PII-TTAP
PERMANENCY INNOVATIONS INITIATIVE
Training & Technical Assistance Project

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND ASSESSING AN INNOVATION

Volume 1: Teaming and Communication Linkages

Children's Bureau

Acknowledgements

To support the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) Grantees in better meeting the needs of children and families, the PII Training and Technical Assistance Project (PII-TTAP) team created the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach (the Approach). The Approach helps organizations develop new innovations or adapt existing ones and effectively implement them to ultimately improve outcomes for children and families. The PII-TTAP team created this Guide which operationalizes the Approach and aids in the transfer of learning by providing detailed information, tools, and instructions for innovation development and adaptation, data and fidelity monitoring, and sustainability planning within child welfare systems. It is based on lessons learned working with the tools, guidance, and resources provided to PII Grantees. This Guide was created by:

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[1] NIRN was actively involved in PII-TTAP from October 2010 through June 2015.

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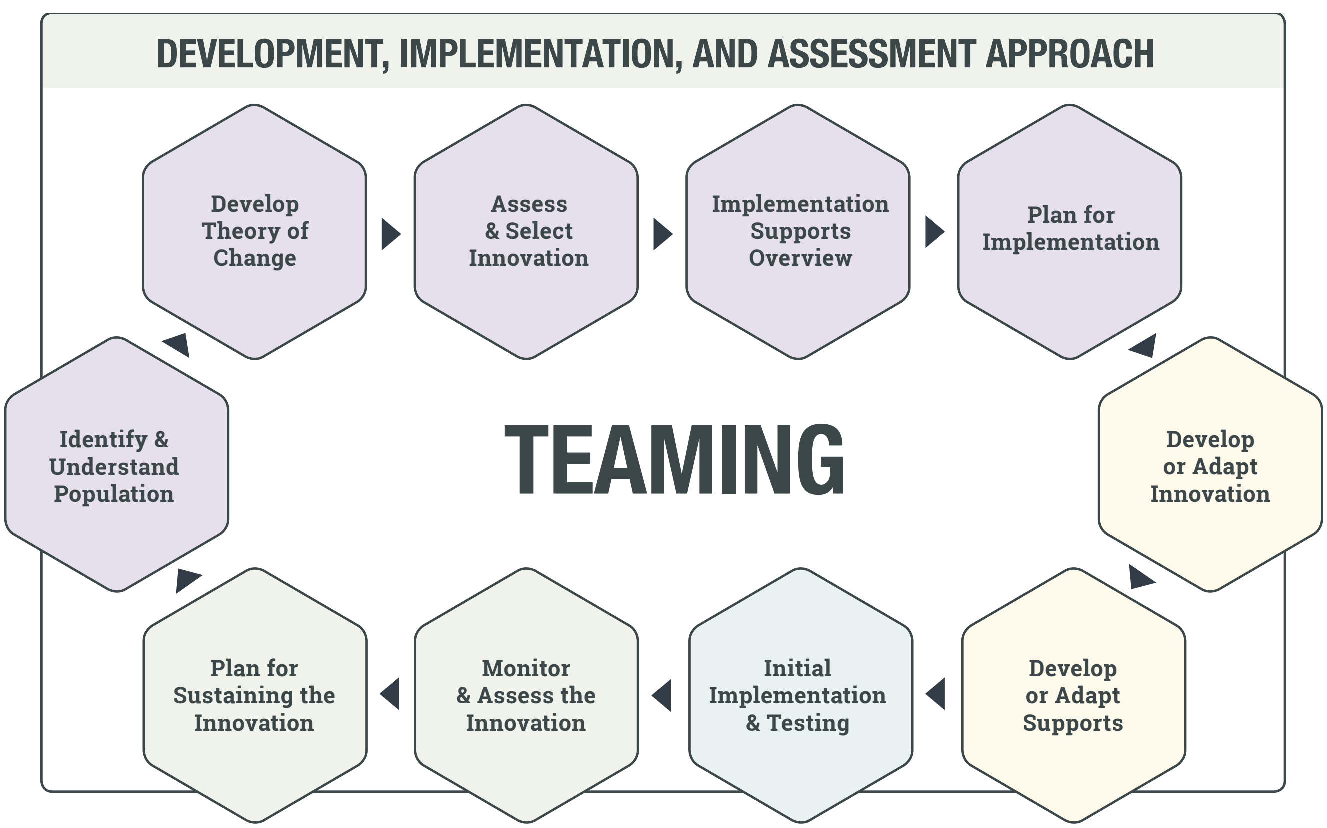
Teaming and Communication Linkages

The preliminary activities included in this volume of the *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation* (the Guide) precede the exploration stage of implementation and should be applied throughout the implementation process. They include assembling effective teams critical to implementation success; developing a plan for team interaction; writing a charter that defines the purpose, mission, roles, responsibilities, and timelines for the implementation team; and developing a strategy to ensure that teams communicate with maximum efficiency. The tools and guidance in this volume should be used at the beginning of an initiative as the core team and the teaming structure are being built. The core team can refer to this volume whenever they need to re-assess the teaming structure.

Getting Started With Teaming and Communication Linkages

The questions included in the Introduction section of the Guide help determine which implementation stage an innovation is in and which volume of the Guide addresses that stage. If an implementation team is starting with the Teaming and Communication Linkages section, the questions below can help determine which chapter of this section is the most appropriate starting place. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the corresponding chapter in parentheses is the appropriate place to begin. This volume can also be used as a reference throughout the life of the initiative.



- Do you have a team in place that is responsible for your initiative? (Chapter 1)
- Is there a team in place that is responsible for ensuring the innovation is operationalized and the implementation supports are in place? (Chapter 1)
- Are teams clear about their individual functions, their decision-making authority, and how they should interact with other teams supporting the initiative? (Chapter 2)
- Are there clearly stated and active communication links between the teams supporting your initiative? (Chapter 3)
- Are organizational and systems leaders and stakeholders engaged in your initiative? (Chapter 3)

Teaming and Communication Linkages

Constructive and effective teaming is critical for implementation success. The three chapters in this section overview the types of teams necessary to successfully implement an innovation and how they may interact; how to assemble teams and write a charter that defines the purpose, mission, roles, responsibilities, and timelines for the implementation team; and how to develop a strategy to ensure that the teams communicate with maximum efficiency. This section includes a quiz to test understanding of the material. It also includes the Teaming Structure Assessment Tool and the Team Charter Tool to help develop and assess teaming structure.

Overview of Implementation Teams

Overview

The Teaming and Communication Linkages chapters are integral to the activities discussed in Sections 1 through 10 of the Guide. Chapter 1 discusses the importance of creating functional teams for implementation success, and the role of communication strategies in helping those teams interact effectively. If an agency or organization doesn't have a small group of dedicated people in place who understand their responsibilities and how to communicate the processes of implementing an innovation in child welfare, it is especially important to review this chapter, which provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of implementation teams and discusses the development of effective team structures. A tool for assessing teaming structure is included at the end of this chapter.

