Establishing a Framework for the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs

Frances Wallace, MPH, Sandra F. Naoom, MSPH, Karen A. Blase, Ph.D., Dean L. Fixsen, Ph.D.
National Implementation Research Network, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida

RESULTS

As shown in Figure 1, in its simplest form implementation has five essential components (based on conceptions by Attkisson, 1984 and Mjollvik, Douglas, Paindaveine, Wheeler, & Zhou, 2000):  
1. a SOURCE (a "best example," often a composite of the original practice or program that was developed and evaluated and the best features of attempted replications of that practice or program),
2. a DESTINATION (the individual practitioner or the organization that adopts, houses, supports, and funds the installation and ongoing use of an innovation),
3. a COMMUNICATION LINK (an individual or group of individuals representing a program or practice who actively work to implement the prototype practice or program with fidelity and good effect at an implementation site), and
4. a FEEDBACK mechanism (a regular flow of reliable information about performance of individuals, teams, and organizations acted upon by relevant practitioners, managers, and purveyors),
5. that operate within a sphere of INFLUENCE (human and socio-political factors that impinge directly or indirectly on people, organizations, or systems).

As shown in Figure 2, more than 2500 citations related to implementation were retrieved and entered into an EndNote database; 1064 citations were then for full-text review and content analysis.

Content analysis was completed using a data extraction tool developed by the research team to glean pertinent information from each document reviewed.

The article summary covered eleven aspects: research domain, common theme(s)/pattern(s), topic, or purpose of the article, methods, results & findings, codes or stages of implementation as defined by the codebook, the extent to which an article looks at an isolated factor or takes a more integrated and multi-level approach, important next steps that may advance the field, selected quotations, selected references, and memos or notes made by the reviewer about the article.

Once the full text review was completed, 664 articles remained, one-third of which were identified as key to implementation. Article summaries were then sorted into content areas by searching for the codes and stages described in the codebook.

DISCUSSION

Implementation depends upon:
- Well-defined functional agents of change
- Well-defined methods of teaching others (knowledge, skills, and abilities)
- Short feedback loops regarding practitioner performance
- Well-defined methods for creating and managing organizational change

The Work of Implementation is:
- Changing the behavior of adult human service professionals
- Changing organizational structures, cultures, and climates
- Changing the thinking of system directors and policy makers

" We are faced with the paradox of non-evidence-based implementation of evidence-based programs."
-Drake, Gorman, and Torrey (2002)

RECOMMENDATIONS

More implementation research:
- Need evidence on cross-program, multi-site effectiveness of implementation strategies at the practitioner, organization, and systems level.
- Need evidence on methods to train trainers, coaches, evaluators, and administrators.
- Need evidence on methods to coach trainers, coaches, evaluators, and administrators.
- Need evidence on methods to evaluate trainers, coaches, evaluators, and administrators.
- Need evidence on organizational development and change.
- Need evidence on impact of systems interventions.
- Need evidence on sustainability.
- Need evidence on incorporating innovations.

We thank the following organizations for their support:
- W. T. Grant Foundation

For more information: Frances Wallace, MPH  Fwallace@fmhi.usf.edu, Sandra F. Naoom, MSPH  snaoom@fmhi.usf.edu; Karen A. Blase, PhD  kblase@fmhi.usf.edu; Dean L. Fixsen, PhD  dfixsen@fmhi.usf.edu
National Implementation Research Network http://nirn.fmhi.usf.edu

UNITED STATES FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Kaiser Family Foundation
National Partnership for Action to Build Capacity for Mental Health Services
National Clearinghouse for Child Welfare and Mental Health Services
National Indian Council on Child Welfare