

PII-TTAP

PERMANENCY INNOVATIONS
INITIATIVE

Training & Technical
Assistance Project

PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BUILD IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY IN CHILD WELFARE:

A Manual Based on the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach



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 PII-TTAP team created this manual to be used by training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers supporting public, private, and Tribal child welfare organizations that are applying the Approach to develop or adapt innovations, implement innovations methodically and with fidelity, and build evidence. It uses lessons learned from working with the PII Grantees. This Manual was created by:

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Suggested citation:

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project. (2016). *Providing technical assistance to build implementation capacity in child welfare: A manual based on the development, implementation, and assessment approach*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

This document was created under JBS International, Inc. Contract No. HHSP23320095638WC funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and does not necessarily reflect its views. The Center for the Support of Families is a subcontractor under this contract.

Table of Contents

Background	1
Manual Overview	1
Overview of the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach	2
Methods of Technical Assistance Delivery	3
Role of T/TA Provider	3
Method of T/TA Delivery	4
Role of Virtual T/TA	4
Benchmarks	5
Technical Assistance to Apply the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach	6
Chapter 1: Teaming and Communication Linkages	7
Chapter 2: Exploration	12
Step 1. Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population	12
Step 2. Develop a Theory of Change	18
Step 3. Assess and Select an Innovation	23
Step 4. Provide an Overview of the Implementation Supports	27
Step 5. Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	31
Chapter 3: Installation	37
Step 6. Develop or Adapt the Innovation	37
Step 7. Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports	42
Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	42
Recruiting and Selecting Competent and Confident Staff	47
Training to Build Knowledge and Skills	51
Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	54
Fidelity Assessment: Measure Development and Process Development	58
Identifying and Using Data for Decision-Making in Support of Innovation Implementation	62
Chapter 4: Initial Implementation	66
Step 8. Initial Implementation and Testing	66
Chapter 5: Full Implementation	70
Step 9. Monitor and Assess the Innovation and Implementation Supports	70
Step 10. Plan for Sustaining the Innovation	75
Conclusion	79
Quick Reference Guide—Critical Implementation Junctures	80

Background

The field of child welfare faces many challenges. Families in the child welfare system deal with complex issues, and few evidence-based innovations are available to address them. Child welfare agencies are often faced with developing innovations not previously implemented or tested, adapting innovations from other settings, and developing a process to establish the effectiveness of the innovations. In addition, limited implementation knowledge in child welfare and lack of attention to implementation¹ can result in insufficient planning, testing, understanding of necessary supports, and paying the requisite attention to fidelity. Without strategic planning to accurately diagnose the problem and root causes, agencies may rush to implement a solution without a clear connection to the problem or a path to achieving the desired outcomes.

Providing Technical Assistance to Build Implementation Capacity in Child Welfare: A Manual Based on the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach is intended to be used by training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers supporting public, private, and Tribal child welfare organizations that are applying the *Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach*² (the Approach) to develop or adapt innovations, implement innovations methodically and with fidelity, and build evidence. Anyone working with child welfare organizations preparing to develop and implement an innovation will benefit from its application.

The Approach was developed by the Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance

Project (PII-TTAP) as part of PII, a 5-year, \$100 million initiative underway since 2010 that includes six Grantees,³ each with an innovation designed to help a specific subgroup of children leave foster care in less than 3 years.⁴ PII combines requirements for purposeful application of implementation science, rigorous evaluation, and coordinated dissemination of findings.

This integration of implementation science and program evaluation is intended to build or enhance the capacity of child welfare agencies to develop, implement, and evaluate research-informed innovations and adapted evidence-supported interventions (ESIs) and to provide evidence about program effectiveness. An overarching objective of PII is to increase the number of ESIs available to the child welfare community.

Manual Overview

The goal of this Manual is to provide guidance to T/TA providers who are building the implementation capacity of child welfare organizations that use the Approach. The PII-TTAP team developed three products to support the transfer of learning and assist public, private, and Tribal organizations to use the Approach. In addition to this Manual, a 5-volume *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation*⁵ (the Guide), and a virtual T/TA website, the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Toolkit (the Toolkit)⁶ are available.

The Manual is organized to give T/TA providers an understanding of the Approach and how to apply it. This includes an overview of the Approach, information for delivery of T/TA in various settings, and

¹ Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M. & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation Research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FVHI Publication No. 231).
² Tseng, V. (2012). The uses of research in policy and practice. *SRC D Social Policy Report*, 26(2), 1–16.

³ http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/develop_implementation_assess_approach.pdf

⁴ The PII Grantees include: Arizona Department of Economic Security; California Department of Social Services; Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; Los Angeles LGBT Center; University of Kansas; and Washoe County, Nevada Department of Social Services. For more information about Grantees' target populations and interventions, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/pii-project-resources>

⁵ PII operated from 2010 to 2016.

⁶ The Guide: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/guide-developing-implementing-assessing-innovation>

⁶ The Toolkit: <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>

guidance for using the Approach to deliver technical assistance. A quick reference guide is provided at the end of this Manual to assist you with keeping track of

and completing the major activities that need to occur during each of the steps of the Approach. The table below provides more detail on each section:

Section Title	Content
Background	The background includes an overview of PII, an overview of the Approach, and the purpose and goals of the Manual.
Methods of Technical Assistance Delivery	This section includes helpful information about delivery of T/TA.
Technical Assistance to Apply the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach	This section walks users through each step of the Approach, providing guidance on how to deliver T/TA related to each step. A set of questions at the beginning of each chapter within this section assists users in identifying materials to review.
Quick Reference Guide—Critical Implementation Junctures	Each of the activities in this checklist represents a critical implementation juncture and should be addressed before moving forward.

Overview of the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach

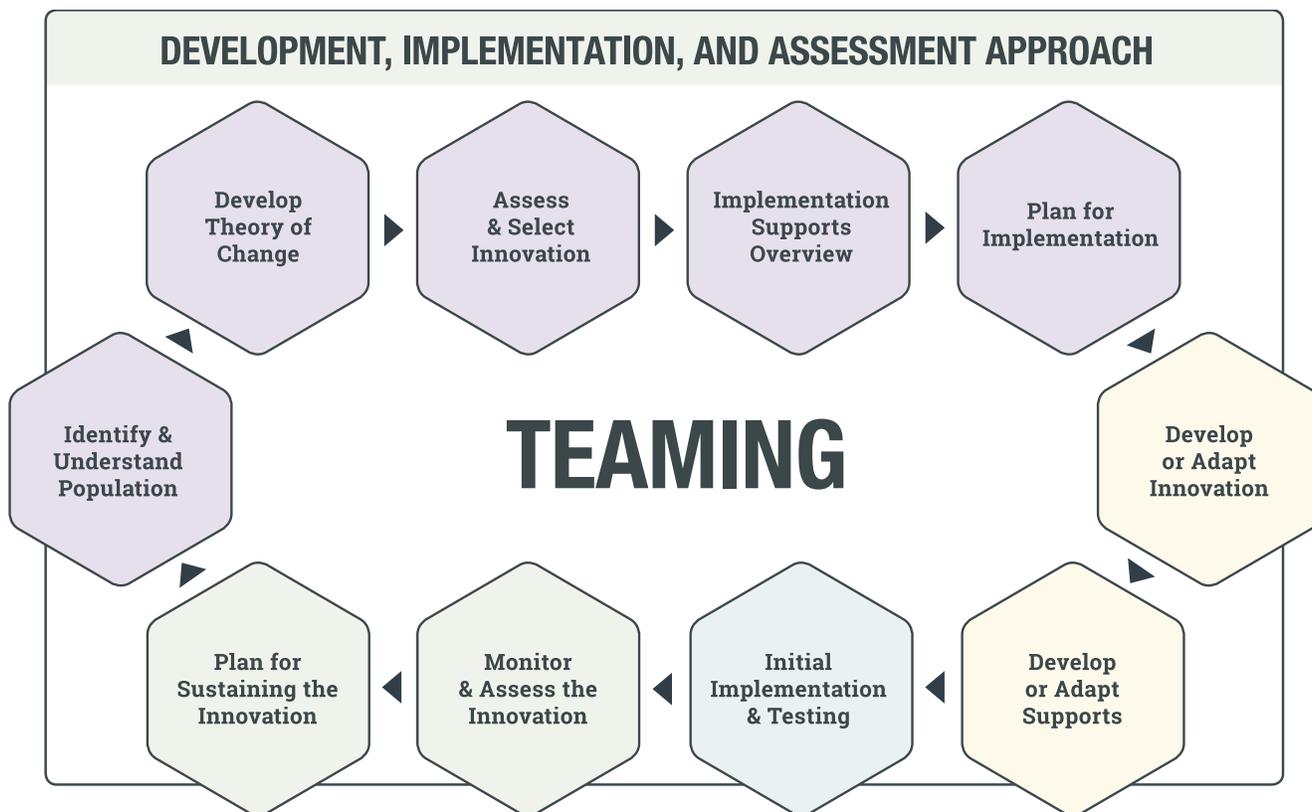
As noted above, the Approach serves as the foundation for this Manual. The Approach, which was developed by the PII-TTAP team to support PII Grantees, is a framework that helps organizations develop new innovations or adapt existing ones and effectively implement them to ultimately improve outcomes for children and families. This Approach builds on the technical assistance provided to PII Grantees and incorporates best practices and lessons learned from its application in the child welfare field. The Approach provides a systematic, practical framework for implementation in a child welfare setting.

The Approach involves activities that can be organized within four implementation stages: exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation. (See figure on next page.)⁷ Each of the stages includes steps that must be completed to progress through the implementation process. The early steps in the Approach focus on strategic planning: correctly identifying the problem, developing a theory of change, and selecting from existing solutions or deciding to devel-



op a new one. The later steps are focused on clearly operationalizing the innovation and the implementation supports, effectively using data to make improvements in the innovation and the implementation supports, and focused planning to sustain desired outcomes. Functional teaming and strategic communication provide a critical foundation for the entire implementation process. See the *Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach* for more information.

⁷ The four stages are based on the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) Active Implementation Stages.



Methods of Technical Assistance Delivery

Role of T/TA Provider

Technical assistance is defined as providing an “individualized, hands on approach to building an entity’s capacity for quality implementation of innovations.”⁸ This definition encompasses a wide variety of support that can be provided to a participating organization. When using the Approach, the role of the T/TA provider can be individualized depending on what the organization wants, its structure, its prior implementation knowledge, the innovation being implemented, the budget, and whether there are other T/TA providers involved. Before getting started with an organization, it is important for the T/TA provider

to clearly define its role and reach an agreement on what is expected of the T/TA provider and of others involved in the implementation effort.

Complex Process

Supporting development and implementation projects can often be complex to manage because of the many moving parts, the complexity of the content, and the political and policy factors that inevitably require attention. A T/TA leadership team with expertise in the fields of child welfare, implementation science, and project management, and T/TA staff with expertise in child welfare systems and practice and/or in implementation science are critical.

⁸ Wandersman, A., Chien, V. H., & Katz, J. (2012). Toward an evidence-based system for innovation support for implementing innovations with quality: Tools, training, technical assistance, and quality assurance/quality improvement. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(3–4), 445–459.

Best practices indicate that TA should be responsive to the needs of the organization and be customizable and tailored to the organization's current capabilities.⁹ T/TA providers should facilitate conversation and ask questions of the organization to anticipate its needs but also to help its staff explore the answers and move through the steps of implementation. It is helpful if the T/TA provider is knowledgeable about the organization but at the same time is able to bring an outside perspective. The T/TA provider must be willing to listen, learn, and explore resources to answer questions.

In general, the role of the T/TA provider is to help the organization move through the stages of program development, implementation, and monitoring/assessment. To do that, the Guide and Toolkit contain the various tools, resources, and examples that were used when applying the Approach to the work of PII Grantees. Depending on the organizational factors, some of these tools, resources, and examples might be more relevant than others.

Method of T/TA Delivery

Providing T/TA using the Approach is flexible. It is important to first examine what T/TA the organization needs and decide the best way to provide that T/TA—in person or via email, telephone, or video conference.



An Essential TA Component

A survey of PII Grantees on the quality and benefits of the TA provided to them showed that regularly scheduled conference calls and on-site visits were the most helpful. *“As much as it required scheduling and took a significant amount of effort, the bi-weekly calls were essential to communication and continued forward movement.”*

In addition, some parts of the Approach are better applied using different types of interaction. For example, the process to develop an implementation plan might call for a few initial organizing phone calls, followed by an all-day, in-person meeting and ending with the draft being circulated and revised via email.

Role of Virtual T/TA

Being able to use technology between face-to-face meetings allows the T/TA provider to remain up to date on project progress and provide T/TA on an as-needed basis. If the T/TA provider plans to provide T/TA using technology, the T/TA provider and the participating agency need to commit to the proposed schedule for meetings, webinars, and face-to-face meetings.

In addition, using technology as a platform for knowledge dissemination allows people to learn at their own pace and in a manner that suits their specific learning styles. Given the busy pace in the child welfare field, not everyone is able to attend every meeting. Virtual learning allows those who might have to miss a meeting to catch up when they have the chance. For these reasons, the products that explain the Approach are in written and video format, with accompanying tools, resources, and examples to further clarify concepts. As a T/TA provider, you can use these products both virtually and in person to accommodate a wide range of needs.

⁹ Wandersman, A., Chien, V. H., & Katz, J. (2012). Toward an evidence-based system for innovation support for implementing innovations with quality: Tools, training, technical assistance, and quality assurance/quality improvement. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(3–4), 445–459.

Benchmarks

For the PII Project, benchmarks set by the funder were used to monitor and track progress as the Grantees moved through the implementation steps. When providing T/TA using the Approach, it is very important to have a process in place to monitor and review progress, make decisions about implementation, and determine when the work is good enough to move forward or when adjustments may be needed before new implementation activities begin. A T/TA provider can use benchmarks to track progress, ensuring that the foundation is laid for solid implementation. For example, the development and approval of an implementation plan provides a roadmap for how implementation should proceed. Creating a solid foundation for implementation



and knowing that an innovation was implemented correctly serves to help build evidence of the innovation's usefulness in the child welfare field.

Technical Assistance to Apply the Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach

The following pages provide information that you as a T/TA provider can draw on and refer to for guidance when using the Approach to help an organization identify a problem, adapt or develop an innovation, prepare for implementation, implement, and plan for sustainability. The guidance is divided into the phases of implementation and organized according to the steps in the Approach, beginning with Teaming. For each of the steps, the Manual provides:

- **Preliminary Considerations**—Concepts and questions you should consider and answer (in conjunction with the organization) to determine if the organization has sufficiently addressed this topic or if additional TA is needed.
- **Overview**—The main activities of the step.
- **Summary From the Guide**—Provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in that step.
- **The Role of T/TA**—A list of the major undertakings with which a T/TA provider might provide assistance during the step.
- **Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents**—A table that lists the major tools, resources, and examples associated with the step and where they can be found.
- **Sample Questions**—A list of sample questions that you as the T/TA provider could use with the organization.
- **Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers**—A table of some of the challenges faced by the PII Grantees and how they were addressed.



Teaming and Communication Linkages

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization about teaming and communication linkages, review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on any of these topics. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the initiative you are supporting needs your help with this step.

- Does the organization currently have an Implementation Team?
- Does the Implementation Team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, leadership, functions the team will attend to, and decision-making processes?
- Is there a shared understanding of the role and goals of the Implementation Team, and the steps required to assure the team is well-positioned to move the innovation forward?
- Does the Implementation Team have a communication plan?

Be sure to review the Guide and the Toolkit before working on this step. It is very important to understand the basics of teaming and communication linkages before attempting to provide T/TA.

Overview

While developing an Implementation Team and writing a communication plan are the first steps in implementation, they are also constantly evolving and should be attended to throughout the entire process of implementation. The activities include assembling effective and well-formed teams, writing a team charter, developing a plan for “internal” team communication and for communication with other teams. The desired outcome is to ensure that the organization has a team that is able to guide the implementation of the innovation through the

steps outlined in the Approach. Additionally, the Implementation Team will need to develop a communication plan describing communication with internal and external stakeholders and among different internal teams.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Develop an Implementation Team. The Implementation Team guides the overall initiative by ensuring that 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 functions will change depending upon the implementation phase.