Learning Objectives: This chapter provides understanding of

- The purpose of an implementation team
- The characteristics of effective teams
- Key implementation team responsibilities
- Teaming structure development

Competencies: Meeting the learning objectives will develop foundational knowledge to

- Create and manage a well-functioning team structure
- Assess and refine the teaming structure to support each phase of implementation
- Establish team functions and communications to sustain the innovation and implementation infrastructures

Key Terms

Implementation Team – A team that guides the overall initiative by ensuring the innovation is defined, operationalized, and implemented; ensures implementation supports are in place; identifies the measures for monitoring the initiative; and plans for sustaining the improved outcomes

Team – A group of people working together for a common purpose

Implementation Team Attends to Key Functions

A team that guides an initiative and attends to the key functions of implementation is critical to the successful implementation of an innovation. Developing other teams to complete time-limited tasks and attend to specific implementation functions can also be helpful, as can a clear team structure and a communication strategy that links the teams. A team is a group of people working together for a common purpose. Team members need to have common goals and objectives and a commitment to the overall work. They need to bring skills, authority, and expertise to move the initiative forward.

When implementing an innovation, an implementation team serves two purposes:

- To organize the work that needs to be done by drafting work plans, analyzing data, researching potential innovations, guiding the implementation of the innovation; and monitoring, adjusting, and sustaining the innovation
- To provide the leadership, guidance, and consultation necessary to support the practitioners implementing the innovation

Characteristics of Effective Teams

Effective teams share some common characteristics in that they:

- Have the time to do the work required, which may mean being relieved of other responsibilities
- Are accountable for achieving the goal or objective assigned to them
- Have an organized way of communicating with each other
- Have a passion for and commitment to the innovation
- Have clear objectives
- Follow a decision-making process that allows the team to reach decisions and move forward
- Share leadership roles, allowing different team members to take the lead at different points in the life of the innovation based on their levels of expertise in the tasks and topic at hand
- Build relationships based on trust, cooperation, support, and constructive conflict
- Expect both individual and mutual accountability for performance results

The Nature of Teams

Depending on the initiative, the membership of the implementation team and other assembled teams may vary. Teams might be assembled and then disbanded when their tasks have been completed. Teams may comprise members for whom leading implementation work is their only role, or teams may comprise existing groups that are deliberately repurposed to focus on implementation functions and activities. A key function of child welfare leadership is to continually align the new initiative with daily operations and other priorities within the organization. This includes helping team members balance other ongoing responsibilities with the expectations of the team.

No matter how many times members on a team change or how many teams are assembled and disbanded during the life of the initiative, it is crucial to have clear communication channels and to attend to the functions that support effective implementation.

Essential Team Functions

The teams created for an initiative serve a variety of functions. Some will be long-term while others may be more time limited and task oriented. Implementation teams are actively involved in the work of implementation. They are not advisory groups or committees that provide periodic input.

Although team structures are specific to each initiative and therefore team functions may vary, the table below provides an overview of some of the key functions that teams can expect to perform during each implementation phase. Teams can refer to this table periodically to ensure they are attending to the appropriate key functions.

Exploration:	Installation:
• Research potential innovations. • Assess the fit of potential innovations with the needs of the target population. • Assess requirements for implementing the innovation. • Examine potential barriers to implementation. • Use data to drive decision-making regarding implementation planning. • Consider sustainability activities and planning during all phases of implementation. • Begin to develop leadership capacity for the long term. • Gain and continue to maintain buy-in and support from key stakeholders.	• Work with program developers, purveyors, external consultants, and intermediary organizations to ensure they have the competencies needed to support and sustain the innovation. • Ensure availability of resources, such as staffing, space, equipment, organizational supports, new operating policies and procedures, and referral pathways. • Ensure that practitioners are hired, trained, supported, and can develop the necessary competencies to implement the innovation with fidelity. • Ensure that the innovation is defined and operationalized. • Ensure that implementation supports (e.g., data systems, training) are in place.
Initial Implementation:	**Full Implementation:**
• Use data to assess implementation (e.g., program outputs, fidelity data, coaching data) and monitor the initiative (e.g. staffing trends, referral trends, service outputs). • Ensure continuous quality improvement and rapid-cycle problem solving. • Address barriers to implementation and develop system solutions. • Consistently communicate, and provide feedback and encouragement.	• Ensure continuous use of the innovation with fidelity and ongoing use of data to improve the innovation and the implementation supports. • Focus attention on planning for programmatic, implementation, and financial sustainability post-grant period by ensuring that funding streams are established, reliable, and adequate. • Ensure that supports are in place to continue training, coaching, and fidelity assessments. • Ensure that policies and procedures continue to support implementation of the innovation.

Note: Adapted from Aarons, Ehrhart, Farahnak, & Hurlburt, 2015; Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012; Metz & Bartley, 2012.

To effectively address these functions, teams need people who have the capacities, influence, and experience listed below to successfully implement an innovation and continue positive outcomes.

- Knowledge of or expertise with the innovation
- Experience with implementation practices to collect, monitor, assess, and use data to maintain fidelity and continue to improve outcomes, making adjustments as needed
- Knowledge of or experience with creating and managing organizational and system change
- Influence, credible relationships, and communication with organization and/or system stakeholders to maintain a hospitable environment
- Experience using data for decision-making and improvements
- Decision-making authority within the organization or system to ensure continued alignment of the organization and system to sustain the innovation and outcomes
- Diversity of perspectives[1]

These capacities are important as initial teams are built, as teaming structure changes throughout the

[1] Studies (Higgins et al., 2012) have found that teams with greater diversity are more likely to make innovative strategic decisions and consider a greater range of alternatives.

life of an initiative, and as new people are brought on. Although diversity of perspective is important, obligatory “stakeholder” or “representative” teams should be avoided. The Atlantic Coastal Child Welfare Implementation Center found that stronger implementation teams included members from various organizational functions (such as training, policy, or quality improvement) and from several organizational levels (e.g., county, regional, statewide). They also found that teams were viable if they included members with diverse skills and expertise.[2] If members of the team do not bring diversity of perspectives, the team should ensure through its communication work that it is capturing this diversity.

Teaming Structures

Having a clearly defined structure in place as a way for teams to communicate with each other ensures completion of the implementation work. Teams should be structured to:

- Operate well collectively (i.e., all the functions are covered by relevant teams)
- Operate well as individual teams (i.e., teams have the right people who have time to do the work during and outside of meeting times)
- Support practitioners’ implementation efforts (i.e., teams monitor and continuously improve the implementation of the innovation through data-driven decision-making and feedback loops to other teams)
- Foster efficient communication within and across teams

The Appendix includes examples of child welfare agency teaming structures and how they might change over time.

