Implementation fidelity of public health interventions

A summary of

How to cite this NCCMT summary:

Relevance For Public Health
The concepts and model proposed in this resource are very relevant to public health practitioners and those involved with implementation.

Description
This resource outlines the importance of implementation fidelity. It provides strategies to measure implementation fidelity in order to ensure that community-based interventions that are shown to be efficacious in controlled randomized trials also yield population benefits once translated to the community (i.e., evidence to practice).

Implementing the Tool
Who is Involved?
Public health practitioners and other personnel involved with the delivery and measurement of implementation of public and community-based interventions are involved in this resource.

Steps for Using Tool
This resource defines and describes the components of implementation, with a particular focus on implementation fidelity. It also outlines current efforts to measure implementation fidelity for the successful translation of community-based prevention interventions to the community. Implementation fidelity is defined as the “degree to which an intervention is delivered as intended.” Implementation fidelity is determined to be key to the successful translation of evidence to practice.

The authors distinguish between adherence and competence, while emphasizing that both are key elements in the successful implementation of public health interventions. Adherence is defined as the “extent to which practitioners’ behaviours conform to the intervention protocol.” Competence is defined as the skillfulness of the practitioner (i.e., communication and technical skills) to deliver the public health intervention (i.e., “how well”).

The model requires the user to examine the core implementation components, which include:

- Practitioner selection
- Pre-service and in-service training
- Ongoing coaching and supervision
- Practitioner performance evaluation (assessment of implementation fidelity)
- Decision support data systems
- Facilitative administrative supports
- System intervention

The implementation model puts the notion of implementation fidelity at the centre as a key component. The following frameworks also include implementation fidelity:
In using the proposed framework, the authors acknowledge the existence of a number of barriers to maintaining implementation, including:

- Local adaptations
- Individual variations in practitioner adherence and competence
- Lack of available training and technical support
- Limited resources for supporting the intervention at the site level
- Competing demands for the practitioners’ time that can diminish their commitment or effectiveness

The most impactful consequences of lowered implementation fidelity include weakened beneficial public health outcomes when a known efficacious public health intervention is translated to practice in a suboptimal manner. The method poses a number of measurement strategies to improve implementation fidelity. The authors discuss the pros and cons of each strategy, which include:

- Self-report
- Observation
  - In vivo
  - Video recording
  - Audio recording

Conditions for Use

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Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

Evaluation
Information not available

Validity
Not applicable

Reliability
Not applicable

Methodological Rating

N/A
Not applicable

Tool Development

Developers
Susan Breitenstein
Deborah Gross
Christine Garvey
Carrie Hill
Louis Fogg
Barbara Resnick

Method of Development

Although not specifically stated, the resource presents itself as a narrative review of the literature.

Release Date

2010

Contact Person

Susan Breitenstein
### Resources

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