Program Implementation: Making It More Successful

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Learning Objectives

• Summarize the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) findings on implementation.

• List eight drivers of successful implementation.

• Assess your organization’s current status of implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
What is Implementation Science?

- **Implementation Science**: The study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice.

- **Implementation**: A specified set of activities designed to put into practice an innovative activity or program of known dimensions.
End Goal

- Effective Innovations
- Effective Implementation
- Hospitable Environment

= Socially Significant Outcomes
Information and Change

Letting it happen

Helping it happen

Making it happen

Access to information alone has little impact on practitioner performance.
Step 1: Select and Define the Program

1. Clear description of the program
2. Clear description of the essential practice elements
3. Operational definitions of the essential practice elements
4. A practical assessment of practitioner performance
Step 2: Assemble the Go-Team

Implementation Team members have special expertise in the program being implemented and Implementation Science.

- **Implementation Drivers**
  - Manage implementation drivers during the process.

- **Shepherd the Organization**
  - Shepherd the organization during the ups and downs of implementation.

- **Intended Outcomes**
  - When done correctly, implementation of the innovation will lead to the intended client outcomes.
Multilevel Influences on Success

Core Implementation Components: Training, Coaching, Performance Measurement

Organizational Components: Selection, Program Evaluation, Administration, Systems Intervention

Influence Factors: Social, Economic, Political
Step 3: Assess and Strengthen Implementation Drivers

Weaknesses in one driver can be mitigated by strengths in other drivers.
Step 3: Assess and Strengthen Competency Drivers

Selection of …

- Practitioners
- Organization staff
- Staff for Implementation Teams
Step 3:
Assess and Strengthen Competency Drivers (continued)

Training approaches

- Lecture and discussion
- Demonstration
- Behavioral rehearsal
- Feedback
Main roles of a coach …
- Supervision
- Teaching
- Assessment
- Emotional support

Newly-learned behavior is …
- Raw
- Fragile
- Incomplete
Step 3: Assess and Strengthen Performance Assessment

Examples of measures of contributing factors:
- Completion of training
- Acceptable practitioner-coach ratio
- Acceptable caseload
- Availability of colleagues with special skills
- Availability of certain resources
Decisions rely on the availability of reliable data to …

- Assess process
- Support decision-making
- Assure continuing implementation
Creating a hospitable environment involves policy, procedures, budget allocations and aligning all staff with expected client outcomes.
Step 3: Assess and Strengthen Organization Drivers (cont.)

- Alignment
- Focus
- Champions
- Vigilance
- Change
Step 3: Assess and Strengthen Leadership Drivers

Technical Leaders are …
- Engaged
- Quick to resolve issues
- 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.
Step 4: Assess and Review Implementation Stages

- Determine your stage(s) of implementation. (Do all agree?)
- Match activities to each stage.
- Know what to expect.
- Attend to each stage.
Step 4: Implementation Stages (1 of 4)

1. Assess alignment and potential impact on client needs, and on resources at the individual, agency, and community levels.

2. Assess potential facilitators and barriers to implementation – the Drivers.

3. Develop criteria/benchmarks for go/no-go decision-making at each stage.

4. Develop an implementation plan and team with clear tasks and timelines.
Step 4: Implementation Stages (2 of 4)

- Use resources to prepare to do things differently.
- Install the structural supports (foundation, infrastructure) that are necessary for the new way of doing things.
Step 4: Implementation Stages (3 of 4)

- Rapid-cycle problem-solving teams during and after launch
- Track benchmark data (e.g., Are we engaging in the program as intended?)
- Strong leadership
Step 4: Implementation Stages (4 of 4)

- New learning is integrated into practices, policies and procedures.
- New program/innovation is “accepted practice” and “business as usual.”
- Culture shift to continuous review to ensure targeted client outcomes.
Step 4: Assess and Review Implementation Stages

• What is your organization’s overall stage?
• What drivers can help at this stage and the next?
• Are there people or parts of the organization that are in different stages?
Sustainability

- Planned at beginning
- Flexibility
- Long-term survival
- Scan horizon
Successful Implementation

• How well did we strengthen the Implementation Drivers before starting implementation?

• How well did we follow the required set of core activities at each stage?

• Did we achieve the expected client outcomes within our acceptable range? If not what we expected, how much was due to implementation problems and how much was due to incorrect problem identification?
Resources and Thank You!

National Implementation Research Network
http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resource-search

Active Implementation Hub (education focus, but parallels to VR)
http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/

Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC)
http://www.wintac.org