Foundations in Implementation Practice

Competencies for Implementation Specialists

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Competencies for Implementation Practitioners
Implementation science includes **research** and **practice**

- **Implementation Research**: Seeks to understand the approaches that work best to translate research to the real world.

- **Implementation Practice**: Seeks to apply and adapt these approaches in different contexts settings to achieve outcomes.

(Ramaswamy, et al., 2019)
Implementation Practice

Fundamental goal of implementation science:
To integrate research and practice experience in ways that improve the outcomes of those being served.

Implementation Practice:
The application of evidence emerging from implementation research by people (individuals and teams) with the skills and competencies to tailor implementation frameworks, strategies and approaches to different contexts and settings to meet the unique needs of communities and people and to achieve improved and equitable outcomes.

Equitable implementation:
Occurs when strong equity components (including explicit attention to the culture, history, values, and needs of the community) are integrated into the principles and tools of implementation science to facilitate quality implementation of effective programs for a specific community or group of communities.

Implementation scientists must work with all communities and embrace the diverse experiences that both drive and shape implementation efforts. This requires competent implementation practice and an explicit commitment to equity.
Rationale

Current Discussions

• Call for a classification system that specifies the implementation actor and implementation target.
  (Leeman et al. 2017)

• Actors that have received minimal attention are individuals who provide a system of support for implementation.
  (Wandersman et al. 2018)

• These actors may be referred to as a technical assistance provider, implementation practitioner or specialist, consultant, or intermediary

• They work inside and outside of the delivery system.

There is increasing interest in understanding what these actors do, and in what ways the external support they provide relies on specific skills and competencies.

(Metz, Louison, Ward, and Burke, 2018)
• Call for advancement of individual and team-based skills to build and sustain opportunities for implementation science to achieve public health outcomes.

(Estabrooks et al. 2018)

• Increasing urgency to build implementation practice capacity.

• Many public health and implementation researchers lack formal training in implementation practice
  ▪ On-the-job training is needed to improve capacity building skills.

(Lewis et al. 2018)
Implementation Practice

• Developing competencies
  § Brings clarity to the role of an Implementation Specialist
  § Support reflection and guidance in daily work
  § Assess the quality of work
  § Communicate with partners to build understanding of the Implementation Specialist role
  § Develop workforce

• Framework neutral

• Working hypothesis about what is necessary to support implementation
Defining Implementation Practitioner Competencies

Methodology:
1. Preliminary literature review
2. Initial operationalization of principles and components
3. Content validation survey
4. Systematic scoping review
5. Focus groups
6. Vetting and usability testing
Philosophical Principles

The specific values and principles that guide Implementation Specialists’ day to day work

- Empathy
- Curiosity
- Commitment
- Methodical
- Transdisciplinary
### Implementation Specialist Competencies

#### Implementation Specialist Practice Profile: Constructs, Core Components and Core Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Creation</th>
<th>Ongoing Improvement</th>
<th>Sustaining Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Co-learning  
• Brokering  
• Address Power Differentials  
• Co-Design  
• Tailored Support | • Assess Need & Context  
• Apply and Integrate Implementation Science Approaches  
• Conduct Improvement Cycles | • Grow and Sustain Relationships  
• Build Capacity  
• Cultivate Leadership  
• Facilitation |
Co-Creation

• Support the active involvement of stakeholders in all stages of the production and implementation process resulting in service models, approaches, and practices that are contextualized and tailored to settings

• Essential Functions:
  • Co-learning
  • Brokering
  • Addressing power differentials,
  • Co-design
  • Tailored support

(Metz & Bartley, 2015; Vargo & Lusch, 2004)
Ongoing Improvement

• Support the use of quantitative and qualitative feedback at each stage of implementation accompanied with regular personal, team, and stakeholder debriefings to support improvement.

