The Art of Implementation Science
From Exploration to Sustainability

Hayden D. Center, Jr., Ph.D.
CAPT Associate
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Today’s Training

Define Implementation Science

Discuss its Relevance to Your Work

Explore Stages of Implementation

Assess Your Implementation Efforts

Plan for sustainability
The Art of Implementation Science

Part 1: An Overview of Implementation Science
Introductory Activity

At each table or small group answer the following questions:

What is Implementation Science?

Why is it important to learn how about what science tells us about implementing evidence-based programs and practices
What is Implementation?

A specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions.

The National Implementation Research Network, FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
What is Implementation Science?

The study of methods to promote the integration of research findings and evidence into healthcare policy and practice. It seeks to understand the behavior of healthcare professionals and other stakeholders as a key variable in the sustainable uptake, adoption, and implementation of evidence-based interventions.
Not A Slogan for Implementation
Good planning leads to achieving important outcomes. The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) guides are work and makes it more likely that success will be achieved.
Implementation Stage

- Develop a clear action plan
- Balance fidelity and adaptation
- Establish implementation supports
Develop a clear action plan

An action plan is a document that lays out exactly how you will implement a selected program, policy, or strategy.

It’s important to communicate openly and make sure that all partners are onboard with the implementation plan as you move forward.
Balance Fidelity and Adaptation

ADAPTATION

FIDELITY
Dimensions of Fidelity

- Audience
- Materials protocols
- Providers
- Program content
- Setting

Fidelity
What Are Core Elements⁴?

• They represent the logic mechanisms of change and key delivery steps of an evidence-based approach

• These are what most likely produce effectiveness, usually comprised of…
  • Content
  • Delivery mechanisms
  • Methods
Making Adaptations

Photo Source: https://pixabay.com/p-63148/?no_redirect
Guidelines when balancing fidelity and adaptation

Retain core components

Build capacity before changing the program

Add rather than subtract

Adapt with care and consult experts
Fidelity Drift

Over time there is a tendency to pay less attention to the fidelity of the intervention and staff can gradually change how the intervention is delivered.
Implementation Gap

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Establish Implementation Support

COACHING

Monitoring

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Implementation – What is required?

An organization has to adjust its infrastructure in the installation stage of program change.

These changes must be made continually until the program or strategy is being implemented with fidelity.
Implementation Stages

- **Exploration**
  - Assess needs
  - Examine intervention components
  - Consider implementation drivers
  - Assess fit

- **Installation**
  - Acquire resources
  - Prepare organization
  - Prepare implementation drivers
  - Prepare staff

- **Initial Implementation**
  - Adjust implementation drivers
  - Manage change
  - Deploy data systems
  - Initiate improvement cycles

- **Full Implementation**
  - Monitor, manage implementation drivers
  - Achieve fidelity and outcome benchmarks
  - Further improve fidelity and outcomes

2-4 Years
Establish implementation supports

Onsite leadership and administrative support

Practitioner selection

Practitioner training and support

Program evaluation
Implementation Drivers

- Improved outcomes
- Consistent program implementation
- Performance assessment (fidelity)

- Coaching
- Systems level intervention
- Facilitative administration
- Decision support data system

- Competency Drivers
- Organization Drivers
- Leadership Drivers

- Integrated and compensatory

- Technical
- Adaptive
Implementation Science

Framework for IS

- Identifying Bottlenecks & Gaps
- Utilizing Information
- Developing & Implementing Strategies
- Measuring Effectiveness & Efficiency
Full Implementation takes time
Concluding Activity

What are some lessons you have learned in your attempts to implement new programs?

What wisdom can you provide others?
The Art of Implementation Science

Part 2: The Stages of Implementation
First Stage - Exploration

1. Form Implementation Team

2. Develop communication plan

3. Analyze data to determine need

4. Select target areas and match to need
First Stage - Exploration

5. Review and identify programs, practices, Interventions

6. Review and discuss “eligible” programs and practices
   Need
   Fit
   Resources – Sustainability
   Strength of evidence
   Readiness for replication
   Capacity to implement
First Stage - Exploration

7. Select programs/practices for continued exploration

8. Develop methods to promote exploration and assess “buy-in” for range of impacted stakeholders

9. Analyze information and results of exploration activities
First Stage - Exploration

10. Work group makes recommendation to appropriate level (e.g. state level team, local partners, alliance, funders)
Additional Questions:

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”? 
Activity 1

Individually
Look at the 10 important elements of the Exploration Phase.
Assess the implementation of your intervention based on these 10 elements.

As a Small Group
Discuss what could be done to improve the first stage of your implementation process?
Stage Two - Installation

1. Identify structural and functional changes needed
2. Make structural and functional changes needed
3. Development of selection protocols for “first implementers”
Stage Two - Installation

4. Selection of “first implementers
5. Identification of Training Resources, logistics
6. Training of first cohort of implementers
Stage Two - Installation

7. Develop coaching and support plans for practitioners
8. Evaluate “readiness” and sustainability of data systems
9. Evaluate “readiness” and sustainability of fidelity data system
Stage Two - Installation

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)
Stage Two - Installation

Additional Questions
What might we do to further strengthen our Installation Process?

Are there Installation Activities your need to revisit?

And what are the “next right steps” to engage in or revisit Installation Activities?
Individually,
Look at the 11 important elements of the Installation Phase.

As a small group,
At your table assess your prevention intervention based on these 11 elements.
Is there anything else you need to do to improve your implementation process?
Stage Three - Initial Implementation

1. Develop Communication plan(s) to inform stakeholders of “launch dates”, activities, and convey support

2. Develop Communication protocols for identifying barriers problem-solving at each “level”
Stage Three - Implementation

3. Leadership develops support plan to promote Persistence

4. Written coaching plan developed at relevant levels

5. Coaching system in place
Stage Three - Implementation

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
9. If appropriate, plan for next cohort of “implementers”
Additional Questions
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?
Activity 3

Individually,
Look at the 9 important elements of the Installation Phase.

