

# Implementation Stages Planning Tool



# Implementation Stages Planning Tool Instructions

Whether using something new, scaling an established program or practice or supporting an initiative comprised of multiple programs and practices, successful implementation takes intentional planning and time. Implementation is not an event but a process involving multiple decisions and actions. Change at the site, local, community or state level resulting in improved outcomes does not occur all at once. Although implementation can take longer than we hope or anticipate, its process and trajectory can be predicted and shaped using a stage-based approach.

Implementation happens in four discernible stages:

## **EXPLORATION**

Exploration involves an assessment of assets and needs of the focus population, fit of the program or practice with those needs and assets and feasibility of implementation.

## **INSTALLATION**

Installation involves building the infrastructure necessary to implement the program or practice, which includes building practitioner and organizational capacity.

## **INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

Initial implementation includes the initial efforts of staff to use the program or practice, with attention to using data for continuous improvement.

## **FULL IMPLEMENTATION**

Full implementation occurs as staff use the program or practice successfully, and population-level outcomes are achieved.

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It is important to note that implementation stages do not always end as the next begins; stages often overlap, and activities can cross stages. There also may be instances in which an organization is in different stages at the same time for different programs/practices. In addition, activities necessary for sustainability are embedded within each stage.

Identifying the current stage of implementation for a program, practice or initiative can help staff and stakeholders to better understand progress, ensure the use of appropriate implementation strategies for that stage, plan for data collection and usage, and communicate current implementation efforts.

The **Implementation Stages Planning Tool** supports identification of the current stage and implementation planning and improvement by providing

- a flow chart to determine the current stage of implementation,
- a list of appropriate stage-based activities, and
- an outline of expected stage-based outcomes.

## WHEN TO USE

The **Implementation Stages Planning Tool** can be used at any point in the implementation process. For example, the tool can be used when considering adopting or initiating a new program or practice to guide the selection process and, if needed, the implementation work. It can also be used during the implementation process to identify next steps or, should implementation falter, evaluate potentially missed activities. The tool will help your team and organization ensure implementation activities match the current stage of implementation and support moving into subsequent stages of implementation.