• Essential Functions:
  • Assessing need and context
  • Applying and integrating implementation science approaches
  • Conducting improvement cycles

(Damschroder, et al., 2009)
Sustaining Change

• Support the sustainability of interventions and approaches by developing a shared vision and mutual accountability, building on existing relationships, problem solving and resource sharing, and maintaining collaboration over time

• Essential Functions:
  • Grow and Sustain Relationships
  • Build Capacity
  • Cultivate Leadership
  • Facilitation

(Green et al., 2016)
(Chambers & Glasgow, 2014)
Content Validation Survey
Survey Methodology

• Purposive sample of up to 20 intermediary organisations that support implementation of evidence and innovations at scale to achieve outcomes

• Criteria for the sample included organisations who:
  ▪ Represent diverse contexts and cultures including intermediaries and non-governmental organisations located in North America, Europe, and Australia
  ▪ Support implementation of evidence and innovations in healthcare, social welfare and education settings
  ▪ Have formal connections to the fields of implementation science and practice through conference attendance, membership in local and/or national implementation networks or collaboratives
  ▪ Are providing implementation support on a range of interventions across a number of settings, at scale
  ▪ Are committed to building the competencies of their own team (to build the capacities of others)
Survey Respondents

• 34 respondents
  o 15 intermediary organisations
  o Representation from Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia

• Total Number of Qualitative Comments: 420
  o Total word count: 10,411
  o 275 comments in the form of a question (36), suggested revisions (217), and affirmations (44)
15 Intermediary Organisations

- Research in Practice
- SickKids Research Institute
- Centre for Evidence and Implementation
- Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health
- Centre for Effective Services
- Parenting Research Centre
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
- Evidence-Based and Intervention Support Center (EPIS)
- National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)
- Public Health Ontario
- The Implementation Group
- Colebrooke Centre
- Judge Baker’s Children Centre
- Norwegian Centre for Child Behavioral Development
- Netherlands Youth Institute
Survey Results – Overall

• Constructs and Core Components
  - 97 – 100% of respondents stated that definitions were either very or somewhat complete
  - 94 – 100% of respondents stated that definitions were either very or somewhat clear

• Philosophical Principles
  - 97 – 100% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the principles for implementation specialists
  - 94 – 100% of respondents stated that definitions were either very or somewhat clear
Implementation Specialist Role: Expectations and Limitations

“I can see the importance of good leadership, but to me it seems as a task that alone can "exterminate" the specialist... A very big responsibility...”

“The use of the term "with stakeholders" implies that specialists are integral to sustained relationships, however part of the goal of sustainability is for the intervention and system to thrive beyond and without the specialist...”

“This may be hard to do in practice - some power differentials are beyond the scope of an IS consultant to address. May need to tone down the statement a little to allow for real world imperfections.”

“Again, depending on who the implementation specialist is, and how they are retained/paid, this may need to be handed off at some point to someone within the organisation.”
Respondents agreed the definitions of constructs were complete and clear.

**Co-creation**
- Very: 23
- Somewhat: 11
- Not at all: 0

**Ongoing Improvement**
- Very: 24
- Somewhat: 9
- Not at all: 0

**Sustaining Change**
- Very: 23
- Somewhat: 11
- Not at all: 0
Respondents agreed the definitions of the philosophical principles were clear, and that the principles reflected the practice of Implementation Specialists.
Qualitative Themes - Strengths

1. The profile is helpful for a variety of functions:
   - Brings clarity to the role of an Implementation Specialist
     - Inclusive and current
     - Professionalizes the role
   - Reflection and guidance in daily work
   - Assessing the quality of work
   - Communication with partners to build understanding of the Implementation Specialist role
   - Workforce development

“This is a critical step in bringing clarity and consistency to the role of Implementer, particularly in the context in which I work (community-based child and youth mental health).”

“I also think that while this is a helpful document for IS's, it is just as helpful to share with community partners so they better understand the role of the IS. Something that I think is missing sometimes. I'm not sure my partners always completely understand my role. If we have a common description of the IS role that is used across the world (let's dream big!), then there will be better common understanding, not just of the IS role, but also what Implementation Science is trying to achieve.”

“This is a WONDERFUL tool for helping to cultivate, train, recruit and assess performance of Imp Specialists. A great contribution! I would find it very useful.”
Qualitative Themes - Strengths

2. The profile is framework neutral.
3. The profile is a working hypothesis about what is necessary to support implementation.
4. The profile has strong face validity among respondents.

“It is a thorough and comprehensive review of the many different aspects of the work.”

“In my opinion, a synthesis like this is something that I have missed and that it needed in the field. It is based on literature review which is a major strength and necessity.”
1. The Implementation Specialist’s role in applying an equity lens to the work is critical and should be strengthened.