Team Leaders

Every team needs a leader. To lead implementation teams, leaders need certain skills and abilities to conduct particular functions. Implementation team leaders:

- Understand the stages of implementation and the leadership actions needed to support the efforts in each stage.
- Regularly communicate with internal and external stakeholders about the initiative’s milestones and successes to build and maintain relationships. (Partnering with stakeholders as a strategic component of the process of achieving desired outcomes is described later in this document.)
- Ensure the team is a “real team,” with (1) clear boundaries about who its members are, (2) work that requires interdependency among those

[2] Maciolek, S., Arena, C., Fisher, C., & Helfgott, K.P. (2014). *From start to finish: Child welfare implementation teams that go the distance*. Baltimore, MD: University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth H. Young Center for Families and Children. Retrieved from: http://socialwork.umaryland.edu/cwa/RYC/assets/ACCWIC-2014-Implementation_Teams.pdf

members, and (3) membership that is relatively stable over time. Team membership and team structure is likely to change over the course of the implementation of an initiative, as the organization moves through the various implementation stages. The Teaming Structure Assessment Tool at the end of this chapter defines elements of team structure and groups them into common themes. This document can assist in addressing implementation team functions.

- Remain transparent about how implementation team decisions are made. Communication about pending and/or upcoming decisions should be clear regarding decision-making authority of the implementation team and which decisions need to be elevated to executive leadership. This includes communication about which data are used in decision-making and how.
- Focus on team member learning, which is critical to sustaining implementation efforts. "When people feel they are learning, they are likely to be more engaged in the work and to express their perspectives more fully and to contribute to the work, to others, and to their own growth and learning".[3]
- Conduct productive meetings. Meetings are tools, not an end in themselves. The structure of the meeting should be determined by what the meeting is intended to accomplish. Use meetings thoughtfully and purposefully to further or achieve a goal.
- Manage conflict. Leaders can manage conflict effectively by understanding the ways in which people deal with conflict, including a self-awareness of their own style[4]. Some common styles include: competing (putting one's own concerns over others), accommodating (ignoring one's own concerns to satisfy the concerns of others), avoiding (not addressing concerns in order to avoid conflict), compromising (finding a mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies the concerns of others), and collaborating (working to find some solution that satisfies the concerns of all).

Plan for Sustainability

In addition to being responsible for the work of associated teams and team members, the implementation team may also be responsible for planning to sustain the innovation, assuming it is not harmful and that outcomes are improved. This responsibility may also rest with an executive-level agency leadership team. When planning for sustainability, the implementation team and agency leadership need to consider if and how to transition the work of guiding the innovation from this temporary teaming structure to a more permanent structure. This might also need to involve other stakeholders and organizations. Sustainability should be considered as decisions are made each step of the way (more about planning for sustainability can be found in Section 10 of the Guide).

[3] Higgins, M.C., Weiner, J., & Young, L. (2012). Implementation teams: A new leaver for organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 33(3)*, 366–388.

[4] Holden Leadership Center. (2009). Managing Conflict, University of Oregon. Retrieved from: http://leadership.uoregon.edu/upload/files/tip_sheets/managing_conflict.pdf

Teaming Structure Assessment Tool

Initially and periodically, as the initiative progresses, the implementation team should evaluate itself and the teaming structure. The main points to assess include whether the team and the teaming structure are:

- Operating productively
- Supporting implementation efforts
- Communicating effectively
- Continuing to serve a function or purpose with clear objectives

This is an opportunity to assess the teams' operations, strengthen the teaming structure, and ensure that essential functions of the innovation are being met. This means having the right people and the right teams in place. As implementation progresses, certain teams may no longer be necessary. For example, after an innovation has been chosen, it is no longer necessary to have a team dedicated to reviewing research and searching for an innovation, but it might be necessary to create a team dedicated to outlining the requirements for hiring innovation practitioners. As important

as knowing when to create a team is knowing when to disband or reconfigure it, or create one to attend to specific functions or a new set of objectives.

The Teaming Structure Assessment Tool on the following pages can help to initially assess and periodically reevaluate an implementation team and an overall teaming structure.

TEAMING STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT TOOL

FROM THE *GUIDE TO DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND ASSESSING AN INNOVATION, VOLUME 1*

This tool can be used throughout the stages of implementation in order to assess and reassess the teaming structure for your initiative. When using this tool to initially assess your teaming structure, it is important to recognize that as you begin this process, many elements of a fully functioning team will not be in place. The important part will be to identify the action steps needed to build an effective teaming structure moving forward. As your initiative progresses and implementation of the innovation is rolling out to a greater number of people in the target population, it is a good idea to periodically reassess your teaming structure, function, and communication plans. Using this assessment at various times throughout the implementation process helps you to examine the macro-level structure of your teams and to look broadly at the configuration and interactions among and across multiple teams.

To assist with the assessment, it will be helpful to have your most recent teaming structure and team charters in front of you to review, even if they are in draft form. The assessment is intended to be completed in a facilitated session with your team. The multiple teams (or team representatives) supporting your initiative can complete the teaming structure assessment jointly. During the facilitation of the assessment, the team should discuss each element and reach consensus on the status (in place, partially in place, not in place, not applicable). Discussing the evidence or support for the status ratings can assist in reaching consensus. In addition, you can note action steps that are identified to address elements that are partially in place or not in place.

This tool may be used in two ways:

1. ***Print the following pages and use them as a discussion guide with your team. Write your answers in the space provided.***
2. ***Type your information into the space provided and save to your computer. This will allow you to print the completed document or e-mail it to your team members.***

Assessment Domain: Attention to Team Functions

Elements	Status	Evidence or support for status rating	Action Steps
The teaming structure includes a team responsible for guiding the overall initiative by ensuring that the innovation(s) is/are defined, funded, operationalized, and implemented.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure is clear about where the responsibility rests for ensuring that implementation supports (e.g., data systems, policies) are in place.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure identifies a locus of responsibility for ensuring that practitioners are hired, trained, and supported to implement the innovation(s) as intended.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure facilitates the development of leadership capacity for the long-term of the initiative and identifies leadership for planning for sustainability of the initiative.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure identifies a locus of responsibility for gaining and maintaining stakeholder buy-in and support for the initiative.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure is clear about where the responsibility for reviewing program outputs, fidelity data, coaching data, and feedback data on the innovation(s) rests.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The teaming structure identifies a locus of responsibility for ensuring that key measures are identified to monitor the initiative.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		

Assessment Domain: Effective Links and Communication

Elements	Status	Evidence or support for status rating	Action Steps
The teaming structure supports effective communication (e.g., teams cross-pollinate, team agendas include reports from other teams) through linked membership, linked agendas, or linked communication protocols.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The links and communication strategies are documented in team charters.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
The roles and responsibilities of the teams are clear and are written in team charters. These written roles and responsibilities are shared with other teams.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
There are formal, transparent, and regular methods for hearing from other teams about what is working well and what is not working well.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		
Teams understand when and what issues should be raised with another team because they cannot be resolved at the referring team level.	In Place ☐ Partially In Place ☐ Not In Place ☐ Not Applicable ☐		

Building a Team and Writing a Team Charter

Overview

The previous chapter reviewed the purpose and responsibilities of an implementation team. It also covered characteristics of effective teams. The next step is to build a team and write a team charter. This chapter focuses on the development of an effective team and provides background on the purpose and essential elements of a team charter. The Team Charter Tool at the end of this chapter provides an opportunity to apply the concepts in this chapter to an initiative.