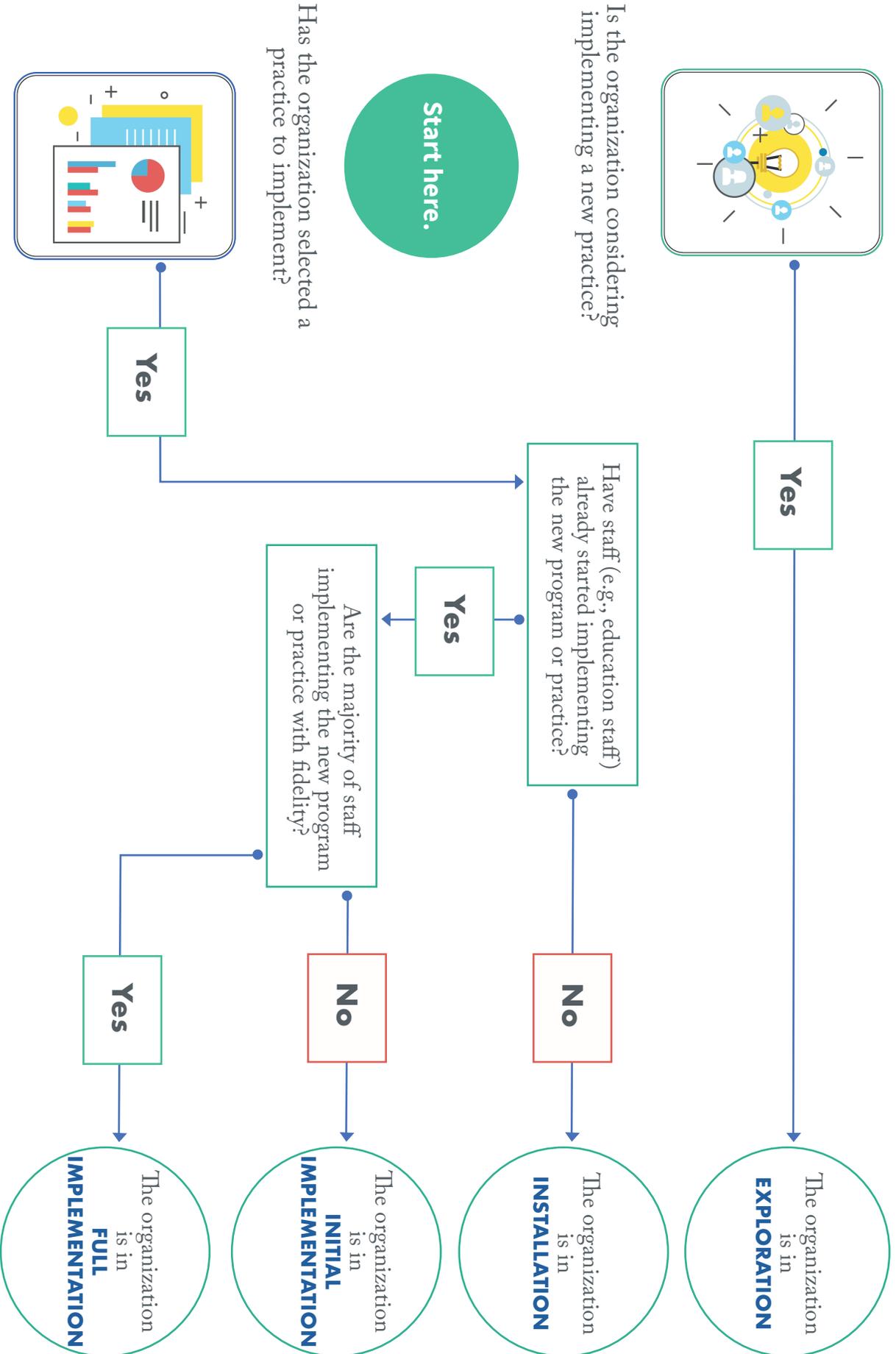
## HOW TO USE

As an implementation team or as an individual:

1. Identify the program or practice's implementation stage to be assessed.
2. Use the flow chart to determine the stage of implementation.
3. Go to the identified stage's activities and expected outcomes.
4. For each activity within that stage, check whether the activity is: In Continuous Improvement, In Progress, or Not Yet Initiated.
5. For each stage, check the outcomes accomplished.
6. Use the notes box to capture reflections, needed actions, etc.
7. Review previous and future stage activities and expected outcomes to identify improvements needed or planning needs.
8. Use the assessment results to build implementation plans, define a scope of work for an implementation team, and communicate progress with staff and stakeholders.

## IMPLEMENTATION STAGES FLOWCHART

Follow the Implementation Stages Flowchart to determine what stage of implementation a program or practice is in currently by following the arrows and answering simple yes or no questions.



## IMPLEMENTATION STAGES CHECKLIST

Assess your team's progress within important stage-based activities for your current stage of implementation. Once you have done so, review progress within previous or subsequent stages to identify improvements and/or planning needs. Tools and resources are linked within the different stage-based activities. Additional resources can be found at <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-hub>.

EXPLORATION STAGE ACTIVITIES	In Continuous Improvement	In Progress	Not Yet Initiated
	(Choose one)		
E1. Grow relationships with stakeholders with a variety of diverse perspectives and inclusive of voices not traditionally prioritized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E2. Develop an <a href="#">Implementation Team representative of the staff, organization and community that are the participants in and recipients of needed changes</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E3. Cultivate <a href="#">Sponsors/Champions that have the authority and cultural capital to promote change</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E4. Assess and create readiness for team, staff, and organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E5. Identify changes needed, existing assets, and <a href="#">potential root causes</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E6. Scan or assess what is currently in place to address the change needed ( <a href="#">Initiative Inventory</a> ).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E7. Identify and learn about other potential practices or programs to address the change needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E8. Assess fit and feasibility of options to address the change needed. Consider need, fit, evidence, usability, capacity, and supports ( <a href="#">Hexagon Tool</a> ).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E9. Using fit and feasibility assessment results, identify the option to implement, or choose to reassess need and potential options, or choose not to proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E10. Develop <a href="#">communication processes and messages</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E11. Determine what actions will be needed to optimize readiness and develop staff capacity, as well as organization and systems changes needed for the identified option.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Notes:

Assess your team's progress by checking the outcomes accomplished for your current stage of implementation. Once you have done so, review progress within previous or subsequent stages to identify improvements and/or planning needs.

## EXPLORATION STAGE OUTCOMES

- Formation of a representative implementation team to guide the work
- Demonstrated need for program/practice (i.e., deemed an appropriate change to support identified needs and assets)
- Assessment of fit and feasibility of implementing the program/practice
- Program/practice selected
- Demonstrated acceptability and buy-in from leaders, staff, and community partners (e.g., individuals, families, community members)



### Important Note About Exploration!

Skipping Exploration can be costly.

Take time to attend to Exploration activities.  
(Romney, Israel, & Zlatevski, 2014).

Notes:

## WHAT IS THE MARKER OF BEING IN INSTALLATION?

A site is in installation once they have made a decision to move forward with a selected program or practice.

