NIRN | NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH NETWORK

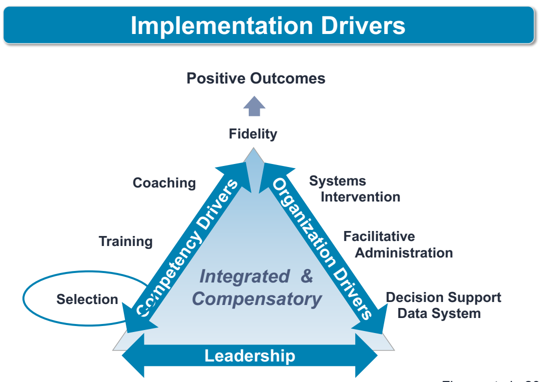
Drivers Tip Sheet: Selection

Implementation Infrastructure

Implementation drivers refer to the key infrastructure elements needed to support practice, organizational, and systems change necessary for successful implementation of a program or practice (Metz & Bartley, 2012). Implementation Drivers are in service to fidelity and ensure that the program or practice is embedded in the organization's operations and culture. The implementation drivers emerged on the basis of commonalities among successfully implemented programs and practices and are grouped into organization and competency drivers (Fixsen et al., 2005).

- **Organization drivers** (facilitative administration, systems intervention and decision-support data systems) create and sustain a hospitable environment in both the organization and the broader system that is needed for the program or practice to be implemented as intended and achieve expected outputs and outcomes.

- **Competency drivers** (selection, training, coaching and fidelity) develop and improve staff competencies to support the program or practice.



Fixsen et al., 2005

Selection

The Selection Driver refers to the use of a purposeful process for selection of staff with the required skills, abilities, and other specific prerequisite characteristics to implement the program or practice. Selection from an active implementation perspective is different from selection as usual.

- *Selection is viewed as a mutual process*. The organization decides whether or not to select an individual to join them *and* the process allows the applicant to understand the expectations related to the position so they may decide whether the position is a good fit for them.

- *Selection uses identification of essential staff characteristics, including those that are tough to teach, in order to set staff up for success*. Effective staffing requires the specification of required knowledge, skills and abilities that relate to program-specific needs. This means specifying skills and abilities that are pre-requisites for the work ahead and determining those that will be developed once the person is hired. The selection process provides the opportunity to select for specific traits or characteristics – ones that may be challenging to support through training and coaching. For example, characteristics such as approaching interactions with service beneficiaries with a strengths-based approach. Information gathered through the selection process can be fed forward to trainers and coaches to help them understand the strengths of the person and more quickly focus on areas that may need attention.

- *Selection sets clear expectations for new hires*. The selection process uses job postings and interviews to lay clear and specific expectations for the staff's new role. A clear expectation for the role must be a willingness to use and understanding of the value of coaching to assure fidelity.

Best Practices for Selection

1. **There is someone accountable for the recruitment and selection of relevant staff for the program or practice.**
   A specific person is responsible for coordinating the quality and timeliness of recruitment and selection processes for staff who will implement the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role in the selection process.

2. **Job descriptions are in place for relevant staff that will implement the program or practice.**
   Job descriptions are:
   - clear about expectations for the position;
   - aligned with the competencies required for the program or practice to be used competently.

3. **Individuals accountable for selection understand the skills and abilities needed for relevant staff.**
   Individuals accountable for selection:
   - know the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the staff position;
   - accurately assess applicant knowledge, skills, and abilities.

4. **Selection protocols are in place to assess competencies for relevant staff that carry out the program or practice.**
   Selection protocol includes all of the following:
   - an assessment of core skills needed for the position;
   - specific procedures (e.g., scenario, role play) for assessing individual ability to perform key skills;
   - specific procedures for assessing ability to receive and use feedback provided during the interview;
   - a documented process for review of adherence to the interview protocol;
   - record of the ratings of individuals' responses.

5. **Selection processes are regularly reviewed.**
   Selection processes are annually reviewed and revised as needed to improve the selection process. The annual review examines at least three of the following:
   - interview results (e.g. protocol adherence, applicant responses);
   - training data;
   - turnover data;
   - fidelity data;
   - exit interview results.