Learning Objectives: This chapter increases understanding of

- The necessary steps to assemble and lead an effective team
- The purpose and elements of a team charter
- How to write a team charter

Competencies: Meeting the learning objectives will develop foundational knowledge to write a team charter and organize, establish, and run an effective well-functioning team structure.

Key Terms

Team Charter – A formal document describing the work of the team and how to complete it

Building a Team

There are two parts to building a team: (1) assembling an effective team and (2) establishing the function, purpose, and objectives for the team. The following list describes the many foundational elements that must be addressed to assemble an effective team.

Foundational Elements of an Effective Team

Clarify the Nature of the Initiative
Assembling an effective team requires an understanding of the team's mission and nature of the work. It might require first developing the mission, goals, and objectives for the team; or the mission, goals, and objectives may have already been established by agency leadership. Whatever the case, the first step in the process of building a team is to define and document the general nature of the work to pick the right team members.

Clarify the Mission Statement
A mission statement captures in a few succinct sentences the essence of the initiative's purpose, that is, the need or opportunity that the initiative is addressing. Having a clear statement allows system leaders and partners, stakeholders, sister agencies, and others to understand what the work is about.

Clarify Team Goals
Implementation teams should review the expectations of agency leadership and other stakeholders, ensuring that the mission of the initiative, the goals for the team, and the expected final results are clearly understood.

Select and Invite Team Members
Identifying candidates who are best qualified for the work may depend on the role they hold within the agency, system, or community. Candidates should be chosen with a focus on bringing multiple skill sets to the initiative. Generally speaking, the maximum recommended size for an effective team is five to seven people, but more or fewer members may be needed based on the nature of the work. Refer to Chapter 1 in this section to review the capacities needed to perform the key functions of successful teams.

Establish Team Function, Purpose, and Objectives
Before getting started on the initiative, the assembled team members should work through each of the following topics, documenting the decisions that are made:

- Mission, goals, and objectives
- Decision-making authority
- Scope, boundaries, and timeframes
- Expected outcomes and deliverables
- Strategies for handling conflict, roadblocks, and challenges

This information will be used later when writing the team charter.

Discuss Goals and Tasks
Ensuring from the start that everyone has a shared vision of the work that needs to be done will minimize misunderstandings, increase buy-in, and improve the likelihood that the team will be productive. Clarifying the tasks that need to be completed will help to identify the skills, expertise, and decision-making authority that the various team members need to complete these tasks.

Establish Leadership and Define the Decision-Making Process
The team should discuss the decision-making authority it has been given by leadership and clarify whether team members are advisers to leadership with leadership making the final decisions or whether the team has the authority to make final decisions. The process the team will use to make team decisions should also be determined. The team may decide that all decisions have to be unanimous, or that a majority consensus is adequate. All members should participate in meetings and promote shared leadership. Different team members should lead tasks based on their levels of expertise with the topics at hand. Team leaders do not need to be in formal leadership positions within the organization or system.

Discuss Deliverables and Communication Strategies
Deliverables might be recommendations to agency or systems leadership, initial work products, an up-and-running innovation, or all of the above. Discussion of deliverables must include due dates.

A strategy for communicating within the team as well as with others outside of the team needs to be formulated. Developing a communication strategy is covered in detail in the next chapter.

Discuss Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

For the team to function effectively, team members need to know what their roles and responsibilities are, as well as what is expected of them. When describing expectations, assignments, and responsibilities, team leadership should be as specific as possible and prepared to hold members accountable. General housekeeping tasks like scheduling meetings, taking minutes, posting and distributing minutes, and setting up collaborative electronic workspaces should also be discussed, assigned, and scheduled. A facilitator should be designated for each meeting.

Requirements and expectations for attendance at meetings is also an important discussion. Establishing expectations about how members will be required to attend meetings—in person, via phone or teleconference—and how many meetings it is permissible for a member to miss, will eliminate frustration and confusion down the road.

Discuss Team Member Relationships

In effective teams, the members build and maintain internal relationships and make conflict productive. Expecting and planning for conflict allows for better management later on. Setting guidelines in advance for acceptable behavior and a way of work for team members may help manage conflict when it arises.

Manage Conflict

"Conflict management encourages creative tension and differences of opinions; anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations; manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner."[5] Consider a shared decision-making approach to meetings by establishing a working agreement of ground rules, agreeing on the goal or focus of the meeting, sharing information about the problem to be solved, brainstorming strategies, creating a plan, and determining next steps. Managing conflict often involves digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the group and finding a solution that meets a variety of concerns.

The Team Charter

A team charter is a formal document describing the work a team will do and how it will be accomplished. Periodically referring to the team charter can help ensure that the team maintains its original goals. In addition, as members leave and new members join the team, the team charter can inform new members about the team's goals and way of work.

Purpose of the Team Charter

A team charter serves the purpose of:

- Focusing the team
- Documenting the team's purpose
- Defining the team's mission, goals, and objectives

[5] McDaniel, N., Brittain, C., & Bernotavicz, F. (2010). *Leadership competency framework*. Albany, NY: National Child Welfare Workforce Institute.

- Defining the scope of operation and timeframe
- Establishing credibility and authority through endorsement by top management
- Defining member roles, authority, and responsibilities
- Defining operating rules
- Defining decision-making procedures
- Establishing methods of communication and reporting structures
- Facilitating stakeholder buy-in by including key members in the decision-making process, and obtaining their agreement along the way

One of the greatest values in creating a team charter is the discussion of information needed to write the charter. Working as a team to think through and agree on the various elements helps team members know each other better and build the bonds that are necessary for a team to function effectively.

Elements of a Team Charter

A team charter includes the following elements:

- Mission of the initiative
- Goals and objectives for the work the team will do
- Scope, boundaries, and timeframe for completing the work—what the work is and is not, how the team will know when it is finished
- Expected deliverables
- Decision-making authority
- Decision-making policy
- Leadership—who is authorizing/sponsoring the team, where leadership rests
- Communication strategies—with whom the team will communicate, how, how often, and for what purpose
- Roles and responsibilities—who will participate and in what ways
- Determination of how conflict will be managed

Implementation Team Charter

The implementation team charter should be created early in the initiative. It might be drafted by two or three people until the full team is organized. This is a critical action and should not be overlooked, but it also should not be given too much time, because it is a living document that should be reviewed and revised as the initiative progresses. For example, the charter can help a team get back on track when it is not doing the work that it was originally charged to do.