Reassessing Teams

Implementation Teams need to be reassessed and realigned periodically to ensure that the team continues to move the initiative forward. This realignment can be done in several ways, such as by convening new teams (if necessary) or repurposing existing teams to ensure that the functions are addressed. As a T/TA provider, you want to know if the right people (with the necessary skills and authority) and teams are in place to move the work forward and achieve the key objectives. You also want to know that there is a connection to organizational and systems leaders who can create the hospitable environment necessary for the innovation to succeed. Teams that may have been necessary and served a purpose while preparing for implementation may no longer be necessary. It is just as important to know when to disband a team as it is to know when to form or reconfigure one to attend to a specific function or set of objectives.

Membership should be broad-based to represent a cross-section of interests related to the purpose of the initiative. Teams with greater diversity are more likely to make innovative strategic decisions and consider a greater range of alternatives.¹⁰ Additional teams are frequently needed to focus on specific aspects of the implementation process. A clearly defined teaming structure with defined communication linkages ensures that the implementation work is accomplished. The team charter provides important information regarding the linked teaming structure, purpose, and responsibilities of each team, and the role of each team in relation to the others.

Develop an Executive Leadership Team. An executive leadership team, which is essential, has the capacity to allocate resources and provide support in a way that allows the Implementation Team members adequate time to participate in and complete the team's work. This requires managing the expectations of each team member's chain of command to ensure that there is adequate time allocated for Implementation Team work.

Develop a Communication Plan. A structure for communicating about implementation progress should focus on clear, consistent, open, and frequent communication as a key element. A communication plan outlines the overall approach for communicating with internal and external stakeholders in the innovation.



It outlines key messages, identifies key stakeholders, and describes communication activities.

Internal communication can be accomplished through a Web portal, online newsletter, or signage to remind staff and stakeholders of the goals of the innovation. Focus groups, implementation meetings, community forums, press releases, press conferences, inter-agency meetings, informational brochures, and social media are good vehicles for communicating and disseminating information to external stakeholders.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the needs of the organization and the relationship you as the T/TA provider have agreed to with the organization, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization address teaming and communication issues. You may help:

- Ensure that the organization has an understanding of the purpose of the Implementation Team, and help them define the team's responsibilities, the teaming structure, the existence and adequacy of the team charter, and the existence and adequacy of communication protocols and feedback loops.
- Determine your role with the Implementation Team. If you, as the T/TA provider, are not part of the Implementation Team, you will need to determine how you will interact with the team and stay informed of their work.
- Facilitate the creation of an Implementation Team.
- Determine where the organization is in its development of an Implementation Team. You may suggest that the organization's staff consider using the *Teaming Structure Assessment Tool* located in Volume 1, Chapter 1 of the Guide.
- Facilitate the creation of the team charter or review the developed team charter. The *Team Charter Tool* is available in Volume 1, Chapter 2 of the Guide.

¹⁰ Higgins, M.C., Weiner, J., & Young, L. (2012). Implementation teams: A new lever for organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(3), 366–388.

- Facilitate the Implementation Team in developing a communication plan. Learn what information the Team believes the staff and stakeholders need to know, when they need to know it, and how they want to receive the information.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with developing teaming and communication linkages. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Team Charter Template	Tool Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 2 Guide: Volume 1, Section 1	This tool guides the development of a formal team charter or the review of an existing team charter to ensure that the 9 charter elements required for a functional team are in place. This can be used as a discussion guide or as a template to create a completed document.
Teaming Structure Assessment Tool	Tool Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 3 Guide: Volume 1, Section 1	This tool is intended to help innovation staff reflect on how their teaming structure is operating (e.g., communicating, using data, strengthening implementation supports, and meeting objectives) and can be used throughout the stages of implementation to assess and reassess the teaming structure for the initiative.
Diamond County Teaming Structure	Example Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 1 Guide: Volume 1, Appendix	This document provides an example of a teaming structure for a fictitious child welfare agency and how it changed over time.
Washoe PII Structure Realignment	Example Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 1	This document shows the teaming structure realignment for Washoe County, a PII Grantee.
Teaming and Leadership to Sustain Your Outcomes, Innovation, and Implementation Infrastructure (May 2015)	Resource Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 3	This document is designed to help you sustain your innovation, describing the organizational functions that need to be maintained, capacities necessary to track and develop the functions, forms that would be useful for addressing these functions, necessary leadership skills, and strategies for partnering with stakeholders.
The Role of an Implementation-Focused Data Team with Decision Support Data System (DSDS)	Resource Toolkit: Teaming and Communication Linkages Module 1	This document examines the key considerations for deciding whether there should be an implementation-focused data team, the possible structures and activities a data team should address, and the key competencies that should be embedded in the team.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with developing teaming and communication linkages. They represent lessons learned from PII:

The question below is intended to assist you in assessing the organization's need for T/TA with respect to the development of an Implementation Team:

- Who does the organization identify as the Implementation Team members?

The questions below are for you to assess the organization's level of progress with respect to internal stakeholder communication:

- How well do the innovation staff and the child welfare organization administrators understand the concerns, hopes, and worries of staff (not involved with the innovation) regarding the impact of the innovation?
- If innovation staff and administrators don't understand the viewpoint of staff (not involved with the innovation), what can innovation staff and child welfare administrators do to gain a better understanding of their perspectives regarding this innovation?

As you provide T/TA to a child welfare organization to develop a communication protocol to be used with internal stakeholders who are not directly engaged in delivering the innovation, consider these questions to facilitate organization-wide communication and collect information that will inform internal stakeholder communication:¹¹

- What are the perceptions about the innovation in the organization?
- What would be meaningful to each of the organization's divisions/units regarding the innovation, and how can the Implementation Team use this information to engage the division/unit?

The organization may also need some assistance in developing a communication plan for external



stakeholders. The following questions are for you to facilitate the development of a communication strategy with external stakeholders:

- What should we communicate about the innovation and to whom?
- Who should lead the communication with each stakeholder group?
- What are the issues about which families may be sensitive when hearing information about the innovation?
- What is the best method for people to give feedback or input on the innovation?

The questions below are for you to use with the Implementation Team when assisting in development of a communication protocol:

- What key messages need to be shared with the entire staff regarding the innovation? How should the message be tailored for different staff roles? How can the organization continue to grow champions of the innovation within divisions/units?
- Are there any strategies that should be avoided because of the possibility of making communication more difficult? Are there issues that the agency/unit/division is facing that would be barriers to messaging this information?

¹¹ These questions are adapted from the NYC Implementation of Evidence-Based Models Internal Assessment of Communication Needs Protocol originally developed by NIRN.

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Forming an Implementation Team is essential but sometimes challenging as the same people are often tapped for participation on teams, committees, and workgroups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulate the level of commitment. • Ensure that the Implementation Team members develop a working agreement.
Often the purpose of the Implementation Team is not clearly differentiated from that of other workgroups or committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly define the purpose and the work of the Implementation Team. • Educate the organization on the importance of the Implementation Team.
Teaming Structure is not addressing needed functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly collect data to gather information about the perception at multiple levels within the agency of the ability or status of the Implementation Team to fulfill the functions needed to move the initiative forward. • Use the Teaming Structure Assessment Tool to assist the Implementation Team with realignment as needed.
<p>Strong and/or dominant personalities</p> <p>Varying levels of authority inherent in a position or tenure in the agency</p> <p>Disagreements</p> <p>Personality conflicts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the Implementation Team to identify how they will work together as well as what they will work on. Incorporate this information into the team charter, which needs to be recorded, visible at meetings, and revisited at each meeting to ensure that each team member is accountable to this agreement.

Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization on identifying the problem and understanding the target population, the organization should have an identified team or teams ready and willing to do the work. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs help with this step:

- Do you have a clearly identified outcome you are seeking to change?
- Have you identified the target population most affected?
- Do you understand the underlying needs or root causes that are affecting the outcomes of your target population?

Be sure to review the Guide and the Toolkit before working through this step. It is very important to understand the basics of identifying a problem and target population before attempting to provide T/TA using this model.

Overview

The first step in the implementation process described in the Approach is to identify and understand the problem the organization wants to solve. Understanding the problem requires the use of data to understand the needs and characteristics of the target population. The desired outcomes of these activities are to:

- Understand the problem and its root causes.
 - What is the problem?

- What are the root causes of the problem (why is it a problem)?
- Identify the target population.
 - Use data to determine who is most at risk of experiencing the problem.
 - Identify needs of the target population—define the circumstances and conditions experienced by the target population that can be remedied.
- Define the scope of the problem.
- Determine the outcomes of interest for the target population.
- Identify the systemic barriers that exist or may exist that will affect the team’s ability to address the problem and achieve the desired outcome(s).

This work must be done **BEFORE** choosing an innovation. It is tempting to choose an innovation



Don't Forget About the Team

To identify and understand the problem, a team must be assembled to investigate the problem and learn about the target population. The team should have an understanding of its responsibilities and a strategy for communicating with each other and with the Implementation Team (if it is a separate team). The information in the Teaming and Communication Linkages section of the Guide can help in assembling a team and developing a communication strategy.

The team should be drawn from agency leadership, field staff, and supervisors. Child welfare agency leadership should be represented for efficiency in making decisions regarding target populations and innovations. Leadership involvement may assist in quickly addressing systemic barriers. Capacity for critical thinking is crucial during these initial steps; therefore, including child welfare agency staff devoted to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities will be helpful. Pursuing partnerships with universities or other entities to conduct data analyses, if this capacity does not exist in the agency or organization, is also worthwhile. In addition, involving external stakeholders in this process may help to gain buy-in and support for the initiative.

first, but doing so will likely result in implementation incongruence, or the implementation of an innovation that does not address the problem or needs of the target population. It is possible to perfectly implement an innovation that does not address the problem or needs of the target population, and as a result to see no improvements in the problem and therefore in the outcomes of children and families.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Identify the Problem. Problem identification involves understanding “what” the problem is and “why” the problem exists. Often leadership or others in key roles in the organization will have ideas about a problem that needs to be addressed. For example:

- An unmet need (e.g., not enough foster homes)
- An identified need for improvement (e.g., visiting children in their foster homes twice a month)
- An unaddressed mandate from policy or court order (e.g., decreasing the rate of maltreatment in care to below a certain threshold)

Identifying a problem will require an organization to conduct research to better understand the “what” and the “why” of an identified or suspected problem. In other words, as noted above, what is the problem and why does it exist? What are the root causes of the problem? The information needed to answer these questions may not be available through a single source, so multiple reports or sources of information may be needed.

Examples of Target Populations

PII Grantees were asked to identify who, in their jurisdictions, were at risk of staying in long-term foster care. Each Grantee identified a target population based on analyses of qualitative and administrative data about children in the care of the state or local child welfare agency. Some of the target populations they identified were:

- > African American and Native American children
- > LGBTQ children ages 7–16
- > Children in care for more than 12 months with one or more identified risk characteristics and an available parent to participate in an innovation
- > Young people ages 13–17½ in care for more than 2 years

Use Analysis Tools and Techniques

Among various methods available for analyzing the collected data, data mining helps to identify the target population. A process of analysis used to explore large amounts of data in search of consistent patterns or relationships between variables, data mining differs from other forms of research in that it can be used to explore a dataset without testing a specific hypothesis. For more information on using data mining for identifying target populations and understanding their characteristics, refer to the Toolkit and the Guide.

Additional research can be used to confirm or reject identified patterns or relationships that suggest a target population. Geographic information systems can be used to further enhance statistical analysis and simplify complex information by providing a visual or spatial context for the data. If the capacity to do this analysis does not exist in the organization you are supporting, it is helpful to seek assistance from university partners or others who have those capabilities.

Identify the Target Population. After identifying a problem, it is important to understand who is at risk of experiencing it. Because risk factors are predictive, not descriptive, the conditions that put the target population at risk of experiencing the problem need to be identified. Subpopulations that may also be at risk of experiencing the problem should also be analyzed and understood. To determine who is at risk, research to gather evidence about families in the local child welfare system should be conducted. It should look at data longitudinally—that is, the same type of information on the same subjects at multiple points in time. It should also note factors related to exclusions, geography, or disproportionate representation. Using data from the research about the child welfare system, the team should look at the needs of the target population.

The needs define the circumstances and conditions that can be remedied.

Define the Scope. Defining the breadth of the problem as it relates to the number of people affected and the location of the target population in the jurisdiction is crucial. Conducting the research and gathering the evidence required to understand the needs of the target population and the breadth of the problem are not trivial undertakings. Research should focus on the conditions and cases in each jurisdiction. In addition to agency case files and administrative data, local child welfare data, including statistical databases, surveys, and focus groups, will be useful.

It may also be useful to gather information from other research conducted about the children and families in the state or local child welfare system. Bibliographic databases (such as the Child Welfare Information Gateway) can provide reports and articles about the target population that may help clarify its needs. The Toolkit and the Guide provide an example of how a child welfare agency used research and data analysis to understand the target population.

To do this work, many child welfare agencies choose to partner with research organizations, such as think tanks or universities, to help conduct the research required to understand the problem and identify the target population.





Determine the Outcomes of Interest. After the target population has been determined, teams should identify which outcome(s) should be improved for the target population. Clearly identifying the outcomes of interest for the target population will guide the selection of an innovation and help to define what constitutes success.

Identifying who is at risk of experiencing the problem, narrowing the target population, and articulating desired outcomes are important activities to help develop a theory of change. This information can also inform an evaluation to determine whether the innovation is achieving the desired outcomes.

Identify Systemic Barriers. After the target population, needs, and root causes of the problem have been identified, the team needs to consider what systemic barriers exist or may exist that will affect the team's ability to achieve the desired outcome(s) to address the problem. These barriers may be concrete issues within an agency (such as lack of adequate staff to implement a new innovation), or something more abstract (like values, beliefs, and commitment to change) that affect the agency's culture and ability to successfully implement an innovation. This information is important for two reasons. First, it is crucial that the team be aware of these barriers to determine whether a theory of change and a possible innovation can feasibly be pursued. Second, if barriers are known in advance of the selection of an

innovation, they can be communicated to leadership and stakeholders who can assist in addressing them. Systemic barriers may be related to staffing, leadership, or organizational supports. Specific examples of barriers can be found in the Toolkit and the Guide.

For more information about problem identification and understanding the target population, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Your role is to guide and support the organization in identifying the problem and the target population. The key elements of this work include helping the organization:

- Understand the problem and root causes
- Identify the target population
- Identify needs of the target population
- Define the scope of the problem
- Determine the outcomes of interest for the target population
- Identify the systemic barriers that exist or may exist that will affect the team's ability to achieve the desired outcome(s) to address the problem

Also, ensuring that the organization has access to staff or another contractor to support the data analysis is key to the role of the T/TA provider in this step. Without staff or other support with the capacity to conduct statistical and other types of data analysis, it will be very difficult to understand the problem and target population most at risk of experiencing the problem.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with the various components of identifying a problem and target population. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Illinois Target Population Template	Example Toolkit: Section 1, Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population Guide: Volume 2, Appendix	This template, from the Illinois PII Grantee, documents the analysis conducted to identify the target population and the evidence that this population is at risk of long-term foster care.
Identify the Problem and Root Causes	Supplement Toolkit: Section 1, Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population Guide: Volume 2, Section 1	This supplemental document gives further guidance on how to identify the problem the organization is trying to solve and figuring out why the problem exists.
Identifying a Target Population	Supplement Toolkit: Section 1, Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population Guide: Volume 2, Section 1	This supplemental document gives further guidance on determining the population most at risk of experiencing the identified problem.
Data Mining in Child Welfare	Resource Toolkit: Section 1, Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population	This article illustrates the context, concepts, processes, techniques, and tools of data mining using statistical and neural network analyses on a dataset concerning employee turnover. (Schoech, D., Quinn, A., & Rycraft, J. R., 2000)
Informing Child Welfare Policy and Practice: Using Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining Technology via a Dynamic Website	Resource Toolkit: Section 1, Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population	This article discusses the use of knowledge discovery and data mining, which makes it possible to create longitudinal data files from administrative data sources, extract valuable knowledge, and make the information available via a user-friendly public website. (Duncan, D. F., Kum, H., Weigensberg, E., Flair, K. A., & Stewart, C., 2008)

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with identifying the problem and understanding the target population. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- How will the organization do the work to understand the problem and define its scope?
- Who will be included and who will lead the work?
- Does the organization have the necessary skills for doing this work?
- What is the timeline?
- Who will decide that the problem has been sufficiently defined?
- How will this decision be made?

