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.

Fidelity: An Outcome of Effective Implementation

The primary function of the Fidelity Driver is measuring fidelity to the program or practice, or the extent to which delivery of the program or practice adheres to the protocol or program model originally developed. Examining fidelity is an opportunity to reinforce the work done by staff and build upon their strengths.

Fidelity is both a driver and an outcome of effective implementation. When implementation supports such as staff selection, training, coaching, and administrative procedures are installed and utilized as the program or practice requires, staff are more likely to achieve high performance and fidelity (Metz, et. al., 2014). When fidelity assessments are weak, this is an indication to agency leaders and supervisors that they should take a close look at how to improve the other implementation drivers.

Fidelity provides feedback to the implementing agency on the functioning of the Implementation Drivers, including:
- *Recruitment and Selection Practices*: How are our current practices ensuring we have capable staff? How should we change our recruitment and selection criteria and processes to ensure we are hiring the right people to do this work?

- *Training Programs*: How is our current training program preparing staff for their work? How should we change training programs to better prepare our staff?
- *Supervision and Coaching Systems*: How can we develop a supervision and coaching plan to support staff in achieving high performance? How do we need to adjust our system to provide better support?
- *Interpretation of outcome data***:** How do our outcomes reflect the performance of staff? How do they inform the decisions we make to support staff?

Best Practices for Fidelity

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

   A specific person is responsible for coordinating fidelity assessment processes of relevant staff for the program or practice. This person is able to execute the responsibilities related to his/her role.

2. **The agency uses a fidelity assessment for the program or practice.**

   The agency consistently uses a fidelity assessment for program or practice.

3. **Agency staff follow a protocol for fidelity assessments.**

   Agency staff follow a written protocol that includes all of the following:
   - orientation process for relevant staff;
   - process for how fidelity data are used;
   - communication protocol for sharing fidelity data.

4. **Agency staff use fidelity assessment data to improve program and practice outcomes and implementation supports.**

   Agency staff review fidelity assessment data regularly and use assessment data to improve implementation drivers.

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