If the implementation team finds that other teams are needed to address certain functions, it should "charter" these new teams by specifying their goals, the timeframe for achieving those goals, and their expected deliverables.

Team Charter Tool

The Team Charter Tool on the following pages provides an approach for planning and creating a team charter.

TEAM CHARTER TOOL

FROM THE *GUIDE TO DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND ASSESSING AN INNOVATION, VOLUME 1*

This tool can be used to guide the development of a formal team charter that describes the work of a team and how it will be done. Before the team starts working on the initiative, discuss and agree on what work you will do and establish guidelines for how the team will operate. Use the questions on the left to guide your discussion and take notes on the right. Once you have covered each of the elements below, you will be ready to write your team charter.

This tool may be used in two ways:

1. ***Print the following pages and use them as a discussion guide with your team. Write your answers in the space provided.***
2. ***Type your information into the space provided and save to your computer. This will allow you to print the completed document or e-mail it to your team members.***

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Mission of the initiative—Include background information about the work you will do and a brief statement about the expected outcomes.	What is the problem that is being addressed?
	What result or outcome is expected?
	Why is it important to solve this problem?
	What are leadership and other stakeholders expecting this team to do?
Goals and objectives for the work the team will do—Be specific and include a timeframe for achieving the goals.	What do we want to accomplish, achieve, or create as a team?
	How will we know when we have accomplished our goals and objectives?
	How much time will we need to complete our objectives?

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Scope, boundaries, and timeframe for completing the work—Define what the work is and is not and how the team will know when it is finished.	What resources are available?
	Are the available resources adequate for completing the work?
	Is anything missing that we need to request from leadership?
	How has the money been allocated in the budget?
Expected deliverables—List deliverables that are tied to the goals and objectives for the project and that help define the timeframe and milestones.	Make a list of the tasks and deliverables

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Decision-making authority— Clarify who is on the team, the skills they bring, and their decision- making power.	What skills and competencies are needed?
	What kinds of decisions will we make?
	Do our members have the knowledge and authority to do this work and make these decisions?
	What authority do we need to implement decisions?
	How many team members do we need?

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Decision-making policy—Outline how decisions will be made within the team.	What will be our primary decision-making method (e.g., consensus)?
	Will there be exceptions to our decision-making policy?
	Who, if anyone, can block decisions?
	Do all members have equal voting rights?
	What is non-negotiable?
Leadership—Determine who is authorizing/sponsoring the team and who are the team leaders.	Who is the team leader? Who are the co-leaders?
	How do we share leadership responsibilities?
	Who on the executive leadership team is sponsoring this work and supporting the team leader?

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Communication strategies— Identify with whom the team will communicate; how and how often; and for what purpose. Consider communication with those internal to the organization as well as those outside of the organization.	Identify other teams and stakeholders with which our team will need to communicate.
	Communicate with other teams to determine how information will be shared as well as how information will be shared with our team members.
	Identify the kinds of information that will need to be shared.
	Identify feedback loops that already exist and others that might need to be created.
	Identify resources that will help everyone stay informed and involved; for example, are collaborative workspaces available? Are there regular presentations at stakeholder meetings?
	Decide how often information should be shared.
	Specify responsibility and authority for sharing information.
	Identify obstacles to communication and define strategies for addressing obstacles and challenges.
	Discuss the importance of buy-in and maintaining momentum and brainstorm strategies for accomplishing this within the team and with outside stakeholders.

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Roles and Responsibilities— Identify who will participate and in what ways, and set guidelines for acceptable behavior.	How often will we meet? For how long? When? Where?
	How do we develop meeting agendas?
	Who will lead or facilitate the meetings?
	How will we keep track of our decisions and agreed-upon actions?
	What are our individual responsibilities?

Elements	Key Discussion Points
Roles and responsibilities— Identify who will participate and in what ways, and set guidelines for acceptable behavior.	What are our individual skills and functional areas of responsibility?
	How will individual members be held accountable and performance judged?
	Do we have the right people on the team to accomplish the work we are charged with doing?
	How will we resolve conflict?
	How will we evaluate our team performance?

Team and Stakeholder Communications

Overview

The previous two chapters covered the importance of teams, how to develop a team, and how to write a team charter. Developing effective teams and stakeholder communication strategies is one of the most important processes in which the team will engage. Failure to communicate important information can lead to several barriers to the implementation of the innovation. This chapter will provide guidance on developing strong communication strategies.

Learning Objectives: This chapter explains how to

- Identify other teams with which the implementation team will need to communicate
- Identify the kinds of information that will need to be shared
- Specify responsibility and authority for sharing information
- Identify obstacles and define strategies for addressing challenges
- Define and document a strategy for internal communications (within the team and within the agency)
- Specify criteria for determining when information is ready to be shared externally
- Define and document a strategy for communications with external stakeholders

Competencies: Meeting the learning objectives will build knowledge to

- Develop and manage strong communication protocols and feedback loops
- Meaningfully engage the right external and internal stakeholders
- Develop and deliver effective, strategic communications

Key Terms

Communications Protocol – A document that specifies the frequency, methods, and purpose of communication between associated teams and with stakeholders

Team and Stakeholder Communication

A communication strategy should:

- Specify the frequency and methods of communication among team members and with associated teams, if other teams are created
- Include strategies for both verbal and written communications
- Outline how and when the team will provide information to agency leadership, agency staff, community partners, contracted providers, courts, children and families, sister agencies, and other external stakeholders
- Be flexible and able to change as the initiative develops

Team Communication Strategy

To be effective, team members need to have open discussions that include everyone on the team and allow everyone to have an opportunity to freely share their thoughts, opinions, and ideas. All team members need to feel safe, respected, and valued so that they are able to work effectively together. How well team members communicate with each other will be critical to the success of an initiative.

Topics to consider when creating a team communication strategy include:

- With what other teams the implementation team will need to communicate
- How to share information within the team as well as across teams
- What kinds of information will need to be shared
- What feedback loops already exist and others that might need to be created

- What resources will help the team stay informed and involved (e.g., collaborative work spaces, e-mail systems, electronic bulletin boards, internal Web space)
- How often information should be shared
- What the team's responsibility and authority is for sharing information
- What obstacles to communication exist and how to define strategies for addressing challenges
- What the importance of buy-in and maintaining momentum is for the team as well as for other teams

As team members discuss these topics, notes should be taken and decisions documented about the team communication strategy. This information should be added to the team charter.

Stakeholder Communication Strategy

Commitment or buy-in from stakeholders needs to occur prior to developing a communication strategy. It will be important to determine the external stakeholders who will act as champions of the initiative and advocate and influence other stakeholders within the community. Stakeholders will need to have information about the identified problem and an understanding of the rationale for the initiative and innovation that will be beneficial to the target population. This can be accomplished by clearly and concisely demonstrating how the initiative aligns with the shared mission and values of the community.