2. Elevate and define stakeholders. This work is done in partnership with others, and not ‘to’ or ‘for’ them.

3. Include the Implementation Specialist’s role in building readiness in organizations and systems

4. Consider the limitations of an Implementation Specialist working in complex systems with time-bound constraints.

“Is the focus on the implementation specialist or is the focus on the 'support for impact'. This might be important for our setting. We might not want to use the word implementation specialist, because implementation does feel like a technical or linear process for a lot of people. Constructs like ongoing improvement, support to use evidence, knowledge-broker might be easier to use in our context.”
Discussion

How could you apply Implementation Specialist Competencies in your own work?

• How could the competencies be used to support workforce development?

• How could the competencies be used to reflect on and assess the quality of implementation practice?

• What additional support or resources would be needed to build the capacity needed for effective implementation practice?
BREAK
Co-Creation and Stakeholder Participation
Implementation is a Collaborative Act

Collaboration leads to:

- Knowledge and evidence that is more implementable
- Infrastructure that brings research evidence and implementation closer together
- Attention to local needs and increased relevance and impact of implementation activity
- Enhanced capacity and capability of implementation

Challenges to top down approaches to evidence use:

- Urgent challenges contribute to leaders moving too quickly
- Evidence and data are used to inform, not empower
- Lack of community engagement, trust and relationship building leads to lack of sustainability
- Need to emphasize capacity building for evidence selection, use and improvement
State of the Field – Scoping Review Results

Implementation frameworks in child, youth and family services – Results from a scoping review

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**ABSTRACT**

Background & objectives: Implementation frameworks are designed to articulate the actions and behaviors considered necessary for successful implementation of interventions, programs or services. Such frameworks have been increasingly used in social services for children, youth and families (which include family and parenting support, out-of-home care (foster care) placements, child protection, family violence, juvenile justice and community services). The purposes of this review were (a) to identify studies employing an implementation framework in this field; (b) map the literature to better understand these frameworks and the ways in which they are being applied; (c) to ascertain the ways in which implementation frameworks are being tested; and (d) to describe the current state of evidence surrounding their use in the field.

Method: For this scoping review, searches of the literature were conducted within PsycINFO, MEDLINE, CINAHL, ASSIA, Embase, Embase Classic, Social Work Abstracts, ERIC and Sociological Abstracts. Databases were searched for published, peer reviewed English language evaluation studies that applied and reported on this application - implementation frameworks in the child, youth and family service sector. No limits were placed on years. Any type of study design was eligible from single case studies to randomized controlled trials.

Results: Out of a total of 8541 publications located, thirty-three met the inclusion criteria. They included eight frameworks that have been applied in the sector. Few of the identified frameworks were based on rigorous research designs. Common strategies used within the frameworks included staging implementation, key influencers (e.g., competencies, organizational factors, leadership), stakeholder identification and engagement, and capacity measurement and building. Rarely were these approaches theoretically grounded or fully developed, and limited information was provided about their characteristics, development or interconnectivity. In short, research underpinning frameworks and their use has been meager, especially considering their proliferation in the field.

Conclusion: This review identifies a need to strengthen the conceptualization of core strategies that are integrated into implementation frameworks, including an articulation of their underlying logic. In the future, implementation science and practice may gain from moving away from comprehensive and complex implementation frameworks towards a more flexible, modular approach to implementation based on the application and combination of effective 'implementation core strategies'. Future research may also draw a more complete picture of the state of implementation frameworks by expanding search terms to also include other sectors and domains into systematic reviews.

(Albers et. al., 2017)
Broad range of stakeholders are involved in implementation process at frontline, organizational, community, and policy level.

- Variety of stakeholders involved in “real life” implementation
- Different levels of stakeholder involvement in implementation varied among frameworks
- Lack of specificity of who, how, and when to involve different stakeholders including service users
Would finding more active roles for stakeholders (including service beneficiaries) in implementation science lead to better outcomes?

How can co-creation strategies address the power dynamics inherent in the development and implementation of evidence and innovations?
IAP2 Spectrum

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower
## Defining Co-Creation

### Spectrum of Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Co-create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To provide information</td>
<td>To obtain feedback</td>
<td>To work with to develop alternatives</td>
<td>To partner in each aspect of decision-making</td>
<td>To empower to make decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Stakeholder Engagement Process
Involving stakeholders in the selection and evaluation of an intervention...