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Training

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- **Organization drivers** (facilitative administration, systems intervention and decision-support data systems) create and sustain a hospitable environment in both the organization and the broader system that is needed for the program or practice to be implemented as intended and achieve expected outputs and outcomes.
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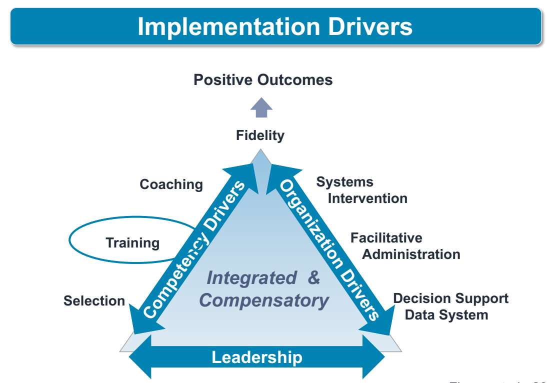

Fixsen et al., 2005

Training

The Training Driver refers to use of purposeful, skill-based, and adult-learning informed processes designed to support staff in acquiring the skills and information needed to support the program/practice. Training of staff provides knowledge related to the theory and underlying values of the program or practice, opportunities to practice new skills to meet fidelity criteria, and feedback in a safe and supportive training environment.

Best Practices for Training

1. **There is someone accountable for the training of relevant staff for the program or practice.**
   A specific person is responsible for coordinating quality and timeliness of training for staff supporting the the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role in training.

2. **Agency staff provide or secure skill-based training for relevant staff on the program or practice**.
   Training is:
   - required and provided before staff begin to use the program or practice;
   - provided by trainers who have a deep content knowledge of the new program or practice and who are effective trainers;
   - skill-based and includes opportunities for practice and feedback in a safe environment;
   - comprehensive, including practice-specific and complementary skills (e.g. equity, diversity and inclusion).

3. **Agency staff use training data for improvement.**
   Training assessment data are collected and provided to supervisors and coaches in a timely manner to improve staff competency and other implementation drivers.

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Coaching

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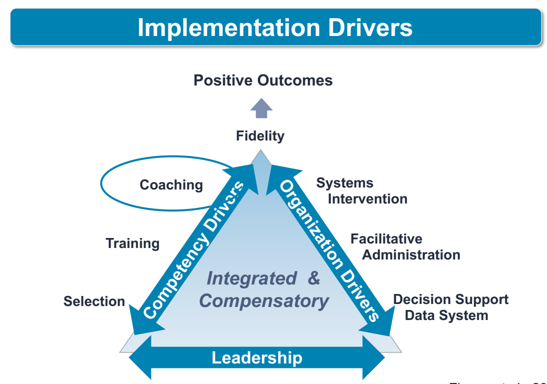

Fixsen et al., 2005

Coaching

Coaching is defined as regular, embedded professional development designed to help staff use the program or practice as intended. Coaching is a necessary component for promoting staff confidence and ensuring competence. Skillful coaching serves the following functions:

- *Ensures support for staff*: Staff often do their work alone or in silos and can feel isolated, particularly as they encounter challenges in their work. Coaching ensures that staff feel supported to do their work well and reduces isolation.

- *Ensures skills are used in practice*: New practices or ways of work can be challenging for staff to use. Without coaching, staff often fall back on 'business as usual,' using skills they are already comfortable with even if those skills are not aligned with the program or practice. Coaching ensures that the fragile, uncomfortable new skills are actually used in practice.

- *Ensures fidelity*: Coaching is essential to fidelity. Coaching allows supervisors and coaches to understand what staff are doing and saying, and support their practice so that their work is aligned with the program or practice as it was designed.

Best Practices for Coaching

1. **There is someone accountable for coaching of relevant staff for the program or practice.**
   A specific person is responsible for coordinating the quality and timeliness of coaching relevant staff supporting the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role in the coaching process.

