What does it take? For effective implementation to get to outcomes

Getting to outcomes is not as simple as selecting an effective practice model or strategy (“the WHAT”). The process of supporting use of any practice model or strategy (“HOW”) is just as, if not more important, for creating supportive systems and improving outcomes.

Effective Implementation

Effective implementation is about supporting both people and organizations.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^4\) It incorporates community partnering and adaptive leadership and management strategies to ensure that practitioners are well supported to deliver the practice model as intended, systems partners work in concert to eliminate barriers, and both use and impact of the practice model are optimized over time using data. The most promising approaches to implementation address known challenges. \(^3\)\(^,\)\(^5\)\(^-\)\(^9\) In particular, four common features\(^10\) are key to developing local implementation capacity and effective performance to support use of the practice model for getting to improved outcomes:

A. Linked, local leadership and implementation teams (Organizational Readiness Building). People at multiple levels of an organization are specifically resourced and tasked to come together and attend to the day-to-day and ongoing leadership and management activities necessary for effective implementation. Teams of executive leaders, staff, and other partners have functional roles and dedicated, on-the-job resources for implementation. Organizational and system practices facilitate progress and problem-solve implementation challenges. \(^5\)\(^,\)\(^11\)\(^-\)\(^16\) Tool and resources focus on assessing, monitoring, and improving organizational culture, climate, functional structures, and processes to support implementing change.

B. Engagement, Relationships, and Partnership. Internal stakeholders, community, tribal members, and system partners are actively involved in co-creating implementation capacity to support getting the practice model into real-world practice. Partners play active roles in listening to identify strengths/barriers, establishing culturally relevant supports and services, detecting practice changes, addressing system barriers, and communication and feedback for improvement. \(^17\)\(^-\)\(^19\) Tool and resources focus on defining and formalizing partnering roles and the adaptive and other leadership behaviors necessary to support them.

C. Workforce and Professional Development. Ongoing professional development plans and practices (often referred to as training and coaching) for the practice model are in place and build on adult learning best practices. This capacity builds the confidence and skills of staff at all levels – those delivering the practice model and the supervisors, managers, and other leadership who supporting. This focus on continuing support to deliver the innovation as intended is another key challenge identified in research and practice. \(^20\)\(^-\)\(^22\) Tool and resources focus on assessing diverse staff needs, supporting the coaching role of supervisors, and strengthening staff retention.
Strengthening Systems for Social Impact

D. Quality, Outcome, and System Monitoring for Improvement. Information and data about implementation, delivery of the practice model, and outcomes are gathered, shared, reviewed, and used by the right people at the right time in order to address problems and improve practices. Organizational and system practices support this ongoing quality improvement work. 

Tools and resources focus on identifying “What do we want to know? How will we know it?” and using data to understand and reinforce what is going well and to address challenges.

References