Engaging external stakeholders as implementation team members in the planning process prompts buy-in and may ease implementation challenges.[6] As team members, external stakeholders should be given important responsibilities and receive follow-through and feedback on their contributions.

Communications with stakeholders may consist of presentations, written reports, memos, and announcements that inform others about and involve others in the work

[6] Willging, C.E., Green, A. E., Gunderson, L., Chaffin, M., & Aarons, G. A. (2015). From a "perfect storm" to "smooth sailing": Policymaker perspectives on implementation and sustainment of an evidence-based practice in two states. *Child Maltreatment, 20(1)*, 24-36.

the team is doing to create a hospitable, supportive environment for the initiative. To achieve this goal, the team's progress should be communicated and successes celebrated throughout the organization and with external stakeholders. It is important to clearly communicate the roles and expectations of these stakeholders in supporting the initiative, including potentially making adjustments to their business processes and policies. Presenting regular updates about progress will keep the focus on implementing the innovation and will help to maintain the momentum and buy-in for the innovation.

Many of the topics to discuss when developing stakeholder communications are the same as those discussed when developing team communications:

- With what stakeholders the team will need to communicate
- How to share information with those stakeholders as well as within the implementation team
- What kinds of information will need to be shared with the different stakeholders based on the action the team wants them to take
- What feedback loops already exist and others that might need to be created, with attention to how feedback will be given to and received from stakeholders.
- What venues or formats will help keep the stakeholders informed and involved (e.g., presentations at standing meetings or existing monthly or quarterly reports)
- How often information should be shared

- What the team's responsibility and authority is for sharing information
- What potential obstacles could prevent information from getting to the stakeholders and how to define strategies for addressing those challenges
- What the importance of buy-in and maintaining momentum is for stakeholders and what the strategies are for accomplishing this

The implementation team should regularly review past decisions and agreements to ensure that the strategies that are being implemented are still relevant and functional. The team should remain flexible and make changes as needed.

Test Your Understanding

The following questions will help test understanding of the material in the Teaming and Communications section. An answer key is provided at the end of this section.

1. An implementation team:

- [ ] a. Has representation from every unit within an agency
- [ ] b. Guides an initiative and attends to key implementation functions
- [ ] c. Is only needed in the very early days of implementation
- [ ] d. Requires all team members remain on the team for the life of the innovation

2. Please read the following and then determine which answer best describes the list.

- Accountability to the specified goal and to each other
- Able to build relationships
- Clear objectives
- Organized communication
- Efficient decision making process

- [ ] a. Characteristics of effective teams
- [ ] b. Essential team functions
- [ ] c. Parts of a sustainability plan
- [ ] d. Characteristics required when hiring new team members

3. In order to move implementation forward, teams must attend to a variety of essential functions. Which of the following are examples of essential team functions? (Choose all that apply)

- [ ] a. Making sure practitioners have the required skills and have been trained before implementing the innovation
- [ ] b. Reviewing the results of the satisfaction surveys administered at the end of training
- [ ] c. Communicating with key stakeholders
- [ ] d. All of the above

4. It comes to the attention of the data team that during the last training there were not enough training manuals for everyone. As a result, participants had to share. The data team sent an e-mail to the team in charge of preparing the training curriculum, asked them to create additional manuals, and gave them the names of the participants who did not receive one. This is an example of what?

- [ ] a. Planning for sustainability of the innovation throughout the entire organization
- [ ] b. An effective teaming structure that communicates well in order to resolve challenges
- [ ] c. One individual team that operates well and has the correct people for the job
- [ ] d. A fully operationalized innovation that includes a fidelity assessment

5. Why is it important to periodically evaluate the teaming structure?

- ☐ a. Throughout implementation, priorities change and some teams may not be needed anymore.
- ☐ b. It isn't. The teaming structure outlined at the beginning of implementation should remain for the life of the initiative.
- ☐ c. It is important that everyone in the organization participates in a team at some point during implementation.
- ☐ d. To ensure everyone is trained in the innovation

6. Due to multiple retirements, the team charged with organizing training and coaching for new workers has had to bring on new members. Upon joining the team, one of the first documents the new members should read explains the team's purpose, their scope of operation, team roles and responsibilities and communication structures. This is also known as

- ☐ a. A team charter
- ☐ b. An innovation manual
- ☐ c. A fidelity assessment
- ☐ d A data collection process

7. If properly constructed, the team charter should:

- ☐ a. Outline how to deliver the innovation
- ☐ b. Include the results from usability testing
- ☐ c. Serve as a point of reference when the team needs to come to a decision
- ☐ d. Clearly outline the mission of the entire organization

8. Once the team charter has been written, it should not change.

- ☐ a. False
- ☐ b. True

9. The development of a document that outlines a strong communication strategy is essential to effective team functioning. Which of the following should be included?

- ☐ a The frequency of communication
- ☐ b The methods used to communicate
- ☐ c The purpose of the communication
- ☐ d All of the above

Use the following scenario to answer questions 10–12.

You are in charge of organizing your implementation team to develop a communication strategy. To start, you have scheduled a series of discussions that includes everyone on the team. During this process, you have everyone brainstorm the meetings and avenues of communication that currently exist between various combinations of the implementation team, leadership, outside stakeholders, contract providers, and other agency staff. Additionally, the team developed a set of guidelines that outlined the frequency and the method (e-mail, written, verbal) with which the team will communicate with contracted agencies involved in the implementation of the innovation.

10. Brainstorming the avenues of communication that exist is probably the first step in:

- [ ] a. Using research to adapt an innovation
- [ ] b. Determining what feedback loops exist and what might need to be created
- [ ] c. Outlining an innovation's essential functions
- [ ] d. Determining the data the organization needs to collect about client outcomes

11. The set of guidelines the team developed should also detail:

- [ ] a. What information will be shared
- [ ] b. The time of day the e-mail will be sent
- [ ] c. The team member responsible for the communication
- [ ] d. A and C

12. The organization's leadership reviews the work the team has done to date (outlined in the paragraph above) and recommends the development of another set of guidelines. They suggest:

- [ ] a. A strategy for internal communication with agency staff
- [ ] b. A sick leave and vacation policy for the organization
- [ ] c. A policy detailing how to get reimbursed for CEUs
- [ ] d. Guidelines for how to choose the innovation the organization will implement

13. A communication strategy is an effective way to communicate with other teams, leadership, and external stakeholders about the status of implementation and barriers encountered along the way, but it also should be used to:

- [ ] a. Communicate successes
- [ ] b. Interview new team members
- [ ] c. Hand out training materials
- [ ] d. Distribute raw data from trainings

VOLUME 1: TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING ANSWER KEY

Teaming and Communication Linkages

1. b
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. a
6. a
7. c
8. a
9. d
10. b
11. d
12. c
13. a