2. **Coaching is provided to improve the competency of relevant staff forthe program or practice**.
   Coaching is provided at least monthly to relevant staff. Coaches' feedback to staff is based on direct observation and at least one other data source such as:
   - group or individual reflections;
   - product or document review;
   - interviews with key stakeholders.

3. **Agency staff use a coaching service delivery plan.**
   A written plan outlines coaching provided to relevant staff, including three of the following:
   - skill sets for being a coach;
   - frequency of coaching;
   - coaching methods;
   - feedback methods and timeframe;
   - communication protocols for coach and supervisor.

4. **Agency staff regularly assess coaching effectiveness.**
   Agency staff assess coaching effectiveness quarterly through the use of two or more data sources:
   - practitioner fidelity;
   - coach fidelity;
   - staff satisfaction with coaching surveys.

   Coaching effectiveness data are used to improve coaching and other implementation drivers.

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Fidelity

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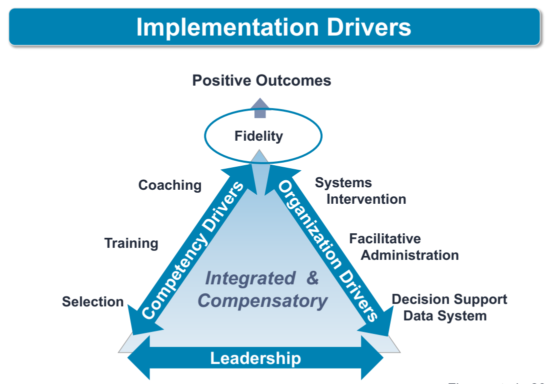

Fixsen et al., 2005

Fidelity: An Outcome of Effective Implementation

The primary function of the Fidelity Driver is measuring fidelity to the program or practice, or the extent to which delivery of the program or practice adheres to the protocol or program model originally developed. Examining fidelity is an opportunity to reinforce the work done by staff and build upon their strengths.

Fidelity is both a driver and an outcome of effective implementation. When implementation supports such as staff selection, training, coaching, and administrative procedures are installed and utilized as the program or practice requires, staff are more likely to achieve high performance and fidelity (Metz, et. al., 2014). When fidelity assessments are weak, this is an indication to agency leaders and supervisors that they should take a close look at how to improve the other implementation drivers.

Fidelity provides feedback to the implementing agency on the functioning of the Implementation Drivers, including:

- *Recruitment and Selection Practices*: How are our current practices ensuring we have capable staff? How should we change our recruitment and selection criteria and processes to ensure we are hiring the right people to do this work?
- *Training Programs*: How is our current training program preparing staff for their work? How should we change training programs to better prepare our staff?
- *Supervision and Coaching Systems*: How can we develop a supervision and coaching plan to support staff in achieving high performance? How do we need to adjust our system to provide better support?
- *Interpretation of outcome data*: How do our outcomes reflect the performance of staff? How do they inform the decisions we make to support staff?

Best Practices for Fidelity

1. **There is someone accountable for the fidelity assessments of relevant staff for the program or practice.**
   A specific person is responsible for coordinating fidelity assessment processes of relevant staff for the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role.

2. **The agency uses a fidelity assessment for the program or practice.**
   The agency consistently uses a fidelity assessment for program or practice.

3. **Agency staff follow a protocol for fidelity assessments.**
   Agency staff follow a written protocol that includes all of the following:
   - orientation process for relevant staff;
   - process for how fidelity data are used;
   - communication protocol for sharing fidelity data.

4. **Agency staff use fidelity assessment data to improve program and practice outcomes and implementation supports.**
   Agency staff review fidelity assessment data regularly and use assessment data to improve implementation drivers.

