

## MAKING IT HAPPEN: IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Implementing a new initiative, modifying a policy or practice, or making a culture shift within any organization can be inherently difficult. Some people will dig into the status quo, while others may walk away with information, but very little motivation for changing behavior. So, how can state/local systems achieve a systems level change, transform partnerships and reach a new normal?

Success is more than an effort to replicate another model. Intentional goals, actions, and roles of partners will differ among regions, yet all key drivers of change are needed to make a significant impact. Implementation Science is the study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations and change processes; *in short – making it happen*. The National Implementation Research Network has studied evidenced-based practices in the implementation of projects, initiatives, and change efforts. Findings show that there are specific drivers of change and stages of progression that significantly increase the successful implementation of a program or innovation.

The evidence-based factors that improve and sustain an organization's systems change efforts involve three categories of drivers: **Competency Drivers, Organizational Drivers, and Leadership Drivers**. All are equally important for a systems level shift to occur. A weakness in one driver can be mitigated by strengths in others; however, if one driver is lacking, it will be difficult for change to happen. Consider how your region applies implementation drivers to incite change and positively impact accessibility and employment of people with disabilities.

### PURPOSEFUL vs. HOPEFUL

Implementation Science indicates that a purpose-driven mission for change is a **'make it happen'** approach. This is compared to an information-only campaign or a **'let it happen approach,'** as well as a **'hope it happens approach'** in which participants have help to make the change through training. Both lack purpose and yield very little impact. Consider the purpose-driven missions below for state workforce systems.

**State Purpose:** To leverage the longstanding partnership between the State Equal Opportunity Officer and State Vocational Rehabilitation Director to collaboratively implement Section 188 and a statewide AJC Certification process across all WIOA core partners.

**State Purpose:** To build a diverse, action-oriented taskforce with representatives from workforce and cross-disability partners to collaboratively improve policy and practices that impact accessibility to employment services for individuals with disabilities.

**State Purpose:** To improve the AJC Certification process by motivating AJCs to more strategically evaluate physical and programmatic accessibility, while demonstrating areas of priority and progress through continuous improvement.

### ASSEMBLING A 'GO-TEAM'

Part of the *make it happen* approach is assembling the right 'go-team.' Each go-team consists of people who have a range of skills and expertise from within and outside of a system, and who may represent both leadership and program perspectives. Organizational dynamics will need to be assessed to consider the culture of the system(s) represented and dynamics between partners. Go-teams explore, define, and clarify goals to ensure understanding and agreement of the overall purpose and innovation to be implemented. Most importantly, each go-team collectively specifies the change they want to generate.



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## DRIVERS OF INNOVATION & CHANGE

Within each of the major drivers, there are factors that improve and sustain an organization's change efforts.

**Competency Drivers** involve strategies that improve and sustain an intervention to produce desired results. Factors include the selection of who will drive the implementation, training approaches, and coaching methods that actively support the change in behavior and system.

- *Selection of practitioners, organization staff, staff for implementation team*
- *Training approaches: Lecture/discussion, demonstration of skills, abilities and practices, behavioral rehearsal to practice the skills, feedback on the practice*
- *Coaching (TA) that is work-based, opportunistic, readily available, and reflective*

**Organization (System) Drivers** are mechanisms to create and sustain a hospitable organizational and system environment for effective services. Factors include using data to determine action, applying technology in a deliberate way that adds value, vigorous attention to reduce barriers, and alignment across all levels of an organization.

- *Decisions rely on the availability of reliable data*
- *Administrative support is proactive, vigorous, and enthusiastic to reduce implementation barriers*
- *Leadership and responsibility for systems intervention is clearly communicated at each level and within overall organization*

**Leadership Drivers** focus on providing the right leadership strategies for the types of challenges that arise from the change management process needed to make decisions, provide guidance, and support organizational functioning. Factors include styles of leadership.

- *Leadership style of "responders" are reactive, while "managers" emphasize policies and procedures*
- *Technical leaders engage, are quick to resolve issues, and able to organize groups to solve problems*
- *Adaptive leaders are responsive in complex situations where there is less certainty about what needs to be done and how to do it*

## Consider Implementation Science: Implementation Drivers



### Implementation Science

Blase, K., & Fixsen, D. (2018, October 10). *Implementation Stages*. Retrieved from National Implementation Research Network: <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-stages>

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