- How will the organization do the work to identify the target population, the outcomes of interest for the target population, and any systemic barriers that may exist that will affect the team’s ability to achieve the desired outcome(s) to address the problem?
 - Who will be included and who will lead the work?
 - Does the organization have the necessary skills for doing this work?
 - What is the timeline?
 - Who will decide that the target population and its needs have been sufficiently defined?
 - How will this decision be made?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
<p>There is a temptation to identify an innovation before identifying the problem and target population.</p>	<p>It is very important to identify the problem and understand the target population. As a T/TA provider, you can help to slow down the organization on this step until it is complete. You can also help the organization find the right people to do the data-mining and analysis required in this step.</p>
<p>Digging deep enough to identify the root cause of the problem is challenging and takes time. It may be tempting to just identify a problem and not dig to clearly identify the root causes.</p>	<p>Keep asking “why” until you get to the underlying cause(s) of a problem. Asking why should lead to an apparent action that can be taken to address the problem and prevent it from recurring. Responses should be factual—including occurrences grounded in fact—not based on assumptions or personal beliefs.</p>
<p>It may be difficult to find the right people with the right skills to do the data analysis required to identify the target population most at risk.</p>	<p>It is crucial to find the right people with the right skills even if the organization has to look to outside support from university partners or contractors.</p>

Develop a Theory of Change

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization on developing a theory of change, the organization should have identified a problem and target population. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization you are working with needs help with this step:

- Has the organization with which you are working conducted research to inform its hypothesis about what activities, if implemented, will change outcomes for the target population?
- Can the organization articulate the process by which it believes outcomes for the target population will change?

You should be knowledgeable about developing a theory of change. If you are not familiar with this topic, be sure to review section 2 of the Toolkit or the Guide before attempting to provide T/TA on this concept.

Overview

After identifying the problem and understanding the target population, the next step is to develop a well-conceived theory of change, which helps to identify a pathway of change from the root cause of the problem to the desired outcome.

This work must be done **BEFORE** choosing an innovation. As noted above, it is tempting to choose an innovation first, but doing so will likely result in implementation incongruence, or the implementation of an innovation that does not match the problem or needs of the target population. It is possible to perfectly implement an innovation that does not address the problem or needs of the target population, and

see no reduction in the problem and therefore in the outcomes of children and families.

The desired outcome of this step is a defined theory of change.

Summary

A theory of change consists of five components, described below, including the identification of the desired outcome, causal links, assumptions, indicators, and a narrative to describe the full theory.

Desired Outcomes. Developing a theory of change starts with identifying the desired outcome or outcomes based on the root cause of the identified problem and the needs and characteristics of the target population. In a theory of change, outcomes represent changes in conditions of some kind among people, institutions, and systems. For example, an outcome could be a change in a policy, law, behavior, attitude, knowledge, or state of the environment. Desired outcomes should be realistically achievable, and everyone involved should be able to understand them.



Causal Links. A theory of change includes a series of steps that must unfold for the desired outcomes to be met. Research and data mining to identify the problem and understand the root causes may be augmented to identify these steps. Only steps that can be linked in a way that shows a causal progression toward a desired outcome should be included. Together, these steps—“causal links”—make up the pathway of change, from understanding the root cause of the problem to achieving the desired outcome.

Assumptions. When working with an organization to support it in identifying causal links and clarifying a theory of change, it is important to ensure that organizational staff articulate underlying assumptions related to the causal links. Such assumptions help to explain why the pathway of change will solve the problem. They also lay the groundwork for selecting an appropriate solution or innovation for the problem. Supporting assumptions with research from literature in the child welfare and social science fields strengthens the plausibility of the theory and the chances of achieving the desired outcomes.

Discussing assumptions with the Implementation Team and with other stakeholders helps to identify



Don't Forget About the Team

The team used to investigate the problem and learn about the target population may also be the team that works together to identify a theory of change. The team should have an understanding of its responsibilities and a strategy for communicating with each other and with the Implementation Team (if it is a separate team). The information in the Teaming and Communication Linkages section of the Guide can help in assembling a team and developing a communication strategy.

indicators to track success and strategies to produce desired outcomes. Discussing thoughtful questions about assumptions can test their validity and can generate discussion about ideas that can be tested and measured. Exploring these questions in a group setting may help to develop consensus about the group's common beliefs concerning the identified problem and what needs to occur to solve it.

Indicators. After identifying the causal links and the associated pathway of change, you should work with the Implementation Team to define indicators. Identifying and defining indicators allows the team to monitor and assess progress toward achieving desired outcomes. Indicators may also be thought of as evidence that the outcome is being achieved. Indicators are formulated by answering several questions to help determine the evidence that proves that the causal link has been achieved.

Narrative. When the desired outcomes, causal links, assumptions, and indicators have been thoroughly discussed and documented, it is important to work with the organization to describe its theory of change. In a brief narrative, the Implementation Team should explain the overall logic and present a compelling case for how and why the initiative is expected to work. The narrative provides a quick way to explain the theory of change to others and to communicate how each of the elements will work together. The appendix at the

end of Volume 2 of the Guide includes an example of a theory of change for one of the PII Grantees.

For more information about developing a theory of change, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Your role in this step is to guide and support the organization in developing a theory of change after a problem and target population have been identified. This includes:

- Describing the benefits of a theory of change
- Helping the Implementation Team understand the five components needed to construct a theory of change:
 - Desired outcomes
 - Causal links
 - Assumptions
 - Indicators
 - Narrative

Your role also includes asking meaningful questions to test assumptions and the theory of change.



Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization develop a theory of change. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
The Theory of Change Development Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change Guide: Volume 2, Section 2	This tool allows the user to specify causal links and indicators and to articulate assumptions that help to build a pathway from the root cause of the problem to the desired outcomes. Once these elements have been articulated, space is provided to draft a narrative that describes an overall theory of change.
Diamond County Theory of Change	Example Guide: Volume 2, Section 2	A fully developed fictitious example of a theory of change.
Kansas Intensive Permanency Project (KIPP) Theory of Change	Example Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change Guide: Volume 2, Appendix	This document describes the theory of change for KIPP, a PII Grantee.
The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A Practical Guide to Theory Development	Resource Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change	This guide is organized in two sections: Section 1 provides information needed to facilitate a theory of change process with a community group. Section 2 is a resource toolbox for the theory of change facilitator. (Anderson, A.A., 2006)
Applying a Theory of Change Approach to the Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Progress, Prospects, and Problems	Resource Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change	This paper presents a theory of change approach to evaluating comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), describing it in three stages: surfacing and articulating a theory of change; measuring a CCI's activities and intended outcomes; and analyzing and interpreting the results of an evaluation. (Connell, J.P., & Kubisch, A.C., 1998)
Theory of Change Technical Papers: A Series of Papers to Support Development of Theories of Change Based on Practice in the Field	Resource Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change	These technical papers cover core components of the concept of theory of change and key requirements for its effective implementation. (Taplin, D.H., Clark, H., Collins, E., and Colby, D.C., 2013)
Using a Theory of Change to Drive Human Resource Development for Wraparound	Resource Toolkit: Section 2, Develop a Theory of Change	Focusing on the role of a theory of change for the wraparound approach, this article demonstrates how achieving coherence and integration across staff professional development activities is facilitated when training, coaching, and staff evaluation are guided by a clearly articulated program theory or "theory of change."

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with developing a theory of change. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- How will the organization do the work to develop the theory of change?
 - Who will be included and who will lead the work?
 - Does the organization have the necessary skills for doing this work?
 - What is the timeline?
- Is the theory of change:
 - Plausible—Does the logic of the pathway of change seem correct: “If these causal links are completed, will we get the results we expect?”
 - Feasible—Are the human, political, and economic resources sufficient to complete the causal links?
 - Testable—Are there credible ways to measure whether progress is happening as expected?
 - Meaningful—Are the desired outcomes important?
 - Is the magnitude of change worth the effort?
 - Aligned—Are the desired outcomes aligned with the agency’s values, vision, and philosophy?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
It is tempting to skip over this and go right to innovation development.	Work through an example of a theory of change to clarify why it is important. If the organization doesn’t do it up front, the work will have to be done at a later point in time. The delay in doing the work may have consequences. For example, if the desired outcome and causal links (steps to getting to the outcome) are not identified early, there is no way to know what the innovation is trying to achieve and how to get there. This is a crucial point to make.
Some of the concepts required in developing a theory of change are confusing or difficult to grasp.	Frame it to move away from thinking about a specific innovation and toward thinking more about how business as usual needs to be different.
A theory of change is not a Logic Model!	The primary difference between the two is that a theory of change does not require the identification of a specific innovation or solution, but a logic model does. Helping an organization understand that a theory of change is used in a logic model, but that a logic model cannot be developed without an identified innovation, may help to clarify.

Assess and Select an Innovation

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization surrounding its selection of an innovation, the organization should have identified a problem and target population. The organization leaders with whom you are working should have a clear theory of change and should be clear about the members of the Implementation Team and how decisions regarding the initiative are made. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Have a list of possible solutions?
- Have a list of key factors upon which to assess the fit of possible solutions?
- Have a solution that addresses the identified problem for the target population?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should take when selecting an innovation. This includes but is not limited to knowledge about where to find potential innovations, assessing the fit of an innovation to the organization, and being aware of the factors an organization needs to consider before



deciding to develop its own innovation. If you are not familiar with these topics, please refer to Section 3 in the Toolkit or the Guide.

Overview

The desired outcome of this step is the selection of an innovation that fits the organization and addresses the identified problem and the needs of the target population. This could include selecting an already existing ESI, choosing to adapt an existing ESI, or developing a new innovation based on existing research. To arrive at this decision, the organization must have done significant research to identify potential innovations that might address the identified problem. The organization must have identified and compared the possible innovations across key factors to identify which innovation is the best fit for the organization and the identified theory of change.

Clearinghouses for Evidence-Supported Innovations

Multiple websites serve as clearinghouses for evidence-supported innovations, but not all use the same criteria for what constitutes evidence. When helping your organization to research possible solutions, be sure everyone is aware of the variation in rankings from site to site.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Identify Possible Solutions. Helping an organization identify an innovation starts with developing a list of possible solutions. Researching and identifying possible solutions includes a review of a variety of different sources such as websites, peer-reviewed

journals, publicly available reports, and experts. It can be useful to review other fields such as mental health, juvenile justice, and substance abuse. A comprehensive list of websites and clearinghouses for finding evidence-based practices can be found in the Guide and the Toolkit.

Key Factors to Consider in Assessing Solutions.

Information gathered from researching possible solutions, interviewing program developers, and contacting other organizations that have implemented the same innovation serve as ways to gather information about the possible solutions. This information can then be used to help the organization assess each of the solutions using a variety of factors, such as:

- The alignment of the innovation with the theory of change
- Evidence demonstrating improvement in the short- and long-term outcomes of interest
- The fit of the innovation with the agency or system
- The feasibility and organizational capacity of implementing and sustaining the innovation within the agency or system
- The readiness of the innovation for implementation

Selecting a Solution. The organization can use the Innovation Assessment and Selection Tool in the Guide and the Toolkit to assess each of the possible solutions on the key factors presented above. After making a decision, the organization will need to decide whether the chosen innovation will need to be modified to fit the target population and structure of the organization.

If at the end of the search, the team decides none of the possible existing solutions fits with the organization, they could decide to develop an innovation. Developing an innovation could borrow from existing innovations or build on current research.

Reasons for Adapting a Solution. There are multiple reasons an organization might consider adapting an innovation. Most commonly organizations choose to adapt an innovation that was used with a different:

Developing an Innovation

In your role as a TA provider, it will be very important to be familiar with the work involved in developing an innovation. This way you can accurately inform the organization about the steps they will need to take. You should also emphasize that the organization will need to set aside a significant amount of time to do the work involved in developing an innovation. Section 6 in the Guide or Toolkit provides more information on what is involved when developing an innovation.

- Target population—Differences might include race or ethnicity, age, gender, education, and income levels.
- Structure of the child welfare system—For example, the innovation was implemented in a public agency but the organization you are working with is fully privatized.

Regardless of the reason for adapting, it is a good idea for the organization to work closely with the innovation developer or another expert when doing the adaptations.

For more information about assessing and selecting an innovation, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the needs of the organization and the relationship you as the T/TA provider have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping the organization assess and select an innovation. You may help:

- Prepare an approach for assessing possible innovations, including:
 - Key factors for the organization to consider based on the work done in Steps 1 and 2
 - Fit with the organization’s mission and values
- Direct the organization to resources that identify possible solutions.
- Conduct a research review.

- Examine the possible solutions.
- Weigh the pros and cons of developing the organization's own innovation and/or adapting an already existing innovation.
- Choose an innovation.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials you could use to help an organization with various components of assessing and selecting an innovation. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Innovation Developers or Experts Interview Guide	Tool Toolkit: Section 3, Assess and Select an Innovation Guide: Volume 2, Section 3	This tool outlines questions organizations should ask innovation developers when they are trying to decide whether the innovation is right for their organization.
Innovation Assessment and Selection Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 3, Assess and Select an Innovation Guide: Volume 2, Section 3	This tool allows the comparison of up to five different innovations across a variety of categories. It should be used once an organization has already narrowed down its choice of innovations.
Research Review	Example Toolkit: Section 3, Assess and Select an Innovation Guide: Volume 2, Appendix	This is an example research review completed for a PII Grantee when it was trying to determine the level of evidence needed for a proposed practice or innovation. This example illustrates the type of information that should be gathered and shared when conducting a review to determine the level of evidence for potential solutions.
Illinois Intervention Template	Example Toolkit: Section 3, Assess and Select an Innovation	This example from a PII Grantee demonstrates how the intervention would address the problem and the needs of the target population. This example illustrates the type of information an Implementation Team may want to gather and share to justify the selection of a specific innovation.
List of evidence-based clearinghouses	Resource Toolkit: Section 3, Assess and Select an Innovation Guide: Volume 2, Section 3	List of evidence-based clearinghouses that can be used to identify and assess potential innovations. Each clearinghouse varies in its definition of evidence and in the interventions listed. Other resources and research efforts should supplement.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with assessing and selecting an innovation. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Does the organization have a clearly defined problem and target population?
- Is there an articulated theory of change?
- How will the organization research possible solutions?
 - Who will be included and who will be in charge?
 - What is the timeline?
 - Who has the final decision on choosing an innovation?
- What will the organization use for its search? Possibilities include evidence-based clearinghouses, peer-reviewed journals, and publicly available reports about child welfare practices.
- How will the results of the search be organized and presented? To whom will the results be presented?

As a T/TA provider, you could use the following questions when helping an organization compare and choose an innovation (a detailed list of sub-questions for each of the following questions can be found in the Innovation Assessment and Selection Tool in the Toolkit and Guide):

- How well does the innovation align with the organization’s theory of change?
- Is there evidence demonstrating that use of the innovation results in improved outcomes? If so, what is it?
- How well does the innovation fit with the organization?
- Does the organization have the organizational capacity needed to implement and sustain the innovation? If not, what needs to be done?
- How ready is the innovation for implementation?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Choosing an innovation based on leadership influence or another jurisdiction’s experience instead of relying on key, available data.	Use the innovation assessment tool with the organization.
While it might be the only way for the organization to meet the needs of the target population, creating an entire innovation is time and resource intensive.	Provide an overview of what would need to be done to create an innovation (refer to the Guide or the Toolkit for more information on what is involved).
Using an existing ESI might save time on development but poses other challenges (e.g., interactions with innovation developers, limited ability to adapt).	Use <i>Intervention Developers</i> or <i>Expert Interview Guide</i> to help the organization gather as much information as needed about the potential ESI and what exactly is needed to implement it before moving forward.
The people with the knowledge needed to choose an innovation might not be involved, such as those implementing the innovation or those receiving the innovation.	Help or remind the organization to review the teaming structure and team members regularly. If the correct members are not present, help or remind them that it might be time to restructure or create a new team. As a T/TA provider, it will be helpful for you to review the Teaming and Communication step again.