INSTALLATION STAGE ACTIVITIES	In Continuous Improvement	In Progress	Not Yet Initiated
	(Choose one)		
I1. Ensure the <a href="#">practice/program</a> is clearly defined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I2. Revisit implementation team membership to ensure needed perspectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I3. Ensure the implementation team has the appropriate knowledge, skills, functions and authority to support infrastructure development and improvement of the program/practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I4. Convene implementation team regularly to use data (e.g., fidelity, program/process, outcome) to critically examine and improve implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I5. Develop plan for implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop selection protocols for practitioners.</li> <li>• Develop <a href="#">Training/Professional Learning Plans</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Develop coaching plans</a>.</li> <li>• Develop data systems (what data, how data will be collected, used, and shared).</li> <li>• Develop decision making criteria for success and scaling.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I6. Secure and develop infrastructure resources and supports needed for the program/ practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I7. Select practitioners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I8. Provide initial training for practitioners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I9. Review and refine needed policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I10. Develop and use feedback loops between practitioners, leadership, community partners, and stakeholders to ensure effective communication.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes:

## INSTALLATION STAGE OUTCOMES

- Implementation team is functioning [well](#)
- Majority of practitioners are trained in the program/practice
- Infrastructure is in place to support coaching to effectively develop competencies required to use the program/practice
- Fidelity measure and criteria are established for the program/practice
- Infrastructure is in place to collect, analyze, and use data (i.e., fidelity, program/process, outcome) to continuously improve use of the program or practice
- Staff have access to data infrastructure and are equipped to use it
- Policies and procedures to support use of the program/practice are in place and understood by practitioners, leaders, community partners, and stakeholders
- Bi-directional communication is taking place among stakeholders including community partners, individuals and families, practitioners, supervisors and leaders



### Important Note About Installation!

Planning to ensure needed resources and supports are available helps avoid frustration and false starts.

### Notes:

## WHAT IS THE MARKER OF BEING IN INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION?

A site is in initial implementation when implementers begin to deliver/use the program/practice.

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION STAGE ACTIVITIES	In Continuous Improvement	In Progress	Not Yet Initiated
	(Choose one)		
II1. Convene implementation team regularly to use data (e.g., outcome, fidelity, process) to critically examine and improve implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II2. Practitioners begin delivery/use of program/practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II3. Implement <a href="#">Coaching Supports</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II4. Continue Training/Professional Learning as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II5. Gather data and feedback through multiple sources including staff, practitioners, recipients, families, and stakeholders to monitor progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II6. Use a process to develop improvement strategies through analysis of data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II7. Refine implementation infrastructure (i.e., training, coaching, data systems, leadership supports and resources) based on data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II8. Use feedback loops with leadership, practitioners, staff, recipients, and stakeholders to communicate about progress, improvement strategies and success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II9. Use decision making criteria for expanding use of the practice/program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes:

## INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION STAGE OUTCOMES

- Majority of practitioners are using the program/practice
- Data are used regularly to inform decision-making and improve implementation of the program/practice
- Practitioners are beginning to achieve fidelity in their use of the program/practice
- Quality of implementation is improving across practitioners, however, variability in quality exists
- Evidence for feasibility of implementation, such as
  1. increase in use of the program/practice with fidelity;
  2. increase in staff confidence and skill in using the program/practice;
  3. increase in coaches'/supervisors' confidence in supporting staff; and
  4. meaningful engagement of recipients and families in the program/practice



### Important Note About Initial Implementation!

Initial Implementation is like the first pancake off the griddle.

It is not perfect, because the griddle (infrastructure) is being fine-tuned to be at the right temperature through use of trial and learning.

Notes:

## WHAT IS THE MARKER OF BEING IN FULL IMPLEMENTATION?

At least 50% or more of intended practitioners are using the program/practice with fidelity and outcomes are being achieved.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION STAGE ACTIVITIES	In Continuous Improvement	In Progress	Not Yet Initiated
	(Choose one)		
F1. Convene implementation team regularly to use data (e.g., fidelity, program/process, outcome) to critically examine and improve implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F2. Monitor and improve implementation supports and resources as needed to sustain implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F3. Continue to collect and use data for improvement (e.g., fidelity, program/process, outcome).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F4. Continue the training and coaching supports to maintain skillful use of the program or practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F5. Continue to use feedback loops with leadership, practitioners, staff, recipients and stakeholders to communicate about progress, improvement strategies and success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F6. Evaluate for expected outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes:

## FULL IMPLEMENTATION STAGE OUTCOMES

- Data are used regularly to inform decision-making and improve implementation of the program/practice
- Sustained use of the program/practice with all practitioners delivering with fidelity and ease
- Evidence that identified outcomes are improving through use of the program/practice



### Important Note About Full Implementation!

Keep going!

To ensure sustainability of outcomes, data collection (including fidelity), supports for implementers, and continuous improvement cycles are ongoing.

Notes: