

Implementation Infrastructure

Implementation drivers refer to the key infrastructure elements needed to support practice, organizational, and systems change necessary for successful implementation of a program or practice (Metz & Bartley, 2012). Implementation Drivers are in service to fidelity and ensure that the program or practice is embedded in the organization's operations and culture. The implementation drivers emerged on the basis of commonalities among successfully implemented programs and practices and are grouped into organization and competency drivers (Fixsen et al., 2005).

- **Organization drivers** (facilitative administration, systems intervention and decision-support data systems) create and sustain a hospitable environment in both the organization and the broader system that is needed for the program or practice to be implemented as intended and achieve expected outputs and outcomes.
- **Competency drivers** (selection, training, coaching and fidelity) develop and improve staff competencies to support the program or practice.



Coaching

Coaching is defined as regular, embedded professional development designed to help staff use the program or practice as intended. Coaching is a necessary component for promoting staff confidence and ensuring competence. Skillful coaching serves the following functions:

- *Ensures support for staff:* Staff often do their work alone or in silos and can feel isolated, particularly as they encounter challenges in their work. Coaching ensures that staff feel supported to do their work well and reduces isolation.
- *Ensures skills are used in practice:* New practices or ways of work can be challenging for staff to use. Without coaching, staff often fall back on 'business as usual,' using skills they are already comfortable with even if those skills are not aligned with the program or practice. Coaching ensures that the fragile, uncomfortable new skills are actually used in practice.

- *Ensures fidelity*: Coaching is essential to fidelity. Coaching allows supervisors and coaches to understand what staff are doing and saying, and support their practice so that their work is aligned with the program or practice as it was designed.

Best Practices for Coaching

1. **There is someone accountable for coaching of relevant staff for the program or practice.**

A specific person is responsible for coordinating the quality and timeliness of coaching relevant staff supporting the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role in the coaching process.

2. **Coaching is provided to improve the competency of relevant staff for the program or practice.**

Coaching is provided at least monthly to relevant staff. Coaches' feedback to staff is based on direct observation and at least one other data source such as:

- group or individual reflections;
- product or document review;
- interviews with key stakeholders.

3. **Agency staff use a coaching service delivery plan.**

A written plan outlines coaching provided to relevant staff, including three of the following:

- skill sets for being a coach;
- frequency of coaching;
- coaching methods;
- feedback methods and timeframe;
- communication protocols for coach and supervisor.

4. **Agency staff regularly assess coaching effectiveness.**

Agency staff assess coaching effectiveness quarterly through the use of two or more data sources:

- practitioner fidelity;
- coach fidelity;
- staff satisfaction with coaching surveys.

Coaching effectiveness data are used to improve coaching and other implementation drivers.

Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R., & Wallace, F. (2005). *A Review and Synthesis of the Literature Related to Implementation of Programs and Practices*. Tampa, FL: National Implementation Research Network.

Metz, A., & Bartley, L. (2012). Active implementation frameworks for program success: How to use implementation science to improve outcomes for children. *Zero to Three (J)*, 32(4), 11-18.