Provide an Overview of the Implementation Supports

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization on implementation supports, the organization should have selected an innovation for implementation. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization may need your help in understanding the implementation supports and their compensatory nature. Does the organization:

- Have criteria established for recruiting and selecting practitioners to implement the innovation?
- Have an established training curriculum and coaching plan that has been developed for the existing innovation?
- Have existing fidelity measures and protocols to assess practitioners’ implementation of the innovation?
- Have policies and procedures in place to support the new way of work and the innovation?



- Have systems in place to collect and manage information about the implementation of the innovation?
- Have agency and system stakeholders and leaders engaged to support the innovation?

You should be knowledgeable about the six supports that need to be in place for a solid infrastructure and an organizational environment open to and supportive of successful implementation. If you are not familiar with these topics, please review the information below and refer to the Toolkit or the Guide.

Overview

The desired outcome of this step is to introduce the organization to the six implementation supports that need to be put in place to support their innovation. The organization’s Implementation Team will need to understand each of these supports that will become a part of its implementation plan. Each of these implementation supports is further defined in Step 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Leadership and Stakeholder Supports. Policies, procedures, and organizational structure, culture, and climate influence the success of an innovation or systemic change. Evidence shows that when these organizational factors are functioning well, innovations are more likely to be successfully implemented. Effective leadership, with a strong shared vision, is also critical to the success of an organization, particularly

one facing system-wide change. Strong leaders clarify existing goals or develop new ones, engage and support staff, obtain buy-in by connecting the innovation's goals to the foundational goals of child welfare practice, and transform longstanding beliefs and practices. It is important to:

- Adjust organization and leadership factors, as needed
- Consider how stakeholders will be engaged
- Identify stakeholders and establish regular communications

Staff Recruitment and Selection. Staff recruitment and selection is the first critical step in the process of building a competent workforce with the knowledge and skills to implement practices that benefit children and families. Recruitment and selection involves identifying a qualified recruitment and selection team.

Staff Training. Training teaches staff how to provide an innovation, by focusing on the skills and capacities related to the innovation's essential functions as well as when, where, how, and with whom to use (and not to use) the innovation. Pretests are useful for determining practitioners' existing knowledge and what they need to learn. Training supervisors before training practitioners allows supervisors to assist with the training of their staff.

Staff Coaching. While training introduces the skills and capacities required to successfully deliver an innovation, coaching extends that training. Coaching can help staff apply the skills and capacities introduced in training to carry out an innovation with confidence and competence. Coaching reinforces skills and capacities on the job, inspiring staff to reach their personal and professional potential.

Fidelity Assessments. Fidelity assessments are used to determine whether the program or innovation is being implemented as intended. These assessments help ensure that the innovation's essential functions are in place. Fidelity assessment protocols may already



exist for an innovation or may need to be developed. If they need to be developed, the Implementation Team should allow extra time to complete this task.

Identification and Use of Data. Identifying and using data for decision-making can help determine whether the innovation is improving practices and producing the expected outcomes for children and families. This includes outcome data as well as the implementation supports generated throughout implementation. Before implementing the innovation, the Implementation Team should think through the questions they need to answer and the data needed to answer them. Data should be organized in a way that allows for easy access.

For more information, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization understand implementation supports. You may help the organization:



- Prepare an approach for assessing current implementation supports or those needed to build a solid infrastructure and organizational environment to support successful implementation.

- Become familiar with resources or information that allows the organization to understand the concepts regarding implementation supports.
- Understand the compensatory nature of the implementation supports.
- Develop a plan to build implementation supports at the various implementation stages.
- Understand how the implementation supports are affected positively or negatively by teaming and communication.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of implementation supports. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Core Implementation Components	Resource Toolkit: Section 4, Implementation Supports Overview	Two frameworks related to implementation stages and core implementation components are described in this article and presented as critical links between research and practice.
Active Implementation Frameworks for Program Success: How to Use Implementation Science to Improve Outcomes for Children	Resource Toolkit: Section 4, Implementation Supports Overview	Outlining four implementation frameworks, this article discusses the role of implementation supports in ensuring sustainable program success.
Toward an Evidence Based System for Innovation Support for Implementing Innovations with Quality to Achieve Desired Outcomes: Tools, Training, Technical Assistance, and Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement	Resource Toolkit: Section 4, Implementation Supports Overview	This article begins to conceptualize theory, research, and action for an evidence-based system for innovation support (EBSIS) focusing on four key support components: tools, training, technical assistance, and quality assurance/quality improvement.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with determining readiness for developing implementation supports and the implementation plan. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- How will the organization attend to all six implementation supports before beginning the implementation process?
- Does the proposed innovation have an established training curriculum?
 - If not, who will be responsible for developing it and training staff?
- Does the innovation have an established coaching plan?
 - If not, who will be responsible for developing it and coaching staff?
- Does the innovation have established fidelity criteria?
 - If not, who will be responsible for developing the criteria?
 - Who will be responsible for completing the fidelity reviews?
- Are the data that will be used for decision-making available?
 - If not, what will be required to collect data?
 - Are there resources and internal capacity for data analysis?
 - What is the timeline?
- Is there executive leadership support for this innovation?
- Is there community stakeholder support for this innovation?
- Will staff need to be hired to deliver the innovation?
 - Do existing staff have the capacity to deliver the innovation?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Lack of understanding of the implementation science concepts.	Educate the Implementation Team and others within the organization on implementation science research. Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.
The people with the knowledge and authority to allocate resources might not be involved.	Help or remind the organization to review the teaming structure and team members regularly. If the correct members are not present, help or remind them that it might be time to restructure or create a new team. As a T/TA provider, it will be helpful for you to review the Teaming and Communication step again.

Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization on initial assessment and developing an implementation plan, the organization should be familiar with the implementation supports. Review the following questions to determine in which stage of implementation the organization is and whether you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates the organization you are supporting needs to work on this step. Has the organization you are supporting:

- Assessed the readiness of the innovation for implementation?
- Identified the work needed to implement the innovation?
- Drafted an implementation plan to ensure that the innovation and implementation supports are developed and ready for implementation?
- Reviewed and adjusted a communications strategy with internal and external stakeholders to prepare for implementation?
- Assessed an existing team in preparation for the next phase of implementation?

You should be knowledgeable about conducting an initial assessment and developing an implementation plan before attempting to provide T/TA. Review the Toolkit or the Guide for more information.

Overview

After developing, assessing, and selecting an innovation, the next step is to conduct initial assessments and develop an implementation plan. The organization should assess the selected innovation(s) to determine



how much development or adaptation work is needed before implementation can begin. Creating an implementation plan will help to clarify time and resource requirements. Adjustments to the team and the communications strategy are necessary to prepare for the next phase of implementation. The desired outcomes are for the organization to:

- Understand the readiness of an innovation for implementation and the work needed to implement it.
- Draft an implementation plan.
- Update communications strategy with internal and external stakeholders to prepare for implementation.
- Put an appropriate teaming structure in place for the next step in implementation.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Assess the Innovation. Before an innovation is implemented, the Implementation Team should make sure the innovation fits within the organizational context and should create a plan for development or adaptation work. To do this, the team must understand the innovation’s readiness for implementation and how much work, if any, will be required to make it ready.

After readiness has been assessed, the team can plan the time and resources for necessary development and/or adaptations. These efforts build on the assessment and research conducted while selecting a solution for an identified problem.

Assess Innovation Readiness. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) suggests that an innovation is ready for implementation when it is teachable, learnable, doable, and readily assessed in practice. For an innovation to be “ready” for implementation, the organization should be able to articulate:

- A clear description of the innovation, including the philosophy, values, and principles, and the population that will benefit.
- A delineation of the features that must be present to say the innovation exists; these are the essential functions.
- Behaviorally based indicators for each essential function that are observable and measurable, to ensure consistency across practitioners delivering the innovation.
- A method of assessing whether the essential functions are being performed as intended.

If the organization selected an existing evidence-supported innovation and it is being directly replicated, most likely the four features mentioned above have already been articulated. If the innovation involves adaptation (i.e., making adjustments to fit the target population and the context) or the team is developing an innovation, the organization will need to operationalize the innovation. This is discussed in detail in the Toolkit and the Guide.

Assess the Implementation Supports. The readiness of the implementation supports will also need to be assessed to ensure there is a hospitable environment in which practitioners can implement the innovation. After the readiness of the implementation supports is clear, the Implementation Team should determine the time and resources needed for development and/or adaptation. This builds on the assessment and research completed when selecting a solution for the identified problem.

Develop an Implementation Plan. An implementation plan is a comprehensive plan to guide pre-implementation and implementation activities. It illustrates critical steps for the agency to prepare to roll out the innovation and serves as a roadmap for the Leadership and Implementation Teams. The implementation plan is a living document used as a monitoring tool to determine whether the process of implementation

Ask the Organization These Questions

The following questions should clarify which implementation supports are already in place and which need to be developed or strengthened. If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” the organization should add these implementation supports to the implementation plan. Are there:

- > Established criteria for recruiting and selecting practitioners for implementation?
- > An established training curriculum and coaching plans?
- > Existing fidelity measures and protocols to assess practitioners’ implementation?
- > Policies and procedures in place to support the new way of work and the innovation?
- > Systems in place to collect information about implementation of the innovation?
- > Agency and system stakeholders and leaders engaged to support the innovation?

is on track. This proactive approach should result in implementation in a way that makes rigorous evaluation possible.

Communicate With Leadership and Stakeholders. An important step in the implementation planning process is for the organization you are supporting to obtain and maintain buy-in and support from agency leadership and other internal and external stakeholders. Outreach to stakeholders and systems—such as those responsible for referring clients, delivering training, and providing services—necessary to move the innovation forward should be considered. Including leadership and these stakeholders in the planning process fosters buy-in and support for the necessary changes and reinforces understanding of the time, resources, and commitment needed.

Implementation Plans Should Describe:

- > A clearly defined problem and target population
- > The theory of change; i.e., how the identified need will be met and the desired outcome(s) achieved
- > The selected innovation
- > Any challenges, real or anticipated, and ways to address those challenges
- > A work plan that outlines:
 - All necessary activities (e.g., operationalizing the innovation, creating a training curriculum, recruiting and selecting staff, adapting the fidelity assessment process, initial testing) and resources required for them
 - Involved teams and stakeholders, with clearly defined responsibilities
 - Key elements for sustainability, and elements of a phased approach for rollout to different locations or teams of practitioners (if applicable)

Review and Refine Existing Teams. Based on the plan for activities before and during implementation, the existing teaming structures may need to be reviewed to determine whether changes are needed. In this case, team members should have the necessary expertise and/or authority to build or strengthen the innovation by operationalizing its components and developing the implementation supports.

For more information about developing an implementation plan, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Your role is to guide and support the organization in conducting an initial readiness assessment and developing an implementation plan. The key elements of this work include helping the organization:

- Conduct initial assessments, including:
 - Assessing the readiness of the innovation to be implemented
 - Assessing the readiness of the organization to support the innovation
- Develop an implementation plan
- Update communication protocols
- Review teaming structures

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of initial assessment and implementation planning. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Implementation Plan Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan Guide: Volume 2, Section 5	This tool is intended to guide a team in the development of an implementation plan, a comprehensive plan that illustrates critical steps in pre-implementation and implementation activities.
Illinois Implementation Plan	Example Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This example from a PII Grantee provides an overview of the target population, project initiative and associated interventions, expected outcomes, and plans and time frames for preparing to implement—and then implementing—the initiatives/interventions.
Overview and Examples of Ongoing Readiness	Resource Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This resource reviews the concept of ongoing readiness and defines the components. It includes examples and strategies used by PII Grantees to achieve readiness throughout the project.
Measuring Provider Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Practice: Consideration of Organizational Context and Individual Differences	Resource Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This article explores the role of attitudes in acceptance of an innovation and proposes a model of organizational and individual factors that may affect or be affected by attitudes toward adoption of evidence-based practice (EBP). (Aarons, G.A., 2005)
Evidence-Based Practice Implementation and Staff Emotional Exhaustion in Children’s Services	Resource Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This study investigates the association of EBP implementation and fidelity monitoring with staff emotional exhaustion in a statewide EBP implementation study. (Aarons, G. A., Fettes, D. L., Flores, L. R., & Sommerfeld, D. H., 2009)
Assessing and Changing Organizational Culture and Climate for Effective Services	Resource Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This article summarizes the findings of two national studies and one controlled clinical trial to: (a) link hospitable organizational context to service outcomes, (b) describe a new profiling system for assessing organizational social context, and (c) demonstrate how social context can be changed with planned organizational innovation strategies. (Glisson, C., 2007)
Organizational Readiness for Stage-Based Dynamics of Innovation Implementation	Resource Toolkit: Section 5, Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan	This article discusses the need to prepare systems for change in terms of organizational readiness and functioning as well as their service delivery infrastructure, emphasizing the collection and applications of better information about staff perceptions of need, organizational climate and resources, leadership commitments to change, and anticipated barriers. (Simpson, D., 2009)

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with initial assessment and developing an implementation plan. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Is the innovation ready to be implemented?
 - Is it evidence-supported? In other words, has it shown, through rigorous evaluation, the potential to improve outcomes for children?
 - Has it been developed and tested with a similar target population?
 - Does it have a program manual or other documentation, such as a practice profile, that operationalizes the innovation?
 - Does it have an established training curriculum and coaching plans?
 - Are there existing fidelity measures and protocols to assess practitioners' implementation?
- Does the organization you are supporting have:
 - A clear description of the innovation, including the philosophy, values, and principles, and the population that will benefit?
 - An explanation of the features—essential functions—that must be present to say the innovation exists?
 - A method of assessing whether the essential functions are being performed as intended?
- Has the organization assessed its readiness to implement the innovation? Do they have:
 - Established criteria for recruiting and selecting practitioners for implementation?
 - Policies and procedures in place to support the new way of work and the innovation?
 - Systems in place to collect information about implementation of the innovation?
 - Agency and system stakeholders and leaders engaged to support the innovation?
- Does the organization you are supporting have an implementation plan? Does the plan include:
 - A clearly defined problem and target population?
 - The theory of change; i.e., how the identified need will be met and the desired outcome(s) achieved?
 - A description of the selected innovation?
 - Any challenges, real or anticipated, and ways to address those challenges, including:
 - > A work plan that outlines all necessary activities to prepare for implementation (e.g., operationalizing the innovation, creating a training curriculum, recruiting and selecting staff, adapting the fidelity assessment process, initial testing) and resources required for them?
 - > Involved teams and stakeholders, with clearly defined responsibilities?
 - > Key elements for sustainability and elements of a phased approach for rollout to different locations or teams of practitioners (if applicable)?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
<p>It is tempting to move forward with implementation without conducting initial assessments of innovation and system readiness. They are time-consuming and can be frustrating. They can make it necessary for organizations to go back to the drawing board to rethink their innovations or refocus support and attention on organizational readiness.</p>	<p>Ensure that organizations do the work up front to identify the problem and target population, develop a theory of change, and choose an innovation that can be supported by the organization. As a TA provider, you can slow down the organization and help them revisit these earlier activities. If the organization needs to go back to the drawing board, better to know this early rather than several years into an unsuccessful implementation.</p>
<p>Developing implementation plans can take time and the documents can get very long.</p>	<p>Help the team you are working with understand how this planning helps in the long run to guide activities. To make the documents more manageable, put large portions of supporting documentation into the appendices rather than in the main document.</p>
<p>Teams often don't update communication protocols until communication breaks down.</p>	<p>Complete communication protocols early and update them frequently. Include check-ins on who needs to know information and who needs to share information as a regular part of Implementation Team meetings.</p>
<p>It is difficult to stay on top of reviewing teaming structures.</p>	<p>Include check-ins on who needs to be part of the team or what teams are needed as a regular part of Implementation Team meetings.</p>

Develop or Adapt the Innovation

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization on developing or adapting an innovation, the organization should have developed an implementation plan. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic before beginning this section of the manual. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that your organization still needs to work on this step.

