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**STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION – From Beginning to End**

**STEP ONE: EXPLORATION**

During this stage, people have spent some time already looking at other interventions, programs, etc. that might satisfy their organizational needs. A set of draft goals and objectives may have been developed. Organizers may be thinking about how to get buy in from staff and others doing work in the same area. Organizers may have already started to think about what an action plan might look like. The initiative, program, or project has not been implemented yet. Here are some ideas of what people may be doing during this stage:

1. Explore and investigate what is already been done and is available in the area of father engagement/father involvement. Investigation might include:
   1. Doing an Internet search
   2. Asking someone from another county
   3. Attend an educational forum or conference to learn about what others are doing
2. Conduct an organizational assessment about what your organization may need and how it might proceed with father engagement/father involvement
   1. This initiative readiness assessment helps an organization to know more about if they are actually ready to implement a particular program or project.
   2. The University of Wisconsin, Extension provides a detailed example of a Nonprofit Organizational Assessment tool that you can use to guide your planning for your father engagement/father involvement efforts. Their website is: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/nonprofits/management/documents/assessment.pdf>
3. Think about the feasibility of implementing father engagement strategies
   1. Who will you target in the organization that will be helpful and an asset?
   2. Are there other organizations, community partners, etc. who you can partner with to pool resources?
   3. What does the organization finances and budgeting look like?
   4. What outcomes do you hope to impact?
   5. If successful, how will the new interventions be sustained over time?
4. Think about the mission and vision of your project
5. Think about which organizational supports that will be needed and how they might be utilized for your efforts

**CASE EXAMPLE:**

A contingency of staff development representatives, regional training academy staff and county staff visited another county in their region who had already implemented several father engagement projects, including a resource center and a support group for fathers. The resource center was a place where fathers could come to get information about services in the county, talk to staff about issues they were presented with, use the computer for job searchers, participate in job training, etc. It’s almost like a one stop shop for fathers and children. The purpose of the visit was to gather information and bring back information to their respective agencies for consideration of adopting the same or similar strategies for engaging fathers.

**STEP TWO: INSTALLATION**

During this stage, the initiative, program, or project has been selected. Implementers are starting to strategically think about the resources necessary for implementation and an action plan to implementation the new practice. Here are some ideas of what people may be doing during this stage:

1. Select a leadership/facilitative team – It might be helpful to recruit someone who is already familiar with the new practice or who the agency thinks will be a good cheerleader to spearhead the new efforts.
2. Action plan – Management may find it prudent to develop an action plan that specifically details what the organization plans to accomplish, who will do what and how. Here is an example of how to write an [action plan](http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/FatherTk/Action_Plan.docx).

**CASE EXAMPLE:**

Several staff from San Francisco County were selected to serve on a committee to participate in improving father engagement in the county. A committee chair was selected by the management to lead the efforts in the county. The committee met periodically to plan for the provision of services. The committee ultimately selected the strategies that the county would pursue to engage fathers. The committee members were given tasks and activities to move their initiative forward.

**STEP THREE: INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

People charged with implementing the new innovation are actually starting to do the new ways of work. Everything is still so fragile during this period because staff may have to change the way they have traditionally been working, bugs are still being worked out with the action plan, and management may not have all the answers to all the questions. Here are some ideas of what people may be doing during this stage:

1. Communication and engagement – Management and/or the leadership will be attempting to continue to gain buy-in from the staff who will actually be implementing the project. They may be speaking to staff in various venues talking about the new practice. Supervisors may be talking about the new practice in unit meetings and during supervision.
2. Training – Some of all of the staff may be asked or required to attend informational and educative trainings about the new practice to learn more about what is expected of them.
3. A piece of part of the new practice is actually implemented in a smaller section of the organization.

**CASE EXAMPLE:**

A team of workers at varying levels in Napa County participate in their father engagement efforts. One way that Napa County attempted to communicate to staff that they would be endeavoring in the area of father engagement is that they held a county-wide training with a content expert. His presentation focused on the importance of fatherhood, fathers’ impact in the lives of their children and the intersection of fathering and child welfare. As an outcome of this training, staff were asked to give their ideas and think about what the County could do (from a staff perspective) to help include and engage fathers in child welfare.

**STEP FOUR: FULL IMPLEMENTATION**

Half or more of the people charged with implementation are actually doing the new ways of work with varying levels of fidelity, seeking to do the practice as intended. Organizations have provided support and resources for implementation and systems are efficient and effective.

1. Graduated implementation – Organizations may start to implement the new practice in more units until the practice is implemented in most areas in the organization.
2. Evaluation/Assessment – An evaluator or team continually assesses that the practice is implemented as intended, that the outcomes that were determined in the beginning are going in the direction as intended, and that staff is receiving the supports that it needs to continue working.
3. Revisions – After evaluation, the practice, program or intervention may need revisions and refinement to be more effective.

NOTE: the process of evaluation and revisions could occur several times until the bugs are all work through with the practice, program or intervention.

**CASE EXAMPLE:**

Some counties have piloted the Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) project which is an informational and/or therapeutic couples training session that involves helping both mothers and fathers learn how to interact with each other for the healthy relationship with their children. The project is facilitated by content experts and initial reports from the project show that it has been effective in helping parents see the importance of both parents as involved, effective in helping parents communicate more effectively, and helpful in that fathers recognize that they are vitally important to their children.

**STEP FIVE: SUSTAINABILITY**

Organizations and systems have developed and maintained ongoing quality assurance systems and are willing to stay attuned to changes, anticipate new changes and adapt to changes once the changes occur in the organization

1. Staff - A stable and reliable staff will have settled in to lead the new initiative. They will be very familiar with the program and what is expected of them. Other staff may look to them as the experts and direct questions and comments their way.
2. Resources – Staff have the available resources that they need to continue their work in this new area.
3. Organizational and cultural climate - The organization has been steadfastly supportive by providing a climate in which the new way to work is achievable and caseloads are realistic
4. Money – The organization may have secured enough financial support to sustain the new practice for some time. The organization may be researching other ways to obtain additional funding. The organization may be collaborating with others to pool budgets to sustain the practice.

**CASE EXAMPLE:**

Fresno County appears to be the county that has had the most long standing father engagement programs. For example, they have an “All Dads Matter” facilitated by father and for fathers. Any father from the county is welcome to participate in the groups. The fathers determine the content of the groups. Fresno also has a Boot Camp for Dads where new dads are mentored by veteran dads. The new dads are taught skills like changing diapers, how to hold and nurture their babies, how to talk to and discipline their children, etc.