


Implementing Evidence-based Practice

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WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This paper discusses a four-phase implementation process model, adapted to public service sector settings. The paper highlights the important variables, challenges, and opportunities of each phase (Exploration, Adoption/Preparation, Implementation, & Sustainment), considers inner and outer contexts, and discusses implications for further research.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Service delivery and client outcomes can be improved by implementing innovative practices. Implementing Evidence Based Practices (EBP) can be complex, challenging, and non-linear due to the multi-layered nature of public service agencies. The first phase involves awareness of an issue needing attention. In the second phase, agencies experiment with ideas prior to large-scale implementation. Implementation factors involve micro and macro issues. Sustainment indicates continued use of an innovation in practice. The figure below identifies the phases and factors affecting implementation:

EXPLORATION	ADOPTION DECISION / PREPARATION	ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION	SUSTAINMENT
<p>OUTER CONTEXT: Sociopolitical Context Legislation Policies Monitoring and Review Funding Service Grants Research Grants Foundation Grants Continuity of funding Client Advocacy Consumer organizations Interorganizational networks Direct networking Indirect networking Professional organizations Clearinghouses Technical assistance centers</p> <p>INNER CONTEXT: Organizational characteristics Absorptive capacity Knowledge/skills Readiness for change Receptive context Culture Climate Leadership Individual adopter characteristics Values Goals Social Networks Perceived need for change</p>	<p>OUTER CONTEXT: Sociopolitical Federal Legislation Local enactment Definitions of "evidence" Funding Support tied to federal and state policies Client Advocacy National advocacy Class action lawsuits Interorganizational networks Organizational linkages Leadership ties Information transmission Formal Informal</p> <p>INNER CONTEXT: Organizational characteristics Size Role specialization Knowledge/skills/expertise Values Leadership Culture embedding Championing adoption</p>	<p>OUTER CONTEXT: Sociopolitical Legislative priorities Administrative costs Funding Training Sustained fiscal support Contracting arrangements Community based organizations Interorganizational networks Professional associations Cross-sector Contractor associations Information sharing Cross discipline translation Intervention developers Engagement in implementation Leadership Cross level congruence Effective leadership practices</p> <p>INNER CONTEXT: Organizational characteristics Structure Priorities/goals Readiness for change Receptive context Culture/climate Innovation-values fit EBP structural fit EBP ideological fit Individual adopter characteristics Demographics Adaptability Attitudes toward EBP</p>	<p>OUTER CONTEXT: Sociopolitical Leadership Policies Federal initiatives State initiatives Local service system Consent decrees Funding Fit with existing service funds Cost absorptive capacity Workforce stability impacts Public-academic collaboration Ongoing positive relationships Valuing multiple perspectives</p> <p>INNER CONTEXT: Organizational characteristics Leadership Embedded EBP culture Critical mass of EBP provision Social network support Fidelity monitoring/support EBP role clarity Fidelity support system Supportive coaching Staffing Staff selection criteria Validated selection procedures</p>

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Awareness of the challenges of implementation will help agencies better navigate the EBP implementation process. Agencies should take steps to develop partnerships with consumers, and community stakeholders, as well as a positive organizational culture, to ensure better EBP sustainment results. Leadership, training, and reducing staff turnover are essential implementation issues that must be addressed as well.