Changing Contexts: Are we purposefully thinking through adaptation and implementation fidelity?

As we continue our preparations for different scenarios in returning to school, we need to be purposeful when planning for adaptations to our use of practices or innovations. Our context continues to change as we go into the next academic year. We can look to frameworks and learnings from the field of implementation science to guide us in making systematic adaptations.

Ensuring Effectiveness in a Given Context

Implementation is a dynamic and often messy process. To ensure effectiveness in a given context, it requires a thoughtful and deliberate process of determining needed modifications to the design and use of practices or innovations. Ideally, these adaptations are fidelity consistent modifications, or those that keep to the core components of the practice that are needed for effectiveness.

Planning for Purposeful Adaptations

The Implementation Team can consider the following questions when planning purposeful adaptations. These questions are drawn from the FRAME approach (Stirman, Baumann, & Miller, 2019) and Moore & Metz's (June, 2020) recent blog.

Why is an adaptation needed? What is prompting the adaptation?

It is important to communicate the rationale for the adaptation with staff and stakeholders.

What is the goal of the adaptation? For example, are you trying to improve the access to or reach of the program?

Without knowing the goal of adaptation, we can't be purposeful in our design of the change including how we measure its effectiveness.

Who needs to be part of the planning process for the adaptation? Who ultimately makes the decision?

Including those directly responsible for using and supporting the practice as well as intended recipients and other stakeholders is critical for creating acceptability of the change.

What exactly are you modifying or adapting? Are you adapting content, how the practice or innovation is delivered, or support activities such as training, coaching or evaluation?

Being specific in exactly what changes you are making will make it easier to support the change as well as replicate the change.

Is the change consistent with the core elements of the innovation that are needed for achieving outcomes (i.e., fidelity)?

If you're unsure or don't know, what data will need to be collected to help answer this question?

How will you know the impact of adaptation? Will it change the effectiveness of the practice or innovation?

Continue to be data-informed! In order to know whether the adaptation should continue to be used, we need to critically examine its impact on our intended outcomes. Ask questions such as who is the modification working for and what level of change in opportunities or outcomes is it producing?

Adaptations will be necessary during these times of change. Being purposeful on why, who, what, how, and when of modifications will be vital for effective implementation.

Change on purpose and keep it simple!

Resources:

- Moore, J. & Metz., A. (June, 2020). Providing Implementation Support for Program Adaptations in a COVID-19 Environment. https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/practicing-implementation/providing-implementation-support-program-adaptations-covid-19-environment

- Stirman, S. Baumann, A. & C. Miller (2019). The FRAME: an expanded framework for reporting adaptations and modifications to evidence-based interventions. *Implementation Science (14)*, 58 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-019-0898-y

SISEP

State Implementation and Scaling-up
of Evidence-based Practices

IDEAs
that Work

U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

FIND OUT MORE