- Is the organization’s innovation clearly operationalized?
- Is the organization clear about the activities practitioners will implement when working with the target population?
- Are the behaviors practitioners are expected to demonstrate clearly defined?



- If the organization is implementing a research-informed or evidence-based innovation with a different population than prior implementation, has it been operationalized for use with this different population?

You should be knowledgeable about developing or adapting an innovation before attempting to provide T/TA related to this step. Review the Toolkit or the Guide for more information.

Overview

The next step in the implementation process is to determine if there is a need to write a practice profile to operationalize the innovation to be implemented.¹² The desired outcomes are for the organization to:

- Understand what a practice profile is and its purpose
- Understand the elements of a practice profile
- Create a practice profile task group
- Create and finalize a practice profile¹³

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

What is a Practice Profile and Why is it Important? A practice profile is a document that describes how an innovation works in everyday practice. Practice profiles make it possible for core activities or practices to be taught and practitioner performance measured. An organization needs a practice profile so that individuals who will implement the core practices will know what

¹² Material in this chapter is adapted from the work of the National Implementation Research Network.

¹³ Metz, A., Bartley, L., Blase, K. & Fixsen, D. (2011). *A guide for creating practice profiles*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, FPG, Child Development Institute, UNC.



to do and how to do it and can be trained or coached to do it consistently well.

More specifically, practice profiles provide a framework for developing implementation supports (e.g., a training curriculum, a coaching service delivery plan, and a fidelity assessment process). Developing these supports help to ensure that the innovation is delivered as intended (with fidelity to the original design). Using this framework makes it possible to assess the results of an innovation and determine whether it is having the desired impact on child and family outcomes.

Elements of a Practice Profile. A practice profile consists of five elements:

- The essential functions of an innovation—Essential functions are the activities or strategies that a practitioner engages in to address the identified problem. They are based on research evidence and are used to guide what practitioners do and how they do it. The essential functions are what set the innovation apart from business as usual.
- An operationalized definition for each essential function—In a practice profile, each essential function is described through the development of

an operationalized definition. The operationalized definition must be based on the same research that supports the theory of change. The operationalized definition should also clearly describe the connection to the underlying values, principles, and philosophy of the innovation.

- Core activities associated with each essential function—In addition to an operationalized definition, each essential function has associated core activities. Associated core activities are the observable actions that practitioners will perform. They help to further define and clarify what the function entails in practice. Research should be used to define and support the associated activities, and the activities should support the underlying values, principles, and philosophy of the innovation.
- Behaviorally based practice indicators that explain how to do the core activities—Behaviorally based practice indicators should be supported by the research used to define each essential function. They describe exactly how the practitioner will perform the core activities during implementation. They are based on the observable behavior of the practitioners and are measurable, so an observer can tell if the practitioner is performing the activity successfully. Because they are measurable, the indicators can be used to guide training and coaching of practitioners. Each function should have no more than 10 indicators.
- Practice criteria that describe the levels of performance for the core activities—The team with whom you are working needs to describe the best way to perform the indicator. The description of the indicator must be both observable and measurable. The practice profile includes three levels of practice criteria: expected, developmental, and unacceptable.

Create a Practice Profile Task Group. Developing a practice profile requires an understanding of and/or an ability to research the behaviorally specific elements of the innovation. This work is best accomplished by a group of people with clear knowledge of the

innovation. The task group should comprise members of the Implementation Team but should also include other members of the organization, stakeholders, and innovation developer(s), if applicable. The group should complete the following activities:

- List essential functions as a group
- Draft components of one essential function as a group
- Draft complete essential functions
- Review the practice profile
- Refine and revise the practice profile
- Develop supports for implementation

After the practice profile is complete, the team can begin to develop supports for implementation, including selection criteria for practitioners, training and coaching systems, and a fidelity assessment process. Writing the practice profile is not a one-time event. It may need to be refined and revised during implementation or after initial testing.

For more information about developing or adapting an innovation, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

The Role of T/TA

Your role is to guide and support the organization in clearly operationalizing the innovation through the use of practice profiles. The key elements of this work include helping the organization:

- Understand what a practice profile is and its purpose
- Understand the elements of a practice profile
- Create a practice profile task group
- Create and finalize a practice profile



Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of developing a practice profile. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Practice Profile Development Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2 Guide: Volume 3, Section 6.2	The Practice Profile Development Tool helps to develop or adapt an innovation. It is designed to assist in building a practice profile by identifying the essential functions, associated core activities, and behavioral indicators of an innovation.
CARE Team Practice Profile	Example Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2 Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	This is a practice profile created by a PII Grantee to address the lack of coordinated therapeutic services for youth in foster care.
Child and Family Practice Model Practice Profile	Example Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2	This is a practice profile from a PII Grantee implementing a practice model intended to improve outcomes for children and families.
Example Practice Profile for a Safety-Focused Child Welfare Intervention	Example Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2 Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	This is a fictitious practice profile created by PII-TTAP.
Considerations for Assembling a Practice Profile Workgroup	Supplement Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2	This document contains a list of considerations for an organization to use when creating a practice profile task group.
A Road Map to Implementing Evidence-Based Programs	Resource Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 1	This course provides instruction on how to select the program that best matches your organization’s needs and carry out the steps necessary to implement the program you choose. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA, 2012.)
Ohio Differential Response	Resource Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2	Created by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services with assistance from the National Implementation Research Network, Ohio’s Differential Response practice model provides examples of practice profiles developed for each of the essential functions (“Worker Skill Sets”) of the Differential Response innovation.
PII-TTAP Practice Profile Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 6, Develop or Adapt the Innovation, Module 2	PII-TTAP presented this webinar to the PII Grantees, who were implementing innovative strategies to reduce long-term foster care stays and improve child outcomes. It includes an example of a practice profile template specific to the initiative and provides a deeper look at developing practice profiles.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with developing or adapting the innovation. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Has the organization clearly operationalized the innovation?
 - Have the essential functions of the innovation been identified and described?
 - Has the organization you are supporting clarified how each essential function will work in practice? In other words, has it been operationalized?
 - Does each essential function have associated core activities?
- Has a practice profile task group been created?
- Has the group:
 - Listed essential functions?
 - Drafted a component of one essential function as a group?



- Drafted complete essential functions?
- Reviewed the draft practice profile and refined and revised it as needed?
- Has the group finalized the practice profile?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Practice profiles may be difficult to develop because they need to comprehensively capture information that operationalizes the new way of work.	Good leadership and support from a T/TA provider can be helpful to guide the team through this process. The team drafting the practice profile should focus on the task at hand, understanding that the innovation can be tested and tweaked based on available research. The T/TA provider can help facilitate the process and keep everyone moving forward toward the same goal.
Adapting an existing innovation may be challenging because the purveyor ¹⁴ or program developer may be reluctant to support an adaptation of the innovation and the creation of additional practice profiles.	Be sure that the organization you are supporting has the permission of the purveyor early in the innovation selection process. If a purveyor does not give the organization permission to use and adapt the innovation, it may be necessary to find a new innovation. Even if the purveyor gives permission, be sure the organization involves the purveyor as a member of the team developing the adapted practice profiles.

¹⁴ An individual or group of individuals representing a program or practice who actively work with implementation sites to implement that practice or program with fidelity and good effect (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports

After completing the prior steps, the organization should have identified a problem, determined its root cause(s), developed a theory of change, and selected and developed or adapted an innovation to address the problem. This next step describes the implementation supports, processes, and activities that provide an infrastructure for the successful implementation of an innovation. Implementation supports are interactive processes that must be integrated to maximize their influence on staff behavior and the organizational culture.¹⁵ As you help the organization think about building the implementation supports, it is important to be aware of the compensatory nature of these supports. If recruitment and selection of staff is already determined by the need to use existing staff, the need to put emphasis on training and coaching may be greater. These implementation supports should also be seen as integrated, and tracking the supports along with developing associated feedback loops can inform the organization about each support's effectiveness. Six supports are described below.

For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.

Leadership and Stakeholder Supports

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization about developing leadership and stakeholder supports, review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates



that the organization needs your help in creating a supportive environment through identifying the roles and responsibilities and engaging the leadership and stakeholders. Does the leadership:

- Manage competing priorities?
- Assess organizational readiness for change?
- Engage and support staff at all levels by modeling the desired behavior?
- Seek buy-in and support from community partners, stakeholders, organizational staff, and families?
- Create a hospitable environment for implementation?
- Connect the innovation to the agency's values and culture?
- Build and encourage internal champions?

If you are not familiar with these roles, responsibilities, and engagement strategies, please refer to the Toolkit or the Guide.

¹⁵ Fixen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blasé, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, National Implementation Research Network. (FMIHI Publication No.231). Retrieved from <http://nim.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nim.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NIRN-MonographFull-01-2005.pdf>

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is to engage leadership and stakeholders to create a supportive environment for the innovation. The organization should consider the roles and responsibilities of Leadership and Implementation Teams and determine if the leadership is sufficiently engaged and motivated to implement the innovation. At the end of these activities, the organization will have assessed the willingness and capacity of the executive leadership, the Implementation Team, and stakeholders to support the innovation.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Organizational and System Supports. When organizational supports are functioning well, organizations are better able to support innovations. System supports reflect the alignment of the child welfare system to support practitioners implementing an innovation.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Innovation Implementation Team. The Implementation Team must:

- Connect the innovation to the agency’s culture and values.



- Assess organizational readiness for change and determine the implementation supports needed.
- Assist others in overcoming resistance to change.
- Build and encourage internal champions of the innovation.
- Manage the day-to-day planning and implementation of the innovation.
- Serve as the liaison between the agency leadership and the various teams.
- Recognize successes.
- Plan for sustainability.

Formal Leadership Roles and Responsibilities. When implementing an innovation, leadership facilitates processes that are important in fostering implementation, including commitment to a supportive work climate, positive employee work attitudes, and productive organizational change. Leaders must:

- Develop, refine, and communicate the vision.
- Connect the innovation to the agency’s values.
- Assess ongoing readiness for change.
- Engage staff at all levels to foster leadership at all levels of the innovation.
- Eliminate organizational barriers.
- Build relationships with other agencies and stakeholders.
- Work with the Implementation Team to determine implementation status.
- Focus on maintaining fidelity to the innovation.
- Manage competing priorities.
- Focus on CQI.
- Demonstrate commitment to sustainability.

Roles of Stakeholders. Stakeholders can identify ways their organization, community, or group can assist in the effort to create a hospitable environment for the innovation. Stakeholders provide valuable input on how the innovation and relevant messages are received.

Strategies for Engaging Leadership and Stakeholder Support. The organization can:

- Provide information about the need and identified problem, demonstrating the rationale for the innovation as well as the benefit to the target population.
- Demonstrate how the innovation aligns with the agency’s broader mission and the values of the community and system.
- Use champions to advocate on behalf of the innovation.
- Ensure stakeholders have meaningful implementation work and reinforce the value of their contribution with active feedback loops.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the needs of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping the organization create a supportive environment through the engagement of leadership and stakeholders. You may help:

- Assess the engagement of the executive leadership in the innovation, including:
 - Key factors for the organization to consider, and
 - The innovation’s “fit” with the organization’s mission and values.
- Assess the engagement of external stakeholders in the innovation.
 - Key factors for the system to consider
 - Fit with existing systems mission and values
- Assess the organizational readiness of the agency to develop implementation supports



- Provide information about the role of executive leadership with the Implementation Team
- Develop a communication strategy

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of creating a supportive environment through engaging leadership and stakeholder support. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Leading the Way: The Child Welfare Director’s Role in Implementation	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	This article includes lessons learned from 5 years of implementation work in 6 states, which included intensive collaboration between the Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center and the state agencies’ child welfare directors.
Stakeholder Involvement in Child Welfare	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	This article focuses on developing successful stakeholder involvement by making collaboration and partnerships a way of life for the agency.
Leadership in the Improving Child Welfare Outcomes Through Systems of Care Initiative	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	Drawing on qualitative data collected during interviews with key stakeholders, this brief is designed to enhance understanding of the role of leadership in bringing about systemic change.
Stakeholder Engagement Tools for Action	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	Designed to support the consistent integration of stakeholder engagement principles into policies, strategies, and day-to-day operations, this toolkit includes an overview of the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services Stakeholder Engagement Framework, as well as recommended planning, management, and implementation strategies.
The Role of Executive Leadership and Implementation Teams with DSDS	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Leadership and Stakeholder Supports	This guidance document outlines the role of leadership in ensuring the ongoing effective use of data. It reviews the data-related functions and activities of leaders and Implementation Teams and describes how to embed these functions and activities in their work.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization create a supportive environment through engaging leadership and stakeholders: They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Does the organization have a clearly defined teaming and communication structure?
- Is the leadership motivated to implement the innovation?
- How well does the innovation align with your vision, mission, and values?
- Is there any evidence demonstrating improvement in outcomes? If so, what is it?
- How well does the innovation fit with your organization?
- Does your agency have the organizational capacity needed to implement and sustain the innovation? If not, what needs to be done?
- How ready is the innovation for implementation?



PII-TTAP “asked curious questions about the structures and cultures of the organization to elicit information about readiness.”

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Engaging executive leadership in the innovation	Define the role of the executive leadership in decision-making regarding the innovation.
Engaging external stakeholders in the innovation	Develop partnerships with external stakeholders that provide decision-making opportunities.
Assembling an Implementation Team that can successfully implement the innovation	Defining the scope of work of the Implementation Team and the decision making authority.

Recruiting and Selecting Competent and Confident Staff

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization on implementation supports, specifically their staff recruitment and selection process, you should be familiar with the leadership supports in place to create a hospitable environment for successful implementation. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Have a systemic process for recruiting and selecting staff?
- Have a well-defined interview protocol?
- Have a job description that sets clear expectations for delivering the innovation and explains accountability?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when recruiting and selecting staff. This includes but is not limited to knowledge about effective strategies for staff recruitment. For more information, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

Recruitment Resource

The Child Welfare Information Gateway identifies resources on the screening and selection of child welfare workers.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/workforce/recruit-hire/staff-selection/>

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is for the organization to recruit and select staff who fit the



organization and have the competence to deliver the innovation. The organization needs to consider the essential factors for recruiting and selecting staff. To do so, the organization must create a process and select a team of people responsible for carrying out the process. The organization must have identified a plan for staff recruitment and developed selection criteria.

Summary

The following summarizes the steps the organization should take to recruit and select confident and competent staff for the innovation.

Identify Team Responsible for Recruitment and Selection.

Assemble a team that represents a cross-section of the organization with the authority to make decisions, who understand:

- The desired outcomes of the innovation
- Staff values, beliefs, and competencies that will be needed
- The organization’s training and coaching infrastructure that will support the innovation
- The organization’s CQI infrastructure

Articulate Recruitment Strategy. A recruitment strategy can build in opportunities for candidates to apply for or express an interest in certain positions or job opportunities.

Create a Supportive Environment. Organizations that are able to consistently hire the right staff have taken steps to create a supportive and hospitable environment for the innovation. These organizations understand potential systemic internal and external barriers such as human resources, communication, and funding.

Establish Clear Selection Criteria. The selection criteria should be based on qualities that can be linked to innovation success and used consistently in selecting staff. Clearly defined expectations related to academic qualifications, experience, and other prerequisites help when evaluating and selecting the right staff members. It is also advisable to select for the less tangible, more inherent characteristics that are required to do the innovation well and as intended. These characteristics are based on the underlying values and beliefs associated with the theory of change.

Develop and Use a Well-Defined Interview Protocol. To ensure mutual selection, full disclosure, and interaction during the interview process, develop and use a well-defined interview protocol. A well-defined interview protocol can also help ensure that critical components of an interview process are in place and that criteria for selection can best be assessed.