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Metz, A., Bartley, L., Ball, H., Wilson, D., Naoom, S., & Redmond, P. (2014). *Active Implementation Frameworks for Successful Service Delivery.* Research on Social Work Practice

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Decision Support Data System

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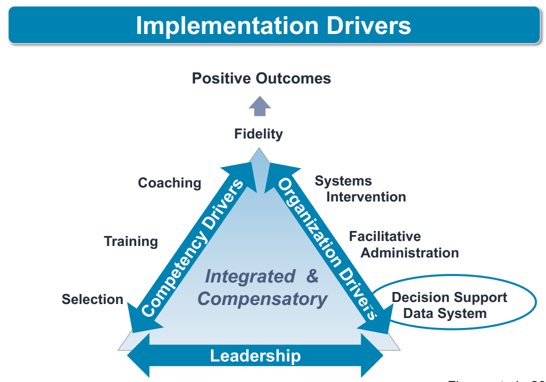

Fixsen et al., 2005

Decision Support Data System

The Decision Support Data System (DSDS) allows organizations to ensure implementation is occurring as intended, and the program or practice is being used as designed. Regular collection and use of data to make decisions assists management with understanding how implementation is progressing and supports staff by assessing the efficacy of their work and ensuring professional accountability.

The DSDS detects, prevents and addresses barriers to implementation. For example, review of data may reveal low utilization of coaching for staff. Upon detecting this, managers can work with coaches and staff to understand what is preventing coaches from working with staff and put in place strategies to overcome obstacles.

Additionally, the DSDS identifies what is working well within organizations. Data can be used to celebrate strengths and successes in the organization's use of the program or practice.

Best Practices for the Decision Support Data System

1. **There is someone accountable for the decision support data system.**
   A specific person is responsible for coordinating a data system that is used to support decision-making for the program or practice and its implementation. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role in overseeing the decision support data system.

2. **Staff have access to relevant data for making decisions for program improvement.**
   Relevant staff have access to and can analyze all of the following data for program improvement:
   - fidelity data;
   - outcome data;
   - programmatic data, including feedback from practitioners and program beneficiaries; and
   - financial data.

3. **Data are useful and usable.**
   Data collected meet all of the following criteria to be useful and usable**:**
   - collected in a standardized way by trained staff;
   - provide relevant information that can support improvement processes;
   - available when relevant staff are making decisions; and
   - are an important component of practice routines.

4. **Staff have a process for using data for decision-making.**
   Staff have a process for using data for decision-making that includes all of the following:
   - data are disaggregated, analyzed and summarized at least quarterly;
   - data summaries are communicated clearly in written reports to relevant staff;
   - action plans are developed and monitored regularly to improve implementation supports and outcomes; and
   - data summaries and action plans are shared with key stakeholders.

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Facilitative Administration

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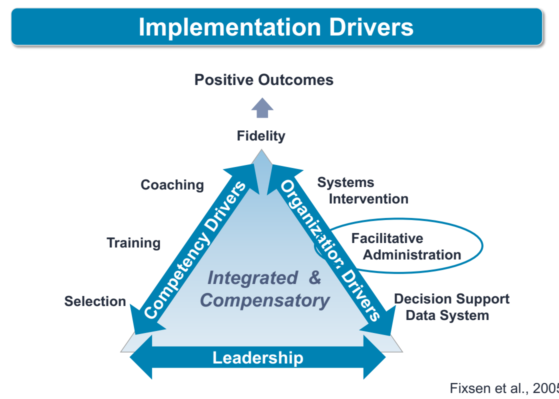

Facilitative Administration

Facilitative Administration refers to how an organization's leaders and managers develop and use strategies that facilitate and support use of the program or practice. The goal of facilitative administration is to hardwire policies and practices that support the program or practice into the organization, and to make staff and practitioners' work easier.

Typically, new practices do not fare well in existing organizational structures and systems. Too often, effective interventions are changed to fit the organizational environment of the implementing agency, as opposed to the implementing agency changing to support the effective interventions. Strong facilitative administration supports organizational change in order to ensure the program or practice is embedded within the institution.

Best Practices for Facilitative Administration

1. **Leadership secures resources to support the development of staff competency to deliver the program or practice.**
   Leaders and managers secure – either through accessing new funds or reallocating funds – necessary resources to select, train and coach relevant staff to use the program or practice. Staff competency development should be specific to roles; for example, training and coaching for Human Resources staff may look different than for staff who will provide training to others.