Volume 1: Appendix

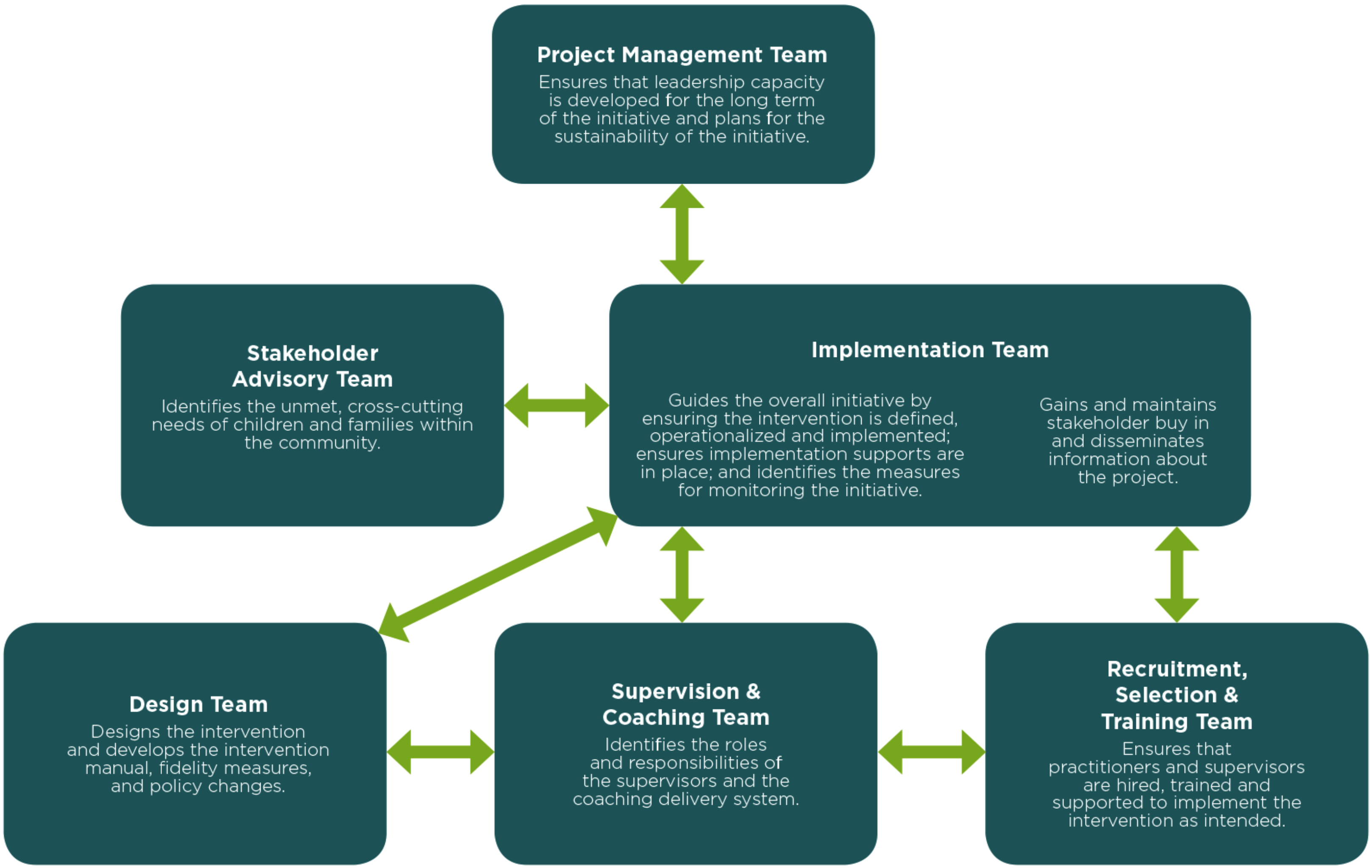
Diamond County Teaming Structure

Diamond County identified timely permanency as an issue of concern. In examining administrative data, they looked at the number of children who entered foster care who were returned home within 30 days and those who were reunified within 180 days and one year. The county found an unacceptable number of children who were not achieving reunification within one year, and an unacceptable number remaining in care for three or more years. The county gathered additional data from an intensive case review of cases where children remained in care more than one year. This led the county to believe that a root cause of this problem may be the lack of adequate assessments that resulted in case plans that did not target underlying conditions, contributing factors, or accurately identify services that would promote behavior change. Goals were not specific and goal achievement was not measurable. Contact with parents was not sufficient to engage the parents to participate in interventions or services that may lead to reunification. Diamond County looked for an evidenced-based practice that they could adopt or adapt to alter the capacity of practitioners to engage parents in a comprehensive assessment of their strengths, needs, and parental protective capacities, which would lead to a purposeful, change-focused case plan.

The Theory of Change was that improved safety and permanency outcomes will be achieved if: caregivers are successfully engaged to address safety threats and build caregiver protective capacities; case plans focus on providing intensive and purposeful services; services are provided to support caregivers and children to achieve goals that will alter the behaviors and conditions that would otherwise lead to placement in long-term foster care; and there is regular measurement of goal achievement. With the implementation of a new practice model that: assesses parent/caregiver readiness for change, employs motivational interviewing to increase readiness for change, and encourages weekly face-to-face contacts between the practitioner and the caregiver and children, the parent/caregiver will decrease behaviors/conditions that threaten safety and permanency.

Initially Diamond County developed a project management team comprising agency leadership, project leadership, and expert purveyors hired to help with the implementation of the new intervention (see Installation Stage Teaming Structure). The county also created a stakeholder advisory team to help identify needs and services to meet the needs of families within the county that come to the attention of the child welfare system. When Diamond County decided to implement this solution, county representatives assembled an Implementation Team to guide the process and ensure that the intervention is defined, funded, operationalized, and implemented. The county created sub-teams with specific responsibilities. The Design Team, for instance, was responsible for adapting the chosen intervention to the agency, including developing the Intervention Manual, fidelity measures, and recommendations for policy changes. The Recruitment, Selection, and Training Team ensured that practitioners and supervisors were selected from existing agency staff who demonstrated the required personal qualities, knowledge, and skills to facilitate the comprehensive assessment process. The team also ensured that any new hires had the interpersonal skills to engage with parents/caregivers on a weekly basis to raise awareness and facilitate readiness for change. This team was also responsible for designing the pre-service and ongoing training.