Use Data to Continuously Improve Recruitment Strategy. Multiple data sources can be used to analyze the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection processes and inform improvement efforts. Some organizations may have data regarding staff turnover. The opinions of administrators, coaches, and other stakeholders can also be used to inform this process. Examples of how to use data to inform recruitment efforts include:

- Using data to understand where candidates are most needed

- Gathering data on practitioners who are effective and whose efforts can be linked to improved outcomes to develop criteria for selection

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are items you may attend to while helping the organization develop its recruitment and selection process. You may help:

- Identify the characteristics and responsibilities of the Recruitment and Selection Team
- Develop a recruitment strategy and materials
- Create a job description that allows candidates to be able to assess whether they are interested in the job and whether the position would be a good fit for them
- Conduct focus groups:
 - To learn how current employees became aware of employment opportunities with the organization and what prompted their decisions to apply
 - To identify systemic barriers
- Develop, administer, and analyze survey results regarding staff interest in the innovation



- Gather and analyze data on recruitment and retention of staff
- Develop selection criteria
- Develop an interview protocol, including questions and behavioral rehearsals

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of recruiting and selecting staff for an innovation. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Interview Questions for Implementation Team Member	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Recruiting and Selecting a Competent and Confident Staff Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	This example was developed by a PII Grantee and includes a sample set of interview questions for an Implementation Team member position at a child welfare agency.
Role Play for Implementation Team Member	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Recruiting and Selecting a Competent and Confident Staff Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	This example was developed by a PII Grantee and includes a scenario for role play during an interview for an Implementation Team member position at a child welfare agency.
Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature (Chapter 5)	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Recruiting and Selecting a Competent and Confident Staff	This section of the National Implementation Research Network monograph focuses on staff selection, including selection of practitioner, organization, and purveyor staff.
Mental Health Provider Attitudes Toward Adoption of Evidence-Based Practice: The Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS)	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Recruiting and Selecting a Competent and Confident Staff	Because provider attitudes toward organizational change may limit or facilitate the successful adoption of new treatments, interventions, and practices, the EBPAS discussed in this article can be a useful tool for staff selection purposes.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization develop an effective recruitment and selection process. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Will this innovation be staffed by existing staff or new staff?
- How do you currently recruit staff?
 - Are you satisfied with the candidates that currently apply?
 - When a candidate is offered a job but declines it, do you know why?
- What can you incorporate into your selection process to target the characteristics needed to deliver this innovation?
- How do you currently provide applicants with a realistic job preview?
- What credentials and qualifications will the innovation require?
- What are some of the intangible characteristics that will make a practitioner successful?



- Who is involved in the selection process now?
 - Who is knowledgeable enough about the innovation to be part of the Recruitment and Selection Team?
- What data do you currently have regarding recruitment, selection, and retention?
- Are there any existing union rules, civil service rules, or other personnel practices that need to be considered?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Existing policies regarding recruitment and selection such as union rules, civil services rules, and personnel policies that limit flexibility.	Assess the ability of the organization to waive or revise existing rules or policies to attract and select top candidates.
Inadequate information regarding the skills required to deliver the innovation; thus selection is based on the wrong criteria	Gather information about others who have successfully implemented the innovation to determine the characteristics that need to be included in the interview protocol.
Unconscious interviewer bias	Ensure that the interviews are conducted by a team that includes staff from across the organization and end users (e.g., adults or youth who receive services), when appropriate.

Training to Build Knowledge and Skills

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization on training to deliver the innovation, you should be familiar with how the staff who will be trained have been recruited and selected and how training will be a factor in retention. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Have clear, concise messages explaining why and how the innovation is beneficial to children and families as well as practitioners?
- Have an implementation plan that attends to changing practitioner behavior by introducing a new set of skills?
- Understand that the transfer of learning will require training and coaching as a continuous set of activities?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when training practitioners. For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is training practitioners to implement the innovation with fidelity. The organization should consider the essential factors for training practitioners when developing integrated training and coaching for them.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Strategies for Preparing for a New Way of Work.

Introducing a way of work that requires learning new skills may stretch the organization in challenging ways.



The environment in which the innovation takes place is as important as the quality of the training and coaching that helps practitioners acquire and use new skills. Some strategies for preparing practitioners for the innovation include:

- Assurance from agency leadership and the Implementation Team that the innovation is essential to achieving agency goals.
- Clear, concise messages explaining why and how the innovation is beneficial not only to children and families, but to practitioners as well.
- Opportunities for internal and external innovation champions to communicate early successes.

Goals of Staff Training. The four goals of training are to:

- Impart knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the innovation.
- Convey information about the history, theory, philosophy, and rationales for the innovation components and practices.
- Provide demonstrations of essential functions and practices.
- Provide opportunities for practitioners to practice new skills and receive feedback on performance.

Design and Delivery of Training. The design and delivery of training depends on the decision to either

implement an existing innovation or develop a new one. For an existing innovation, a training curriculum likely exists. When developing an innovation rather than adapting one that already exists, drafting a practice profile to guide the training is the first step before developing a curriculum to prepare staff to deliver the innovation.

Training for Knowledge and Skills.

- Training should be knowledge- and skills-based. Training introduces the essential functions of the practice; provides a rationale for implementing a new practice; and conveys the history, theory of change, philosophical underpinnings, and mission and values of the practice.
- Train supervisors first. It may be advisable for supervisors to receive training first, before practitioners, so they can be active participants in the training of their staff and encourage them to develop the required skills and perform effectively.
- Use data for CQI. Learning objectives and competencies of the training should be directly connected to fidelity assessments and fidelity criteria. Competency exams or pre- and post-tests of knowledge and skills provide data regarding areas of strength and areas that need improvement. This information can be shared with trainers, coaches, and supervisors to target coaching and supervision activities and can also be used to continually improve training methods.



Example: Role Play

Practitioners may participate in role-playing, where they demonstrate a skill required for the innovation, such as engagement or motivational interviewing. The role play may be recorded, allowing the trainer to provide feedback on the practitioner's strengths and cite specific observations from the exercise. Feedback might include highlighting the body language the practitioner uses to encourage engagement or provide an opportunity to ask a clarifying question about what she missed.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization develop a training plan for practitioners. You may help:

- Provide information about the transfer of learning (learning new skills long enough and well enough to improve job performance. Performance improves by continued practice.)
- Convene a team to develop the training plan.
- Develop and/or provide training on the innovation.
- Provide a Train the Trainer session on the innovation.
- Review the training curriculum.
- Develop an evaluation for training effectiveness.
- Develop a learning management system that tracks training data.
- Integrate training into CQI functions.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of training practitioners. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Collecting Training Data for Continuous Improvement	Supplement Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Training to Build Knowledge and Skills Guide: Volume 3, Section 7.3	This provides an example of the type of training data that can be collected and the story the data tell.
Bridging the Gap Between Prevention Research and Practice: The Interactive Systems Framework for Dissemination and Implementation	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Training to Build Knowledge and Skills	One of three systems discussed in this article, the Prevention Support System, provides T/TA and other support to users in the field, and is intended to be used by different types of stakeholders (e.g., funders, practitioners, researchers) for understanding the needs, barriers, and resources of the different systems.
Creating the Infrastructure for Organizational Change with RAP	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports—Training to Build Knowledge and Skills	This report discusses key training methods and covers the challenges of training staff on a new service delivery and operationalizing those services (based upon an educational model of school staff working with emotionally challenged students).

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with developing a training for practitioners. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Who will develop the training; for example, innovation developers or agency training staff?
 - Are adequate resources dedicated to training?
- What are the training methodologies that will be used; for example, self-directed videos or readings; group-based sessions via Web, in person, or on conference calls?
- What training materials will need to be developed, purchased, or adapted?
- How many staff will need to be trained to deliver the innovation?
- How will staff be prepared to approach training with the intent to learn skills and transfer them to their work with children and families?
- Who will serve as trainers? Are there innovation developers who will provide training or is a Training of Trainers needed?
- Who will be responsible for developing the training schedule and arranging training space?
- What performance support for trainers is needed?
- What support do supervisors/managers need to encourage the transfer of learning?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
An innovation was selected that requires the purveyor to conduct the training.	The organization may need to negotiate the deliverables of a training contract with the purveyor with some mutual agreements and a contingency plan for what could go wrong.
An innovation needs to be adapted requiring the development of the training.	Develop strong practice profiles before developing/adapting training.
There is insufficient investment and support for the innovation on the part of managers.	Train managers first. Develop a communication strategy to gain buy-in.
Data from fidelity assessments indicate training is insufficient.	Use fidelity data to adjust and strengthen training.

Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization on coaching the practitioners of an innovation, you should be familiar with the organization’s current training plan and capacity. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Have an understanding that implementing an innovation will require training and coaching as a continuous set of activities?
- Have a coaching plan?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when coaching practitioners to build knowledge and skills. For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is coaching practitioners to build knowledge and skills in the innova-

tion that fits the organization and addresses the identified problem and the needs of the target population.

At the end of this step, the organization will have a clear plan for how to use coaching to build the knowledge and skills of the practitioners carrying out the innovation.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Goals of Staff Coaching. The three goals of coaching are to:

- Increase competence by ensuring that practitioners learn skills and competencies.
- Build confidence in the practitioners’ professional judgment and conceptual understanding of their roles in the delivery of the innovation.
- Provide feedback to identify, articulate, and resolve challenges experienced by practitioners as their skills and competencies are developing.

Coaching Models. The design and delivery of training and coaching depend on the decision to either implement an existing innovation or develop a new one. For an existing innovation, a training curriculum

and coaching plan likely exist. When developing an innovation rather than adapting one that already exists, drafting a practice profile to guide training and coaching is the first step. (See “Develop or Adapt the Innovation” for more information on drafting a practice profile.)

Considerations for Developing a Coaching Model.

Coaching may take place on a scheduled and/or as-needed basis and generally consists of focused support to clarify and achieve well-defined activities and tasks within the practitioner’s role. Decisions include whether coaching will be done one-on-one, in groups, or both, and who will provide the coaching.

Coaching Plan. Developing a coaching plan allows the Implementation Team to:

- Define how coaching will take place in relation to training and fidelity assessment.
- Define how and what coaching data and feedback loops will inform and improve implementation supports.
- Detail the mutual responsibilities and coaching agreement between the coach and the practitioner to partner in a quality improvement effort.
- Specify the coaching elements that will promote quality service delivery, support the practitioner, and serve as the basis for further professional development—such as information, model, practice, and feedback.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization develop a coaching plan for practitioners. You may help by:

- Participating in conversations with the organization and purveyor or program developer; helping the organization be a better consumer due to your objective perspective



- Providing information about transfer of learning
- Convening a design team to develop the coaching plan
- Reviewing the coaching plan
- Facilitating a coaching agreement between the coach and practitioners
- Developing an evaluation for training and coaching effectiveness
- Developing a learning management system that tracks coaching data
- Helping the organization integrate training and coaching into CQI functions
- Analyzing coaching data to identify systemic factors affecting performance

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of training practitioners. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What is it?
SAFE-FC Coaching and Consultation Plan	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	This is a sample coaching and consultation plan from a PII Grantee.
Kansas Intensive Permanency Project (KIPP) Coaching Policies and Procedures	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	The document outlines the coaching plan for KIPP, a PII Grantee.
International Coach Federation Website	Resources Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	The International Coach Federation is the support network for professional coaches. This website offers historical background, coach referrals, information about accreditation, and other useful resources.
Coaching in Child Welfare	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	This article in Child Welfare Matters provides an in-depth perspective on coaching trends in child welfare, a description of the coaching process, and an explanation of 7 key program components of coaching.
Central California Training Academy Coaching Implementation Literature Review	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	This literature review defines and clarifies terms associated with the coaching and mentoring process, providing a detailed description of the purpose of coaching and the coaching process, and discussing key elements of coaching.
PII-TTAP Coaching Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	PII-TTAP presented this webinar to the PII Grantees, describing the core functions of a coaching system and the functions and components of a Coaching Service Delivery System.
Second PII-TTAP Coaching Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	PII-TTAP presented this second webinar on coaching to the PII Grantees as an opportunity to participate in a deeper discussion of coaching.
The Coaching Toolkit for Child Welfare Practice	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills	This publication describes coaching models and approaches, articulates a framework for using coaching within child welfare, and offers guidance for coaches in child welfare settings.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization develop coaching for practitioners and to develop an integrated training and coaching plan. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- Does the selected innovation have an established coaching plan?
 - Does it need to be adapted?
 - Will the purveyor of the innovation be available to make adaptations?
- What coaching materials will need to be developed, purchased, or adapted?
- How many staff will need to be coached to deliver the innovation?
 - How frequently?
- How will staff be prepared to approach coaching with the intent to learn skills and transfer them to their work with children and families?
- Who will serve as coaches?
 - Are they the innovation developers or can they be developed internally?
- Who will be responsible for developing the coaching schedule?
- What performance support for coaches is needed?
- What support do supervisors/managers need to encourage learning transfer?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Coaches sometimes encounter resistance from the practitioner or the practitioner’s supervisor.	Message the purpose of coaching agency-wide; develop coaching agreements between the coach and the practitioner.
There are no internally qualified coaches.	Contract with the purveyor of the innovation to develop coaching capacity and innovation knowledge.
Child welfare agencies seem to be inherently crisis-driven, not prioritizing time for coaching.	Integrate coaching into everyday work rather than conducting it as a stand-alone activity.
Coaching is not seen as valuable.	Create feedback loops to monitor and troubleshoot coaching challenges.
The coach is seen as a pair of hands to do “the work” of the practitioner rather than helping the practitioner to practice skills.	Incorporate the role of coaches and coaching into the overall communication plan.
The coach identifies performance issues without a clear understanding of who should be informed.	Create a feedback loop that identifies how these issues will be elevated/reported.

Fidelity Assessment: Measure Development and Process Development

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization seeking to develop or adapt a Fidelity Assessment, review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Understand what a fidelity assessment is?
- Understand how to create a fidelity assessment (or adapt one if implementing an innovation with an existing fidelity assessment)?
- Understand how to identify fidelity measures to assess?
- Understand how to identify data sources for the fidelity measures?
- Have a plan for using and sharing results?
- Have a schedule for conducting fidelity assessments?
- Have a way to score assessments?
- Have a plan for gathering and maintaining fidelity data?
- Have a plan for training fidelity raters?
- Have a plan for using the results of the fidelity assessment to improve practice?
- Have multiple methods for assessing whether an activity is occurring as intended?
- Have more than one independent observer who is trained and knowledgeable about the innovation to conduct the fidelity assessment?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when developing or adapting fidelity assessment measures or processes. For more information, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is to allow the organization to verify that practitioners are delivering the innovation consistently as intended and to make needed adjustments and improvements to the innovation and implementation supports. At the end of this step, the organization will have assessed the capacity of the existing fidelity review process to support improvements in the implementation of the innovation (if applicable) or developed or adapted the fidelity review process to support implementation and sustainability of the innovation.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Feedback About Practitioner Progress. The fidelity assessment is designed to assess the use of skills taught in training and reinforced and expanded during coaching. This assessment provides information to the Implementation Team regarding how well practitioner training, coaching, recruitment, and selection are progressing. These data can also help to identify common strengths and challenges across practitioners that may point to areas for adjustment within the implementation support structure, including the organization as a whole.



Guiding Principles. Four guiding principles should be emphasized when creating a fidelity assessment:

- A well-defined innovation must include a practice profile or some other means of outlining the essential functions. The fidelity assessment is created from the practice profile.
- An assessment must be easily administered and maintained in an organizational setting.
- The purpose of the fidelity assessment is to assess whether the innovation is being delivered as intended.
- The results of the fidelity assessment should be used to strengthen implementation supports that improve practice.