2. **Leadership supports the use of a consistent fidelity assessment for the program or practice.**
   Leaders and managers work with relevant staff to consistently use a fidelity assessment to understand whether the program or practice is being used as intended. Fidelity data are used to support continuous quality improvement and communicated with agency staff and stakeholders.

3. **Leadership invests in the resources necessary to use a data system that supports decision-making for the program or practice.**
   Leaders and managers invest in the sustained use of a data system that will enable staff to make decisions relevant to their intended outcomes.

4. **Leadership develops and/or refines internal policies or procedures that support the program or practice.**
   Leaders and managers proactively develop and/or revise policies and procedures that enable staff to implement the program or practice. Relevant policies and procedures may include human resources, performance management, and finance and contracting.

5. **Leadership makes changes in organization roles, functions, and structures as needed to accommodate the program or practie.**
   Leaders and managers proactively consider what changes are needed within their organization to use the program or practice consistently. This may include reorganizing roles or teams, creatively considering how responsibilities may change and/or shifting the format and content of meetings.

6. **Leadership engages in regular communication with all staff and service users regarding the program or practice.**
   Leadership and managers engage in regular communication and feedback loops with staff and consumers. This communication should be bi-directional: leadership can both share information with staff and consumers *and* receive and respond to feedback from staff and consumers.

7. **Leadership visibly promotes the importance of effectively implementing the program or practice.**
   Leadership is vocal in support of both the program/practice and the institutional changes necessary within the organization to support it. In addition to providing vocal support, leadership responds to questions when asked.

8. **Leadership identifies and problem solves challenges to implement the program or practice.**
   All implementation efforts encounter challenges. Leaders and managers maintain a consistent focus on identifying and addressing challenges as they occur.

9. **Leadership recognizes and appreciates staff contributions to implement the program or practice.**
   Finally, leaders and managers proactively and consistently identify and visibly recognize staff efforts to effectively implement the program or practice.

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Drivers Tip Sheet: Systems Intervention

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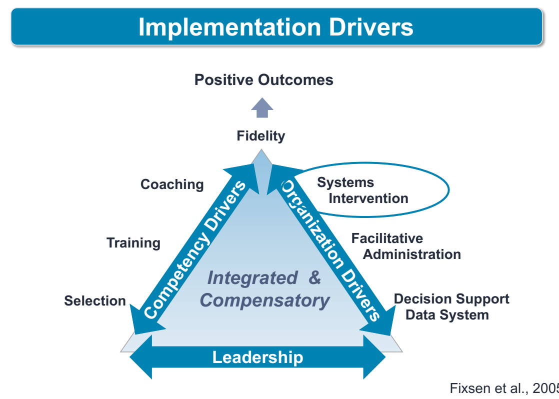

Systems Intervention

Systems Intervention refers to how an organization's leaders work with external partners to ensure availability of financial, organizational, collaborative and human resources required to support and sustain the program or practice. The goal of Systems Intervention is to identify and address barriers that are outside the organization's immediate locus of control. Systems intervention can also enhance and sustain policies, procedures and partnerships that facilitate the work.

Best Practices for Systems Intervention

1. **Leadership engages diverse and representative stakeholders (including service recipients) and staff in developing a shared understanding of the need for the program or practice.**
   Leadership works together with stakeholders and staff to develop a shared understanding of the need for the program or practice

2. **Leadership creates opportunities for diverse and representative stakeholders and staff to learn from each other while implementing the program or practice.**
   Leadership creates ongoing opportunities for shared learning while using the program or practice.

3. **Leadership regularly communicates with stakeholders regarding the program or practice.**
Leadership communicates with stakeholders and receives and responds to feedback from all stakeholders regarding the program or practice..

4. **Leadership creates opportunities for diverse and representative stakeholders (including service recipients) and staff to design solutions together to support implementation of the program or practice.**
Leadership creates ongoing opportunities with stakeholders to design together solutions to support use of the program or practice.

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