Diamond County Team Structure Example - Installation Stage

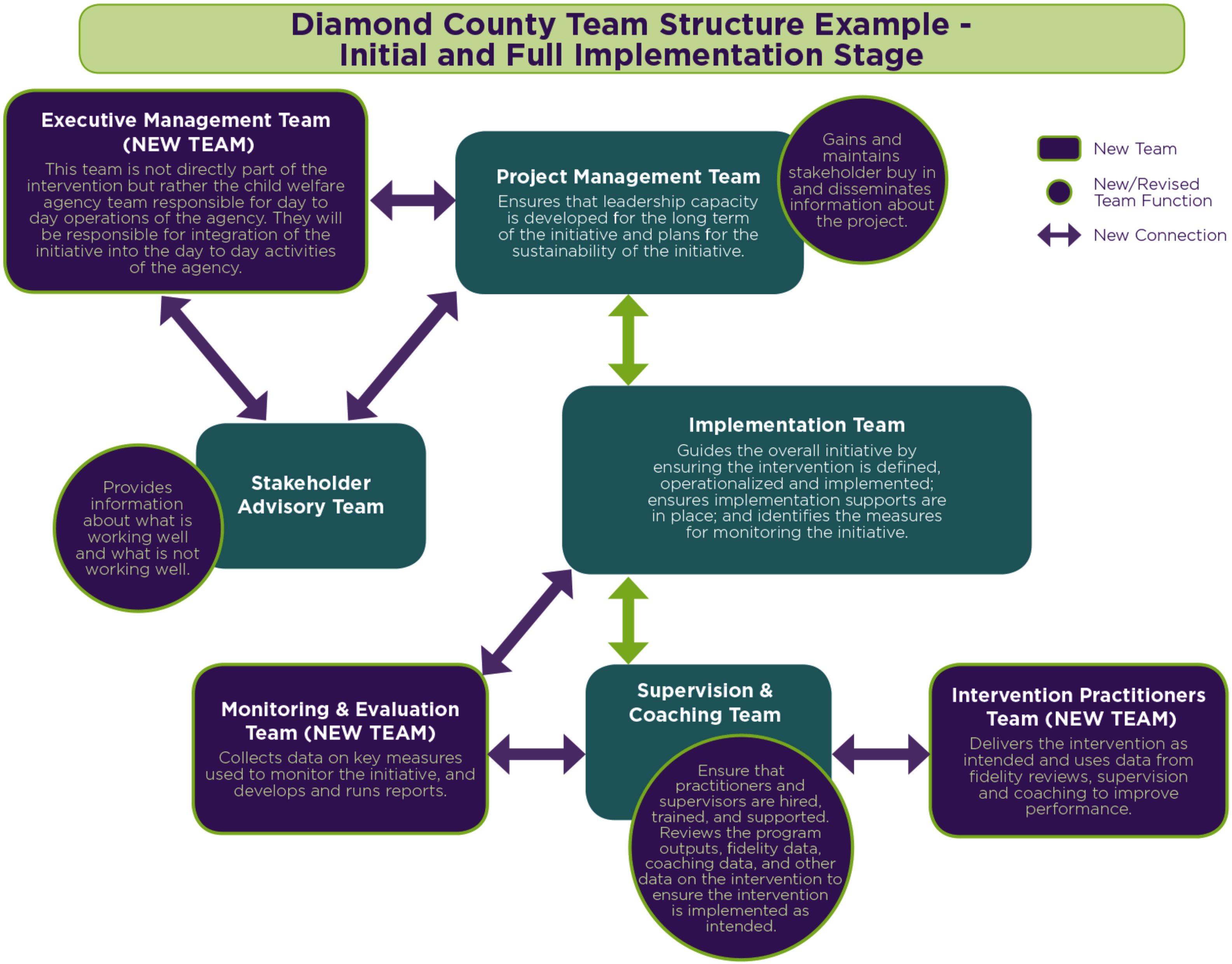


The Supervision and Coaching Team identified the roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and the coaching delivery system required for workers to acquire the skills and capacities necessary to successfully deliver the intervention.

As the intervention moved from the Exploration and Installment Stage to Initial and later Full Implementation, the teaming structure that had been in place needed to be reassessed to determine if it continues to align with the implementation of the intervention (see Initial and Full Implementation Stage Teaming Structure). When Diamond County looked at the essential functions of their teaming structure, it became apparent that some teams had completed their work and were no longer needed, such as the Design Team, while the Implementation Team had too many tasks and needed to create new teams to manage increasingly important functions. Additionally, the functions of some teams had evolved over time. The Recruitment, Selection, and Training Team had completed their work to define the qualifications of intervention practitioners and supervisors and criteria as well as methods for recruiting and selecting staff. After the initial training of the practitioners, the ongoing training function was transferred to the Supervision and Coaching Team.

As the intervention was being delivered, the County collected data on the capacity of the practitioners to deliver the intervention as intended. County representatives collected data through fidelity assessments and competency exams. The Implementation Team reviewed the data and passed their analysis and interpretation of the data on to supervisors. Supervisors were not represented on the Implementation Team, so there was no mechanism for them to share their concerns with the decision-makers. The Implementation Team was reconfigured to include supervisors. The county created a Monitoring and Evaluation Team to ensure that key measures that monitor the delivery of the intervention with adherence to the model and competence by the worker are shared with the Supervision and Coaching Team so that individual coaching plans can be adjusted and organizational supports can be mobilized.

The Implementation Team also changed the protocol for their monthly meeting to ensure that follow-up on assignments was occurring. They also identified that the intervention, which was in a pilot phase within the larger Diamond County Children's Services agency, was not well integrated into the larger agency. This left the practitioners feeling isolated from their peers within the agency. The county created the Intervention Practitioners Team to collectively support their ability to deliver the intervention as intended and to use the data from fidelity reviews, supervision, and coaching to improve performance. There was also a need for the Project Management Team to communicate regularly with the agency Executive Management Team to discuss decisions about sustaining and scaling up the intervention. The Project Management Team also recognized the need to integrate the intervention into the larger community as well as the overall agency. They began to meet regularly with the Stakeholder Advisory Team and asked that team to revise their function to inform the Project Management Team and the Executive Management Team about areas where the intervention is working well and areas that are not working well. This is vital to sustainability. The county documented all of the changes to the teaming structure in revisions to team charters as well as in team structure and communication protocols.


Diamond County Team Structure Example -
Initial and Full Implementation Stage
Executive Management Team (NEW TEAM)
This team is not directly part of the intervention but rather the child welfare agency team responsible for day to day operations of the agency. They will be responsible for integration of the initiative into the day to day activities of the agency.
Project Management Team
Ensures that leadership capacity is developed for the long term of the initiative and plans for the sustainability of the initiative.
Gains and maintains stakeholder buy in and disseminates information about the project.
New Team
New/Revised Team Function
New Connection
Stakeholder Advisory Team
Provides information about what is working well and what is not working well.
Implementation Team
Guides the overall initiative by ensuring the intervention is defined, operationalized and implemented; ensures implementation supports are in place; and identifies the measures for monitoring the initiative.
Monitoring & Evaluation Team (NEW TEAM)
Collects data on key measures used to monitor the initiative, and develops and runs reports.
Supervision & Coaching Team
Ensure that practitioners and supervisors are hired, trained, and supported. Reviews the program outputs, fidelity data, coaching data, and other data on the intervention to ensure the intervention is implemented as intended.
Intervention Practitioners Team (NEW TEAM)
Delivers the intervention as intended and uses data from fidelity reviews, supervision and coaching to improve performance.