How Implementation Science Can Better Advance Equity

Five Recommendations

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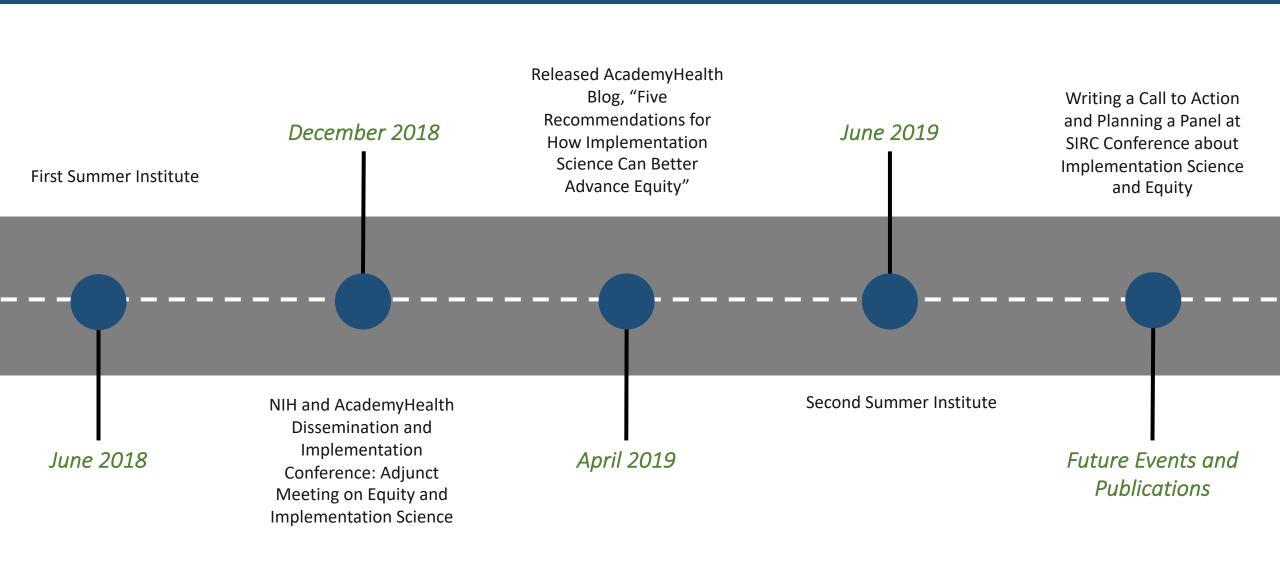
Partnering on Equity

The Annie E. Casey Foundation develops solutions to build a brighter future for children, families and communities. Equity is central to this mission.

The William T. Grant Foundation supports research to reduce inequality in youth outcomes. We strive to support a diverse group of researchers in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and seniority.

Building public system capacity to engage stakeholders and effectively implement evidence-based change is critical for achieving equitable outcomes.

First Summer Institute

December 2018

Released AcademyHealth Blog, "Five Recommendations for How Implementation Science Can Better Advance Equity"

June 2019

Writing a Call to Action and Planning a Panel at SIRC Conference about Implementation Science and Equity

June 2018

NIH and AcademyHealth Dissemination and Implementation Conference: Adjunct Meeting on Equity and Implementation Science

April 2019

Second Summer Institute

Future Events and Publications

Defining Equitable Implementation

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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.

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(DuMont, Metz, Woo, 2019)

Five Recommendations

Recommendation One

Shift Implementation Science's Terminology to Place Different Perspectives on Equal Footing

Implementation research methods should place organizations and community members on equal footing with researchers.

Recommendation Two

Employ Strategies and Build Structures that Elevate Equity Concerns

Facilitation and research-practice partnerships are two approaches for bringing equity concerns to the surface, and both can be used to address power dynamics in research-practice relationships.

Recommendation Three

Cultivate Relationships and Trust

Social relationships are at the heart of implementation. Implementation research studies need to build an understanding of how to cultivate trust; how historic relationships, power dynamics, trauma, and system processes inform those interactions; and what organizational policies and practices build relationships that facilitate equitable outcomes.

Recommendation Four

Shift Funding Incentives to Value Practice Expertise
and Questions

To move toward more equitable outcomes, institutions need to issue guidelines that reflect equal valuing of different kinds of expertise. Shifting funding incentives for implementation research recognizes and values implementation as inherently a collaborative act and will, therefore, produce knowledge and evidence that is more implementable.

Recommendation Five

Promote Exchanges Between Researchers and Community Members

Too often, research and implementation are done to practice and for a community without adequate respect to either. Implementation researchers' immersion is a key strategy to enhance an understanding of both the context and potential equity issues as part of conducting implementation research.

Discussion

These five action areas represent a call to action for the implementation science community to expand its role in order to contribute to equitable outcomes.

How can each of us in our role contribute to this call to action?

What is our sphere of influence?