A Fidelity Assessment Is Created From a Practice Profile. It is important for the practice profile to be well-defined and complete before the fidelity assessment is developed. The fidelity assessment must assess for all the essential functions of the innovation, regardless of who is responsible for delivering them. This may result in the development of multiple fidelity assessments.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary,

but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization create or adapt the fidelity measures and process. You may help:

- Determine if the innovation being implemented has a fidelity assessment process that needs to be adapted or if a fidelity assessment process needs to be created. The table below shows the different TA activities depending on whether the organization is adapting an existing innovation or developing a new one.
- Develop or adapt the fidelity assessment.
- Facilitate the process of developing protocols for conducting fidelity assessments including the rules, procedures, or protocols that will be followed for conducting assessments and collecting data. These include:
 - How to use and share the results of the fidelity assessment
 - How to determine the frequency of the fidelity assessment
 - How to score the fidelity assessment
 - How to gather and maintain the fidelity assessment data
 - How to train raters

Comparison of TA Activities

Adapting	Developing
Become familiar with the existing fidelity measures and process to determine if either needs to be adapted.	Use the Practice Profile and the Fidelity Assessment Tool (see below) to assist with the creation of fidelity measures.
Assist with the adaptation of the fidelity measures and process.	Use the Fidelity Assessment Protocols Tool (see below) to assist with the development of a process for measuring fidelity.
Review the strategy for collecting, analyzing, and using fidelity assessment data to improve implementation supports such as recruitment and selection, training, and coaching.	Develop a strategy for collecting, analyzing, and using fidelity assessment to improve implementation supports such as recruitment and selection, training, and coaching.
Review the process for collecting, using, and reporting fidelity data.	Develop the process for collecting, using, and reporting fidelity data.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of creating

or adapting a fidelity assessment and developing protocols for administration. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Fidelity Assessment Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 1 Guide: Volume 3, Section 7.5	This tool is intended to help create a fidelity assessment from the innovation's practice profile.
Fidelity Assessment Protocols Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 2 Guide: Volume 3, Section 7.6	This tool is intended to help develop a protocol for scoring and administering the fidelity assessment.
RISE Fidelity Assessment Plan	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 2	This plan, developed by the RISE project, a PII Grantee, discusses the process for creating the RISE fidelity assessment and the protocols for using the fidelity instrument.
RISE Fidelity Review Tool	Example Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 1 Guide: Volume 3, Section 7.5	This tool, developed by the RISE project, a PII Grantee, is a fidelity assessment for the Care Coordination Team.
Examining Implementer Fidelity: Conceptualizing and Measuring Adherence and Competence	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 1	This article distinguishes fidelity at the programmatic level from implementer fidelity and provides observational measures from a school-based, preventive intervention that illustrates the unique contributions of implementer adherence and competence.
Implementation of a Relationship-Based School Readiness Intervention: A Multidimensional Approach to Fidelity Measurement for Early Childhood	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Fidelity Assessment Module 2	This article provides an example of a fidelity assessment of the implementation efforts of 65 early childhood professionals involved in an integrated, multi-system intervention that promotes school readiness through parent engagement for children from birth to age 5.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization plan for developing and/or adapting fidelity measures and creating a process for assessing fidelity. They represent lessons learned from PII:

Questions for the Organization to Ask the Innovation Developer or Purveyor:

- Do fidelity measures exist for each of the essential functions of the innovation?
- How frequently are fidelity assessments completed?
- Who completes the fidelity assessments?

Questions to Ask the Organization:

- Are there adequate resources available to attend to fidelity assessment functions?
- How is quality assurance of the fidelity reviews measured?



- What fidelity data are being collected by the organization?
- How are fidelity data used to make improvements?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Understanding what fidelity measures are and how to use them	Educate the organization about fidelity measures and processes.
Fidelity assessments seen as punitive or just one more thing to do	Help the organization message the fidelity measures and processes as different from human resources performance reviews, which affect job performance ratings, promotions, and corrective or disciplinary actions.
Not sure if the fidelity measures are measuring the right things	Continue to revisit and revise the measures.
Reliability of the measures and the process	Set up an inter-rater reliability process where the same case is reviewed by multiple reviewers and the results are compared.



Identifying and Using Data for Decision-Making in Support of Innovation Implementation

Preliminary Considerations

Before providing T/TA to an organization seeking to develop or adapt implementation supports, specifically by creating a Decision-Support Data System (DSDS), review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Do the Implementation Team, CQI staff, and IT staff and leadership:

- Understand the questions that need to be asked to support implementation?
- Have the ability to identify the existing and needed data sources to answer identified questions?
- Understand how to use the data that have been gathered?
- Understand how DSDS activities differ from evaluation activities?

¹⁶ Evaluation of an innovation may have implications for the ability of the organization to access certain types of outcome data.

¹⁷ A Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) is a case management information system that states and Tribes may develop to support their child welfare program needs. The proposed CCWIS regulations will provide states and tribes the opportunity to take advantage of modern technology offerings that will enable them to share data among multiple systems rather than building large “one size-fits-all” SACWIS/TACWIS applications.

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when developing or adapting a DSDS. This includes ensuring that data are collected and used to inform improvements to the innovation and the implementation supports. For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is to use data to give leadership and stakeholders confidence that innovations are being implemented as intended and to use data to make needed adjustments and improvements to the innovation and implementation supports. At the end of this step, the organization will have assessed the capacity of the existing DSDS to support the innovation and how to develop or adapt the DSDS to support implementation and sustainability of the innovation.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Decision-Support Data Systems and Information Technology Systems.

- A DSDS effectively supports the implementation of innovations through the collection, organization, and analysis of data related to innovation implementation and child and family outcomes.¹⁶
- Don’t confuse a DSDS with an IT system, although the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS¹⁷) or other data or IT systems may be helpful in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data.
- Determine what information is being collected in the organization’s IT system and whether these indicators and outcome measures are applicable to the innovation’s theory of change.

Categories of Information. The information needed and the questions to ask can fall into three broad categories: outcomes, fidelity, and implementation supports data.

- Outcomes data—The DSDS can be used to answer questions about short- and long-term child and family outcomes.
- Fidelity data—Provide information about the degree to which the innovation has been or is being delivered as intended.
- Implementation supports data—Provide information about how well the organization and the system as a whole are supporting practitioners in implementing the innovation.

Using the Data. For successful implementation of the innovation, the right data must get to the right people at the right time. An organization that is able to continuously collect, organize, analyze, and distribute this information will strengthen leadership’s ability to plan and make decisions to keep the innovation on track. The Implementation Team should identify the people who need to receive the reports, the data that need to be reported, and how often reports should be released. The Implementation Team, with input from leadership, should carefully consider the question “who gets what data and in what format.”

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization create a DSDS. You may help:

- Assess the ongoing availability, integration, and use of performance data to support the implementation of the innovation.
 - Key factors for the organization to consider include recruitment and selection; training; coaching; fidelity; leadership; Implementation Team functioning; and systems functioning.

- Assess the integration of DSDS with CQI functions within the organization.
- Develop a strategy for developing and improving the collection, analysis, and use of data for decision-making.
- Assist with defining the questions to be answered by the available data.
- Assist with developing the most useful way to report the data to various audiences.
- Assist with data collection through the development of surveys or the facilitation of focus groups.
- Assess whether the information being collected answers the questions being asked. Teams using existing data sources should make sure the data used are reliable and that the calculations in the reports are accurate.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of creating a DSDS. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.



Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Using Data to Understand and Improve Implementation	Tool Toolkit: Section 7, Identification and Use of Data Guide: Volume 3, Appendix	The examples included in this document, developed by PII-TTAP, illustrate various ways of using “on the ground” data to improve implementation efforts.
Making Data Meaningful: Using Data to Support Implementation in Child Welfare	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Identification and Use of Data	This report offers insights to maximize the value of data collection efforts, integrate findings from data with ongoing planning and decision-making, and sustain data collection to support ongoing change and implementation efforts.
Outcomes Management: Incorporating and Sustaining Processes Critical to Using Outcome Data to Guide Practice Improvement	Resource Toolkit: Section 7, Identification and Use of Data	This article presents a case example of a successful and enduring outcomes management system, followed by a review of the literature and a proposed model delineating the key components and benefits of such a system.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with various components of identifying and using data for decision-making. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- What data are being collected by the organization? What else is needed?
- Are adequate resources available to attend to DSDS functions such as collection, organization, and analysis of data, and reporting of data related to innovation implementation and child and family outcomes?
- What is the reliability and validity of the existing data? If data are not reliable and valid, what needs to change?
- Do adjustments need to be made to the SACWIS (or other IT system?) Are they feasible? Who will make these adjustments? How quickly? At what cost?
- If the organization does not have an existing source of data in some areas, how does it create one?

- How does the organization collect data from external sources?
- How, when, and with whom are data shared for decision-making and improvement?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Engaging the executive leadership and the Implementation Team in the DSDS	Define the role of the executive leadership and Implementation Teams in using data for decision-making regarding the innovation implementation.
Connecting the use of data for implementation improvement to CQI	The connection to CQI is the key to sustainability of the innovation with fidelity; therefore, a plan to do so needs to be developed.
Having the use of data feel punitive or compliance driven	Assist the agency in creating feedback loops that use data for improvement and help them communicate that message.
Not knowing what to do with the data	Facilitate how to use the data to make adjustments for improvements to implementation supports.
Not having the data	Assist the organization in determining what data to collect, who will collect it, and how it will be analyzed and used.

Initial Implementation and Testing

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin providing T/TA to an organization seeking to implement their innovation for the first time, review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Do the Implementation Team, leadership, practitioners and supervisors responsible for delivering the innovation:

- Have a developed plan for the usability testing process?
- Understand the purpose of usability testing?
- Know which essential functions of the innovation to test during usability testing?
- Have familiarity with Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA)?
- Have an idea of who will be responsible for coordinating usability testing?
- Have an idea of who will be responsible for reporting the data gathered from the usability testing?
- Know the criteria by which the results of usability testing are assessed?
- Know when the results of usability testing are “good enough”?

You should be knowledgeable about the steps an organization should proceed through when conducting usability testing by trying out critical components of the innovation, implementation supports, and data collection processes to see how they fit within the organization. For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.



Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is to allow the organization to identify the parts of an innovation that may need to be tested during initial implementation of an innovation. This process is used to improve the innovation, implementation supports, and data collection processes. At the end of this step, the organization will have tested the critical components of the innovation and data collection to see how they fit within the organization. Adjustments can be made to improve the innovation and implementation supports.

Summary

Usability testing is the process of establishing the innovation within the organization and learning whether procedures, processes, or innovation components need to be adapted for implementation to move forward. The purpose of usability testing is to help further operationalize the essential functions of the innovation, implementation supports (e.g., training, coaching, recruitment, selection, and fidelity assessment), and data collection.

Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA).¹⁸ A learning and improvement cycle that combines management thinking with statistical analysis in the following four stages:

Plan: Identify what can be improved and what change is needed.

Do: Implement the design change.

Study: Measure and analyze the process or outcome.

Act: Take action if the results are not as hoped for.

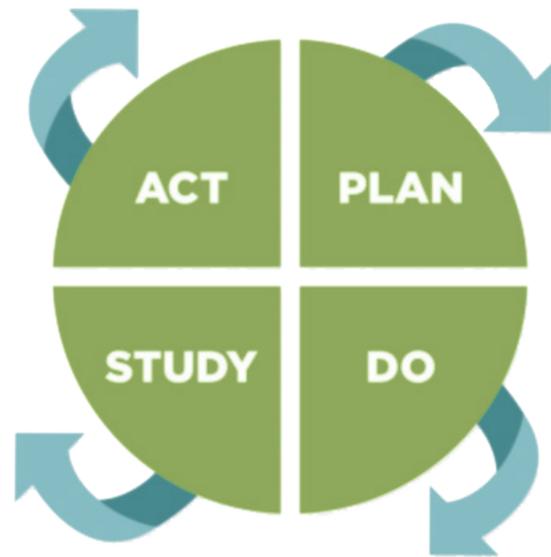
Timing and Functions. Usability testing begins during initial implementation and can be used to test critical components throughout the life of an innovation. Some of its functions are to:

- Maximize learning from available examples (e.g., testing results).
- Quickly detect challenges related to key implementation and innovation processes.
- Revise and retest the processes to see if they have improved.
- Stabilize essential functions of an innovation, implementation supports, and data collection processes.

Multiple Quick Cycles of Testing. Usability testing is the process of engaging in multiple, quick cycles of testing, learning, and improvement. Each cycle within a usability test must include:

- Clearly defined essential function(s) of the innovation, implementation process, or data collection process that is being tested
- A method for assessing the findings
- A procedure for revising the innovation, implementation supports, or data collection processes, as needed

Connection to Evaluation. Usability testing helps pave the way for evaluation efforts by ensuring that the innovation's key components and implementation



supports are working. Usability testing identifies and improves on data collection protocols essential for tracking implementation supports and evaluation outcomes. Testing these components early helps identify and resolve issues, which promotes an easier transition to evaluation. The innovation must be stable before evaluation; that is, the innovation's core components should not change.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the need of the organization and the relationship you have agreed to, your role may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization conduct usability testing. You may help to:

- Review the innovation to determine if it is sufficiently operationalized.
- Provide information about PDSA.
- Select components for testing.
- Create a Usability Testing Plan.
- Identify the criteria for revisions or for declaring it “good enough.”

¹⁸ Best, M., & Neuhauser, D. (2006). Walter A. Shewhart, 1924, and the Hawthorne factory. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 15(2), 142–143.

- Review the results of a cycle of usability testing with the Implementation Team and facilitate the decision of whether additional usability tests are needed.
- Determine how to communicate the results.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization with various components of usability testing. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.



Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
PDF Usability Testing Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 8, Module 2: How to Conduct Usability Testing Guide: Volume 4, Section 8.2	This tool will assist an organization in developing a plan for usability testing by outlining the measures to test, who will be responsible, and a timeline for completion. This tool will also help with tracking the results of each test.
Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Children, Youth and Families Fostering Readiness & Permanency Project Usability Testing Plan 2012	Example Toolkit: Section 8, Module 1: What is Usability Testing? Guide: Volume 4, Appendix	This document presents the Usability Testing Plan for the FRP Project, a PII Grantee. The document identifies the components of the FRP Project that are most critical to ensuring that the innovations can be implemented as intended.
KIPP Usability Testing Report	Example Toolkit: Section 8, Module 2: How to Conduct Usability Testing Guide: Volume 4, Appendix	This report highlights the findings of usability testing of the services, implementation, and data collection procedures of the Kansas Intensive Permanency Project (KIPP), a PII Grantee.
PII-TTAP Usability Testing Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 8, Module 2: How to Conduct Usability Testing	PII-TTAP presented this webinar to PII Grantees, who were implementing innovative intervention strategies to reduce long-term foster care stays and improve child outcomes. It provides an overview of the purpose and processes of usability testing and a presentation from a PII Grantee on its experience with preparing for and implementing usability testing.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization determine whether it has an operationalized innovation that needs testing before moving forward with initial implementation. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- What activities within the innovation are new and likely will be challenging for practitioners?
- Who completes the usability testing?
- Are sufficient resources available to complete usability testing?
- What usability testing data will be collected by the organization?
- How are usability testing data going to be used?
- What criteria do you think constitute “good enough”?



Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
The innovation is not fully operationalized.	Identify and operationalize the essential functions. Refer to the Practice Profile in doing so.
Understanding what to test through usability testing	Educate the organization about usability and usability testing plans.
Usability testing is seen as punitive or just one more thing to do.	Help the organization message about the purpose of usability testing
Not sure if the usability testing metrics are measuring the right things.	Continue multiple cycles of usability testing.
Usability testing is a new and foreign concept to many organizations.	Use the Usability Testing tool to help the organization create a plan for usability testing.

Monitor and Assess the Innovation and Implementation Supports

Preliminary Considerations

Before you begin to provide T/TA to an organization surrounding its use of data to monitor and assess the innovation and implementation supports, the organization should have implementation supports in place and should have completed at least one round of usability testing. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your help with this step. Does the organization:

- Have key measures with which to monitor and assess the innovation and implementation supports?
- Regularly assess implementation of the innovation?
- Use data and rapid-cycle problem-solving to improve implementation?

As a T/TA provider, you should be knowledgeable about how to identify key performance indicators, how to use data to assess whether adjustments to the

innovation or implementation supports are needed, and how to help the organization develop action plans to address and implement these adjustments. For more information, see the Guide or the Toolkit.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is an organization that is able to effectively monitor and assess the innovation and the implementation supports through the collection and analysis of data.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Key Indicators Guidance. To keep track of the different layers and types of data to collect, the Decision-Support Data System Template uses three different layers to help organize the questions the agency would like to answer, identify existing data sources used to answer the questions, and identify data sources that would need to be created.

Layer one focuses on building staff competency and confidence for high-quality delivery of the innovation and achievement of intended outcomes. **Layer two** focuses on organizational and system supports for



Assessing Best Practices

Multiple PII Grantees found the practice of using a structured assessment to be useful throughout the implementation process. Having a T/TA provider help the organization dig deeper led to improved implementation efforts.

delivering the innovation as intended. **Layer three** focuses on organization and system development of effective implementation infrastructure and capacity. Each of the layers asks two important questions: What do you want to know, and how are you going to know it?

Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices.

With a focus on why assessing for implementation supports is useful, this includes the best people to participate in the assessment as well as how to administer and score the assessment. Additionally, the assessment can be used at any stage of implementation with the results being used as a basis for action planning.

Discussing How to Use Data for Decision-Making.

Clarifying when the different layers of data should be collected and the issues that should be discussed before using data for decision-making is important. These issues include how often the data will be collected and how often it will be reviewed, analyzed, and shared with key people. This includes ensuring that the right people get the right data in a way they can understand so that it can be used for discussion and action planning.



The Role of T/TA

Depending on the needs of the organization, your role as a T/TA provider may vary, but the following are things that you as the T/TA provider may attend to while helping an organization monitor and assess the innovation and the implementation supports. You may help:

- Introduce the organization to the concept of examining the different layers of data.
- Work with the organization to formulate questions that allow it to figure out what it wants to know and how it is going to know it.
- Facilitate the administration of the *Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices* survey.
- Analyze the results from the *Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices* survey and develop an action plan.
- Create a schedule for collecting and analyzing the data according to layer.
- Develop a plan for sharing the gathered data. This includes helping the organization decide how the collected data should be formatted, and who should receive the data and how often.
- Use the shared data to facilitate discussion and plan how the organization will use the data to improve implementation capacity, infrastructure, and the innovation.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that could be used to help an organization monitor and assess the innovation and implementation supports. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Decision Support Data System Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 9, Module 1: Key Indicators Guidance Guide: Volume 5, Section 9.1	This tool helps identify the questions an organization may want to answer for each of the data layers. It helps the organization define what it specifically wants to track and where it can find the answers to questions.
Implementation Supports Survey (for Administrators)	Tool Toolkit: Section 9, Module 2: Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices Guide: Volume 5, Section 9.2	This survey is designed to assess implementation supports and can be completed by a variety of respondents knowledgeable about the innovation and what it takes to implement it well. This administrators' guide contains additional guidance for aggregating responses and scoring each implementation support.
Implementation Supports Survey (for respondents)	Tool Toolkit: Section 9, Module 2: Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices Guide: Volume 5, Section 9.2	This survey is designed to assess implementation supports and can be completed by a variety of respondents knowledgeable about the innovation and what it takes to implement it well. This version is intended for respondents only.
Safe-FC Drivers Assessment Action Planning Template	Example Toolkit: Section 9, Module 3: Discussing How to Use Data for Decision-Making Guide: Volume 5, Appendix	This action planning template is based on the Drivers assessment survey findings from the Washoe County Nevada Initiative to Reduce Long-Term Foster Care, a PII Grantee.
Using Data to Understand and Improve Implementation	Example Toolkit: Section 9, Module 3: Discussing How to Use Data for Decision-Making	The examples in this document illustrate various ways of using “on the ground” data to improve implementation efforts.
Identifying and Using Data for Decision Making in Support of Innovation Implementation	Resource Toolkit: Section 9, Module 3: Discussing How to Use Data for Decision-Making	In-depth discussion of DSDS best practices that explains what information is needed for a functioning DSDS system and how an organization can develop and use it.
PII-TTAP Using Data for Decision-Making Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 9, Module 3: Discussing How to Use Data for Decision-Making	This webinar was presented to the PII Grantees by PII-TTAP. It discusses how a DSDS can help organize, align, and improve data collection and the quality of data related to implementation of the innovation.

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization with monitoring and assessing the innovation and implementation supports. You could use these questions when helping an organization develop key indicators and use the Decision Support Data System Tool. They represent lessons learned from PII:

- What would the organization like to know about:
 - Layer 1
 - > How staff recruitment and selection, training, coaching, and fidelity assessments are going
 - > The outcomes from those receiving the innovation
 - Layer 2
 - > How well the executive leadership team is functioning
 - > How well the DSDS is functioning
 - Layer 3
 - > How the organization will build and maintain its implementation infrastructure
 - > Whether the implementation supports are being used and whether they are leading to high-fidelity use of the innovation

The Using Data to Understand and Improve Implementation document (see table above) is a great resource for introducing organizations to this concept. It illustrates, in a concrete way, what questions a child welfare organization might want to ask, what the gathered data might be saying, what other information might be useful, and next steps.

- Where can the organization find the information to answer the questions in each of the layers?
- If the information isn't readily available, what needs to be done to help collect it?



The following questions could be used when you are helping an organization administer the Implementation Supports survey:

- What is the best way for the organization to administer the survey? Would the organization be able to gather more information in a facilitated in-person session or through online (or paper) administration?
- Who are the ideal respondents to complete the survey?
- Who will be in charge of scoring the assessment?

The following questions could be used when helping an organization discuss how to use data for decision-making:

- For each of the layers, how often will data be collected?
- Who will be in charge of managing and organizing the collected data?
- Who will analyze the data?
- Who will be in charge of compiling and distributing the analyzed data?
 - What will be included?
 - How often will this happen?
 - Who will receive the reports?

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Unfamiliarity with using data to improve implementation	Provide examples of how data from fidelity assessments can be incorporated into training and coaching and educate staff on the concept.
Overcoming the notion that data are strictly used for compliance purposes	Emphasize the use of data for system-wide improvement. Provide examples of staff/projects that are using data in this way.
The data template is overwhelming.	Pick a starting point. Emphasize the importance of picking just a couple of elements from each category and starting there.
Discrepancies between the results of the implementation supports survey administered by paper/online and a facilitated assessment	Use both and allow the organization to talk through some of the questions that had large discrepancies.

Plan for Sustaining the Innovation

Preliminary Considerations

The organization should be thinking about and planning for sustainability concurrently with other activities. Ideally, by implementing an effective infrastructure that provides strong support for the innovation, planning for sustainability should be happening continuously. To do this, a few questions must be answered before intentionally planning for sustainability. Review the following questions to determine if you need to work with the organization on this topic. An answer of “no” to any of the questions most likely indicates that the organization needs your assistance in planning for sustainability. Is the organization:

- Clear on what innovation it is trying to sustain?
- Knowledgeable about why it wants to sustain the chosen innovation?
- Clearly outlining a plan for how it will sustain the innovation?

Before helping an organization with this step, you should be knowledgeable about the 3 categories and 10 key elements of sustainability planning. You should also be familiar with the various reasons an organization would want to sustain an innovation and the ways in which it can build sustainability planning into its ongoing implementation activities. For more information, see the Toolkit or the Guide.

Overview

The desired outcome of these activities is an organization that is able to develop a plan to meet the ongoing needs of the target population and the community by sustaining the implemented innovation. To do this, the organization must be able to sustain and improve the innovation and the implementation supports as well as the desired outcomes. The tools in this section can

be used to help the organization draft a successful sustainability plan.

Summary

The following provides a brief description of the concepts and activities addressed in this step.

Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements. The three categories of sustainability planning are:

- The **implementation infrastructure and processes** that must be embedded into the everyday work of people and organizations.
- The necessary **organizational infrastructure and processes** that ensure an administrative foundation for the innovation or service and the ongoing practices and policies for effective implementation.
- The **fiscal strategies and resources** required to fund direct services and staff and organizational resources needed for effective implementation of an innovation or service.

Making the Case and Drafting a Sustainability Plan.

Being able to identify which innovations should be sustained and why is important, but being able to



	Clarifying a Vision of Success		Engaging Leadership
	Tracking and Monitoring Data and Other Information		Building Relationships and Creating Partnerships
	Using Data and Other Information		Demonstrating Effects and Sharing Results
	Creating and Changing Systems		Diversify Funding and Financing
	Focusing on Outcomes		Planning for Sustainability

determine why an innovation might not be sustained is also important. Organizations can use criteria to make a case for or against sustainability. Some of the criteria include whether the innovation:

- Addresses a significant need
- Is supported by a strong theory of change
- Shows promise for affecting the target population
- Is supported by community, internal and external stakeholders

A sustainability plan can take a variety of formats, but it should always include objectives, strategies, action steps, timelines, persons responsible for various tasks, and ways to determine progress.

The Role of T/TA

Depending on the needs of the organization, your role as T/TA provider may vary, but the following are things you may attend to while helping an organization plan for sustainability. You may help:

- Introduce the concept of planning for sustainability to the organization early in the implementation process. This includes:
 - Familiarizing the organization with ways in which it can build sustainability elements into the implementation process as early as possible



- Deciding what innovations should be sustained and why
- Familiarizing the organization with the categories and key elements of sustainability
- The organization should identify reasons to sustain (or not) an innovation.
- Help the organization draft a sustainability plan. Work with the organization to consider the 3 categories of sustainability planning and ask questions that will help outline the plan.

Materials, Templates, and Guidance Documents

Below is a list of materials that you could use to help an organization plan for sustainability. The table below indicates the title of the material, the type, and where it can be found.

Name of Material	Type and Location	What Is It?
Sustainability Planning Tool	Tool Toolkit: Section 10, Module 2: Making the Case and Drafting a Sustainability Plan Guide: Volume 5, Section 10.2	A tool that provides questions to help facilitate discussion and gather information for possible inclusion in the sustainability plan.
Sustainability Planning: Child Welfare Case Examples	Example Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements Guide: Volume 5, Appendix	The examples in this document were developed by PII-TTAP to support PII Grantees as they planned for sustainability of their innovations. These examples represent a range of cases that draw on various aspects of sustainability planning.
Example Sustainability Plan	Example Toolkit: Section 10, Module 2: Making the Case and Drafting a Sustainability Plan Guide: Volume 5, Appendix	This document, developed by PII-TTAP, provides an example of a sustainability plan for an evidence-informed innovation.
PII-TTAP Sustainability Planning Webinar	Resource Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements	PII-TTAP presented this webinar to the PII Grantees. It provides an explanation of key elements to consider when planning for sustainability of an initiative.
Planning for the Ongoing Use of Data to Support Implementation	Resource Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements	This guidance document outlines important questions to consider when planning for the sustainability of the innovation and the continuous use of data to support implementation efforts.
Lessons Learned on Sustainability of Older Adult Community Behavioral Health Services	Resource Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements	This guide offers a sustainability framework that identifies 17 key factors known to influence sustainability that service providers and funders can apply to their work.
New Initiatives: Considerations Related to Planning, Implementing, Sustaining and Going to Scale	Resource Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements	This brief provides a quick overview of basic ideas, phases, stages, and steps related to planning, implementing, maintaining, and scaling up new initiatives, with an emphasis on sustainability.
Moving Forward: A Sustainability Planning Guide	Resource Toolkit: Section 10, Module 1: Overview of the Concepts and Key Elements	This guide assists with sustainability planning by providing basic information on the 6 key steps in the sustainability planning process: (1) clarify vision, (2) determine what to sustain, (3) build collaboration, (4) choose sustainability strategies and methods, (5) develop action steps for sustainability, and (6) document and communicate sustainability success. (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration)

Sample Questions

Below is a list of questions you can use to help an organization plan for sustainability. They represent lessons learned from PII:

Before and during implementation:

- Does the proposed innovation meet a need? Can the organization prove it?
- Think about how this innovation fits with the long-term planning goals of the organization. Where in the organizational structure do you see the program residing?
- What type of support does the innovation need if it is going to be a regular part of the service array?
- Is there a way to make use of existing organizational structures when planning for implementation?

During full implementation:

- Is this innovation meeting an identified organizational/community need? How so?
- Has it been successful in meeting this need? Are there data to support this claim?
- How has this innovation been viewed by the larger community?
- What type of support has this innovation drawn since it began?
- Who needs to approve the long-term integration of this innovation?

More questions related to sustainability planning and developing a plan for sustainability can be found in the Toolkit or the Guide.

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Barriers

Challenges	Possible Solutions
Thinking about sustainability from the beginning	Helping an organization think about what needs to happen if the innovation is going to continue. For example, focusing on how the organization might embed the infrastructure in the organization, engage stakeholders, and disseminate information regarding the innovation.
Thinking beyond fiscal sustainability	Helping organizations think through what else, besides funding, would need to be sustained to help the innovation continue. This includes support from leadership, a management and teaming structure, implementation supports, and the involvement of stakeholders.
Lack of continuity in project and turnover	Emphasize the importance of rebuilding relationships through staff changes and building up the staff expertise through the creation of a functional teaming structure that includes development of team charters, training, and coaching.
Readiness to sustain	Continually address leadership and organizational readiness to implement throughout the project. Continued support and champions are needed to sustain the innovation and implementation infrastructure.
Inability to gather or share outcome data due to the existence of a rigorous evaluation. Absence of outcome data can hinder sustainability efforts	Helping an organization use other available data. This could include evidence of strong implementation supports, data from fidelity monitoring, support from stakeholders, and feedback from the target population.
Sustainability barriers	Potential barriers should be identified early. Usability testing can help identify barriers and allow the organization to test solutions.

Conclusion

We hope you found this guidance helpful in your efforts to build the implementation capacity of child welfare organizations using the Approach to implement an innovation. The following pages provide a quick checklist to assist you with keeping track of and completing the major activities that need to occur during each of the steps of the Approach. Each of the activities represents a critical implementation juncture and should be accomplished before moving forward.



Quick Reference Guide—Critical Implementation Junctures

The following checklist is designed to assist you in keeping track of and completing the major activities of the Approach. Each of the activities represents a critical implementation juncture and should be addressed before moving forward.

Teaming and Communication Linkages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Created an Implementation Team<input type="checkbox"/> Developed a teaming structure<input type="checkbox"/> Outlined clear communication linkages and a communication protocol
Section 1: Identify the Problem and Understand the Target Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Defined problem and root causes<input type="checkbox"/> Identified target population and associated needs<input type="checkbox"/> Identified potential systemic barriers
Section 2: Develop a Theory of Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identified outcomes of interest<input type="checkbox"/> Created causal links<input type="checkbox"/> Identified assumptions<input type="checkbox"/> Developed indicators<input type="checkbox"/> Wrote narrative describing the full theory of change
Section 3: Assess and Select an Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Created a list of factors to consider<input type="checkbox"/> Researched possible innovations<input type="checkbox"/> Created a list of possible innovations<input type="checkbox"/> Compared innovations<input type="checkbox"/> Chose an innovation
Section 4: Implementation Supports Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Learned about the implementation supports<input type="checkbox"/> Assessed existing implementation supports

Section 5: Initial Assessment and Implementation Plan

- Assessed the readiness of the innovation to be implemented
- Assessed the readiness of the organization to support the innovation
- Developed an implementation plan

Section 6: Develop or Adapt the Innovation

- Developed or adapted a practice profile
- Finalized a practice profile

Section 7: Develop or Adapt Implementation Supports

Leadership and Stakeholder Supports

- Created roles for leaders and stakeholders
- Developed strategies for engaging leadership and stakeholders

Recruiting and Selecting a Competent and Confident Staff

- Established a recruitment and selection team
- Developed a recruitment plan
- Established selection criteria and an interview protocol
- Collected data to make improvements to future efforts

Training to Build Knowledge and Skills

- Developed training materials and designed a training plan
- Evaluated the effectiveness of training

Coaching to Build Knowledge and Skills

- Developed the coaching model and designed a coaching plan
- Integrated training and coaching
- Evaluated the effectiveness of coaching

Fidelity Assessment: Measure and Process Development

- Developed or adapted a fidelity assessment
- Developed fidelity assessment protocols
- Created a process for sharing and using the results

Identifying and Using Data for Decision-Making in Support of Innovation Implementation

- Determined what implementation questions to answer
- Outlined a plan for how to gather data to answer these questions
- Detailed a schedule for collecting and reporting data
- Made improvements to implementation supports based upon the data

Section 8: Initial Implementation and Testing

- Developed a usability testing plan
- Engaged in rapid-cycle problem-solving

Section 9: Monitor and Assess the Innovation and Implementation Supports

- Determined the implementation and outcome questions to answer
- Developed a plan for how to gather the data to answer the questions
- Administered the *Implementation Supports: Assessing Best Practices* survey
- Developed an action plan
- Created a schedule for data collection
- Used the data to improve implementation, infrastructure, and the innovation

Section 10: Plan for Sustaining the Innovation

- Decided that the innovation meets a need and that it should be sustained
- Developed a plan for sustaining the innovation and implementation supports