✓ Helps create awareness
✓ Generates buy-in
✓ Identifies and acknowledges any resistance
✓ Aids in the assessment of need, fit, feasibility, capacity, and readiness
Leaders can create readiness by...

✓ Consulting all stakeholders in the decision-making process
✓ Giving clear direction on the change
✓ Acknowledging and validating any concerns
Stakeholder Engagement Process

- Identify
- Analyze
- Map
- Plan
### Step One – Identify

**Key Questions**

- Who will contribute to this objective?
- Who will benefit from it?
- Who can influence it, directly or indirectly?

**Tools & Resources**

Stakeholder Analysis Tool (Column 1)

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Based on the work of NIRN and CES:
[https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation](https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation)
Step Two – Analyze

Key Questions

- How are they affected?
- What will we need from them?
- How important is the objective to them?
- How much influence do they have?

Tools & Resources

Stakeholder Analysis Tool (Columns 2-3)

Based on the work of NIRN and CES:
https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation
Step Three – Map

Key Questions

What is the appropriate level of engagement?

Tools & Resources

Levels of Engagement
Stakeholder Matrix
Stakeholder Analysis Tool (Columns 4-5)

Based on the work of NIRN and CES:
https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation
## Step Four – Plan

### Key Questions

- What are the barriers and enablers of engagement?
- What is the engagement plan?
- Who is responsible?

### Tools & Resources

- Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Based on the work of NIRN and CES:
[https://www.eффícⅧeⅧsvⅧeⅧrⅧviceⅧs.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation](https://www.eффícⅧeⅧsvⅧeⅧrⅧviceⅧs.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation)
## Stakeholder Analysis Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1 – Identify</th>
<th>Step 2 - Analyze</th>
<th>Step 3 – Map</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Stakeholder</td>
<td>Stake in Objective(s)</td>
<td>Input Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder</strong></td>
<td><strong>How does it affect them/their interests?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do we need from them for the objective(s) to be realized?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 1 – Identify
- **Name of Stakeholder**

### Step 2 - Analyze
- **Stake in Objective(s)**
- **Input Needed**

### Step 3 – Map
- **Importance of Objective(s)**
- **Influence over Objective(s)**
Levels of Engagement

**Inform**
Using pull communication (information is made available and onus is on stakeholder to find it) or push communication (information is actively broadcasted to stakeholders)

**Consult**
More limited part of the process – involved, but role is limited – stakeholders are asked questions and they respond

**Involve**
Two-way engagement with limits to their responsibility; they are part of the process.

**Collaborate**
Two-way engagement with joint learning, decision-making and actions; partner in the process

**Co-Creation**
Two-way engagement to empower specific stakeholder groups affected by the work and often not included in decision-making to make decisions and take action
Stakeholder Matrix

Importance of the objective to the stakeholder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform or Consult</td>
<td>Collaborate or Co-create</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Consult or Involve</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Influence of the stakeholder over the objective
## Stakeholder Engagement Plan

### Step 4 – Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Name</th>
<th>Level of Engagement</th>
<th>Potential Barriers to Engagement</th>
<th>Potential Enablers of Engagement</th>
<th>Engagement Plan</th>
<th>Responsibility for Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Prompts:</td>
<td>Prompts:</td>
<td>With the barriers and enablers in mind, identify engagement activities with associated timings and resources.</td>
<td>Name of individual(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>• What could they lose?</td>
<td>• How could they benefit?</td>
<td>Activity examples:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>• Lack of connections to them?</td>
<td>• Existing connections to them?</td>
<td>• Meetings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>• External influences?</td>
<td>• External influences?</td>
<td>• Phone calls</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-create</td>
<td>• Have they previously expressed resistance?</td>
<td>• Have they previously expressed interest?</td>
<td>• Press events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Are they likely to be resistant?</td>
<td>• Are they likely to be interested?</td>
<td>• Letters</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Is significant effort needed from them?</td>
<td>• Is minimal effort needed from them?</td>
<td>• Newsletters</td>
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<td>• Websites</td>
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<td>• Advertising</td>
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</table>

Prompts:
- What could they lose?
- Lack of connections to them?
- External influences?
- Have they previously expressed resistance?
- Are they likely to be resistant?
- Is significant effort needed from them?
Activity

1. Identify an implementation challenge you currently face in your work or have experienced in the past.

2. Individually, complete the Stakeholder Analysis plan.

3. Pair & Share with a neighbor. Pick one stakeholder group and discuss:
   1. How are you engaging or did you engage with this stakeholder
   2. What has worked well? What has been unsuccessful?
   3. Use the Stakeholder Matrix to reflect on how you might work with this stakeholder differently.
Ongoing Improvement and Assessing Need and Context
Ongoing improvement includes dedicating time for reflecting or debriefing to promote shared learning and improvements along the way.

Implementation specialists support the use of quantitative and qualitative feedback at each stage of implementation, through regular individual, team, and stakeholder debriefings to support improvement (Damschroder et al., 2009).
Dynamic frameworks for sustainability and scale emphasize that change exists in the use of interventions over time, the characteristics of practice settings, and the broader system that establishes the context for how care is delivered.

Evidence is grown in research settings.
Evidence is optimized in practice.
Interventions can be continually improved, boosting sustainment in practice, and can enable ongoing learning among developers, interventionists, researchers and patients.

(Chambers, et. al., 2014)
Continuous Learning

Double loop learning where cycles of inquiry lead to a transformation of underlying mental models (i.e., assumptions, values, beliefs) to facilitate meaningful and sustainable systems change.
Assessing Need and Context to Improve Change

• Systematic review evidence
• Barriers and facilitators to achieving contextual features that impact uptake and sustainability
• Implications for leaders

1. Organizational culture
2. Networks and communication
3. Leadership
4. Resources
5. Evaluation, monitoring, and feedback
6. Champions
Organizational Culture

**Facilitators**
- Openness to trialing new innovations
- Culture of learning
- Culture of innovation
- Positive staff attitudes and behaviors toward initiative

**Barriers**
- High level of autonomy in decision-making
What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?

- Assess staff attitudes and seek to increase motivation
- Develop implementation teams
- Develop team meeting agendas through a learning lens (e.g., use of data and information, shared analysis and problem solving)
Networks and Communication

**Facilitators**

- Materially based partnerships to secure needed resources for implementation
- Symbolically based interorganizational *collaboration* to promote shared understanding of problem and solution and bolster legitimacy
- Strong *teams* with an ability to communicate effectively and capacity to problem solve
- Establishment of systems and processes to more effectively manage information and *communication* about the change initiative

**Barriers**

- Poor multidisciplinary *teaming*
Barriers and Facilitators

Networks and Communication

- Develop implementation teams
- Identify purpose of partnerships (leverage resources, promote legitimacy, develop consensus)
- Develop and implement communication protocols with key stakeholders including service recipients such as families
- Use formal stakeholder engagement tool (Identify, Analyze, Map and Plan)

What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?
Leadership

**Facilitators**
- Transformational leaders who promote clear roles, effective teamwork, and a culture of learning
- Leaders who serve as providers of ‘new knowledge’
- Integration of new programs and processes into “business as usual” by senior leaders

**Barriers**
- Middle managers who feel unsupported by senior leaders
- Leadership lacking in authority
- Leadership unsupportive of change
- Leadership that neglects to hold staff accountable for the change
Leadership

What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?

- Articulate clear roles and responsibilities (e.g., revise job descriptions)
- Develop a business process that identifies when and how change initiative (EBP) will align with current ways of work
- Develop specific strategy for supporting middle managers
Resources

**Facilitators**

- **Financial resources** in the form of dedicated funding for the change initiative including staff time, training, coaching and monitoring, evaluation, and human resources
- **Staffing (workload)** that includes assigning dedicated staff to implementation activities
- Dedicated **time** for staff to implement the EBP
- **Education and training** that promotes interdisciplinary collaboration
- Continuously offered **education and training** opportunities (all training offered several times)

**Barriers**

- Insufficient **staffing** is a major implementation challenge for middle managers
- **Time** constraints including more urgent, competing demands for staff
- Unclear **educational materials** and reminders and inconsistent use of educational materials
Resources

What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?

- Be clear about how much and how many resources will be needed
- Dedicate specific resources (financial, human, and technological) to implementation
- Do not rely on existing resources; carve out what will be needed for staff time, etc.
Evaluation, Monitoring, and Feedback

**Facilitators**
- Appropriate feedback mechanisms that preserve engagement of staff implementing the EBP
- Active and engaged leaders who seek feedback
- Soliciting feedback early from middle managers to assuage concerns

**Barriers**
- Leaders who don’t seek feedback from middle managers and staff using the EBP
Evaluation, Monitoring, and Feedback

What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?

