Training and Booster Training			
c) Coaching processes and data			
d) Outcome data measures and reporting process			
e) Fidelity measures and reporting processes			
f) Agency Administrative policies and practices			
g) Other Levels of Administrative policies and practices			
9. If appropriate, plan for next cohort of "implementers"			
Average % in Each Category - Strength of Initial Implementation			
What might we do to further strengthen our Installation Process? Are there Installation Activities we need to revisit? And what are the "next right steps" to engage in or revisit Installation Activities?			

Stage-Related Activities for <u>Full Implementation</u> ☐ Current (every 6 months) ☐ Past (when there has been a shift back to Initial Implementation due to turnover)	In Place	Initiated or Partially In Place	Not Yet Initiated
1. Monitoring and support systems are in place for each Implementation Driver:			
a) Recruitment and Selection			
b) Training and Booster Training			
c) Coaching processes and data			
d) Outcome data measures and reporting process			
e) Fidelity measures and reporting processes			
2. Feedback process from practitioners to Agency administrators is in place and functional (e.g. practitioner participation on Leadership and Implementation Teams, changes to facilitate best practices)			
3. Feedback process from Agencies (e.g. schools, care settings, clinics)to next levels of administration in place and functional			
4. Feedback process to State or to TA support is in place and functional. (e.g. system in place for Agencies to feed information and feedback to appropriate State and/or TA entities)			
5. Agency Leadership and Implementation Teams use data to make decisions (e.g. clinical outcomes, behavior, academics, and fidelity)			
6. Improvement processes are employed to address issues through the use of data, development of plans, monitoring of plan execution and assessment of results (PDSA cycles)			
Average % in Each Category - Strength of Initial Implementation			
What might we do to further strengthen and maintain Full Implementation? Are there Activities we need to revisit? And what are the "next right steps" to engage in or revisit Full Implementation Activities?			