As a small group,
At your table assess your prevention intervention based on these 9 elements.
Is there anything else you need to do to improve your implementation process?
Stage Four-Full Implementation

1. Monitoring and support systems are in place for each Implementation Driver

2. Feedback process from practitioners to Agency administrators is in place and functional
3. Feedback process from Agencies (e.g. schools, care settings, clinics) to next levels of administration in place and function

4. Feedback process to State or to TA support is in place and functional.
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
Additional Questions
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?
Activity 4

Individually, Look at the 6 important elements of the Full Implementation Phase.

As a small group, At your table assess your prevention intervention based on these 6 elements. Is there anything else you need to do to improve your implementation process?
Third Workshop – Implementation and Sustainability
Implementation and Sustainability

In this workshop we will look at the actions that are important to consider to ensure that successful implementation efforts are maintained. There will be an emphasis on implementation actions that may it more likely that a program will ultimately sustain.
Once we achieve important outcomes utilizing the practical steps outlined in implementation science, then the efforts to sustain the program need to continue and become even more fortified.
Keys to Sustainability: Unlocking the Doors to Effective Prevention and Positive Outcomes
Sustainability and the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)

At the Core:

ASSESSMENT
CAPACITY
PLANNING
IMPLEMENTATION
EVALUATION

Sustainability and Cultural Competence
History of Sustainability

Sustainability

Moving from Funding Focused…

Historically, substance abuse prevention has been directed by the funds available and many times the funder.
Prevention Strategies Should Be Continued...

❖ There are documented reductions in substance abuse behaviors.
❖ They are more cost effective when compared to treatment and incarceration costs.
❖ The cost savings and impact on related problems will be clear to funders and community members.
What is Sustainability

✓ Sustainability is a **process** of ensuring an adaptive and effective prevention system.

✓ Sustainability builds capacity among diverse stakeholders.

✓ Sustainability maintains positive outcomes.
Three Keys to Sustainability

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**: assure that the community agencies, organizations and institutions have adequate internal organizational capacity to achieve positive outcomes

**EFFECTIVENESS**: assure effectiveness and alignment of the prevention system to produce positive outcomes

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**: cultivate community support for the prevention system and its positive outcomes
Organizational Capacity

**Action Step 1:**

*Structures and formal linkages:* Develop administrative structures and formal linkages that support comprehensive, collaborative evidence based strategies to achieve and sustain targeted reductions in substance using behaviors.
Organizational Capacity

Action Step 2:

Policies and procedures: Adopt supportive policies and procedures that allow community agencies, organizations and institutions to respond as data indicates.
Organizational Capacity

Action Step 3:

Resources: Secure diverse resources (human, technical, physical and financial) that support the prevention system
Organizational Capacity

**Action Step 4:**

**Expertise:** Acquire appropriate expertise that enables the system to prioritize, plan for, and carry out evidence based strategies to reduce substance use/abuse and its consequences.
Organizational Capacity

Action Step 5:

**Quality and accountability:** Assess implementation quality

*How do we assure quality implementation and accountability of strategies?*

- Assure that the strategy matches the cultural, developmental and gender characteristics of the population
- Receive training or technical assistance to support appropriate implementation of the intervention
Action Step 5 Continued

- Work with the developer to understand the core components that are needed for demonstrated outcomes
- Deliver the program’s core components with fidelity
- Track implementation through process evaluation
Ensuring Effectiveness

Action Step 6:

**Reach and alignment:** Assess the reach and alignment of the strategy to ensure that it aligns culturally and otherwise with the targeted population and is delivered to an adequate number of people in order to achieve the community outcomes desired

- Why do we assess the effectiveness of each strategy?
- How do we assure effectiveness of a strategy?
- What should we do if strategies have not shown to be effective?
Ensuring Effectiveness

Action Step 7:

**Effectiveness:** Assure that the strategy being implemented is documented as effective for achieving the desired outcomes.

How can we ensure that our strategies are reaching and aligning with the target population in order to reach population-level change?

- Develop a logic model that identifies the strategies currently being implemented and their relationship to the targeted outcome behavior.
- Conduct a gaps analysis to ensure that there are effective strategies that will logically work together to result in outcome behavior change.
- Ensure that current strategies collectively reach the target population.
Cultivating Community Support

Action Step 8:

Relationships: Develop and nurture positive relationships among all key stakeholders to create a system of awareness and support in which all interested parties share mutual trust and a willingness to work together strategically.
Action Step 9:

**Champions:** Turn stakeholders into system leaders and champions who advocate for policies and actions both within the system and throughout the community that supports their long term strategic outcomes.
Action Step 10:

Ownership: Encourage ownership - we tend to value that which is ours and are more likely to sustain that which we value.
Outcomes of Sustainability Planning

Communities will build their capacity to reduce substance use consequences by:

➢ Having a **flexible response system** that allows them to strategically address substance abuse issues and achieve positive, sustainable results.

➢ Supporting **outcome based planning** (adopting and integrating the Strategic Prevention Framework into the community prevention system).

➢ Integrating an **effective decision-making process** that enables them to become a valued problem-solving group.

➢ *Effectively using limited resources.*
Remember

The Keys to Sustainability are about recognizing, assessing and building on the many strengths that our communities have to offer.
Questions?
References


If you have questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to contact:

NAME AND TITLE OF SOMEONE FROM THE CAPT/RT