- Develop and implement feedback protocols, including processes for both gathering and using feedback
Champions

Facilitators

- Internal champions who are experts on the EBP
- Internal champions who are available for troubleshooting and for training other staff
- Champions who provide a sense of familiarity among colleagues and belief in the champion’s expertise

Barriers

- Lack of motivation by staff asked to use the EBP
Champions

What does this mean for leaders and implementation practitioners?

- Identify internal champions
- Communicate who champions are
- Allocate resources for champions
- Clarify the role of champions (e.g., who are champions supporting)
- Develop a communication plan for champions, implementation teams, and other key stakeholders
Activity

Turn to a neighbor and choose one construct to discuss:

• Organizational Culture
• Networks and Communication
• Leadership
• Resources
• Evaluation, Monitoring and Feedback
• Champions

Discuss:

1. How do the identified facilitators impact this contextual construct?
2. How do the identified barriers impact it?
3. What strategies have you used to address barriers and strengthen facilitators?
BREAK
Sustaining Change and Cultivating Leadership
Although a variety of factors create the conditions necessary for initial implementation, their presence or influence may diminish over time.
Interventions are classified as sustained when the core elements are maintained or delivered at a sufficient level of fidelity after initial implementation support has been withdrawn, and adequate capacity exists to continue maintaining these core elements.

Even when service systems make the investment in research evidence, sustaining the potential of research evidence over the long-term has continued to be a challenge (Ghate, 2015; Chambers, Glasgow, and Stange, 2013). For example, Saldana (2015) found that only one third of widely disseminated evidence-based models are sustained in the long-term.
Attention to collaboration is increasingly essential in publicly funded social service systems. Leaders must support:

- Diffusion of functions and responsibilities across multiple private agencies as the norm
- Effective collaboration and involvement of multiple stakeholders in order to limit the likelihood of chaotic operations, reduced accountability and lack of cohesion
Leading to Sustain Change

- Develop shared vision and mutual accountability
- Build on existing relationships
- Develop research-practice partnerships
- Facilitate problem-solving and resource sharing
- Maintain collaboration over time

(Green et al. 2016)
Leading for Sustainability

Working in complex systems requires the engagement and influence of multiple stakeholders.

This requires a different kind of leadership—moving from solo heroes to collaboration and teamwork.
Leaders and Implementation Success

Having at least one effective champion improves the likelihood of implementation process.

Having a collective network of leadership, with leaders at multiple levels of a system, is even better.

Requires leadership power to be distributed among various people with expertise, capability and motivation, rather than being concentrated at the top of a hierarchy.

(West et al. 2015)
Benefits of Effective Leadership

Creating a system where leaders flourish has many potential benefits:

✓ If leaders create positive, supportive environments for all staff, those staff are more likely to provide high quality and supportive services
✓ Where there is a culture of collective leadership, staff are more likely to intervene to solve problems and promote responsible, safe intervention
✓ Even if those directly implementing are not in high-level leadership positions themselves, they can seek to influence those who are, and be champions for the intervention themselves
Leaders can support implementation in different ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship-oriented Activities</th>
<th>Change-oriented Activities</th>
<th>Task-oriented Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate with staff about relevant issues</td>
<td>• Demonstrate commitment to change</td>
<td>• Conduct regular leadership meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide reminders of important tasks or events</td>
<td>• Reinforce vision and goals of change</td>
<td>• Clarify roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage inter-agency work and collaboration with specialists</td>
<td>• Recognize and understand difficulties with change</td>
<td>• Prepare and modify plans and documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize and reward efforts to change</td>
<td>• Advocate for change internally and externally</td>
<td>• Monitor performance and outcomes, and relay back where appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visibly and symbolically support change</td>
<td>• Lobby for additional resources internally and externally</td>
<td>• Procure resources, education, training and policies to reflect change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Individual reflection:
1. As an Implementation Specialist, how do I support and cultivate leaders?
2. What does leadership look like for me in my role?
3. What support do I need to grow my skills to support leaders?

Discussion
Closing
Where do we go from here?

Reflections:
1. What are our next steps as Implementation Practitioners?
2. How can we grow professionally?
3. How can we build our field and understanding of our roles?
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.