


 <p><b>Blueprints Pre-Conference Workshop</b></p> <p><b>April 14, 2014 Denver, Co</b></p>	<p><b><i>Tackling the Wicked Problems of Implementing Evidence-Based Programs</i></b></p>
	<p><b>Karen A. Blase, PhD, Co-Director</b></p>  <p><b>Jennifer Schroeder, PhD</b> THE <b>Implementation GROUP</b></p>  <p><b>And Melissa Van Dyke, Co-Director</b></p> 

<p><b>With Appreciation</b></p> <p>To go fast you go alone, to go far you go with others. Our thanks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The Blueprints Group</li><li>– The NIRN Team</li><li>– The GII Group and GIC Committees</li><li>– Foundations</li><li>– Federal Agencies and State Partners</li><li>– Service Providers and Local Agencies</li><li>– Purveyors and Intermediary Groups</li><li>– Implementation and Intervention Researchers</li><li>– Consumers of services and supports</li></ul>
  

## Goals for Today

**Learn about the Active Implementation Frameworks and how they can be applied to your efforts to:**

- Get started and get better as you work productively with Purveyors and with System and Service Partners
- Analyze and develop the implementation infrastructure needed to support your efforts
- Create and support the implementation teams
- Consider how stage-based activities can support and guide the work.
- ***Tame the wicked problems that arise!***



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## Brief Background

- **What is Implementation Science?**
- **How can Active Implementation Frameworks help us?**
- **What are Wicked Problems?**
  - **Why do we need to be aware of them?**
  - **What can be done about them?**



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## The Big Picture



Each year, more prevention and intervention research is done.

- ❑ More careful methods are crafted for reviewing research and identifying evidence-based practices and programs
- ❑ More attention is directed to evidence-based and evidence-informed practices and programs in journals, conferences, and meetings
- ❑ Yet, it is a challenge to realize ***socially significant and sustainable benefits*** for children, families, and caregivers on a broad



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## Socially Significant Solutions

It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos, “Let justice roll down like mighty waters,” and quite another to work out the irrigation system.

~ William Sloane Coffin  
US Social activist and clergyman



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## How Do We Frame the “Gap”?

### ★ Science to Service Gap

★ What is known is not what is used to promote the mental health, educational outcomes and social emotional development of children

### ★ Implementation Gap

★ What is adopted is not used with fidelity and good outcomes for consumers.

★ What is used with fidelity is not sustained for a useful period of time.

★ What is used with fidelity is not used on a scale sufficient to impact social problems.



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## Shifting the Focus



From what works to improve children’s mental health, social–emotional development, educational outcomes, and physical health to....

What works to improve

- ☐ Practices of well-intentioned professionals, teachers, service providers, practitioners
- ☐ Organizational structures and functions
- ☐ The decision-making of funders and policy makers



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## Why Shift the Focus?



**Because no matter how much we know,  
children and families can not benefit  
from interventions, supports, and  
services that they do not receive.**



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## Implementation Science

**Review and synthesis of the  
implementation research and  
evaluation literature  
(1970 – 2004)**

- Multi-disciplinary
- Multi-sector
- Multi-national



Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M. & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).



**[HTTP://NIRN.FPG.UNC.EDU](http://NIRN.FPG.UNC.EDU)**

## Implementation Gone Wrong



## Implementation Science - What Do We Know?

**Experimental Data Show These Methods,  
When Used Alone, Are Insufficient:**

- Diffusion/ Dissemination of information
- Training
- Passing laws/mandates/regulations
- Providing funding/incentives
- Organization change/reorganization

**Data: 5% to 15% Realize Intended Outcomes**  
**NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT**





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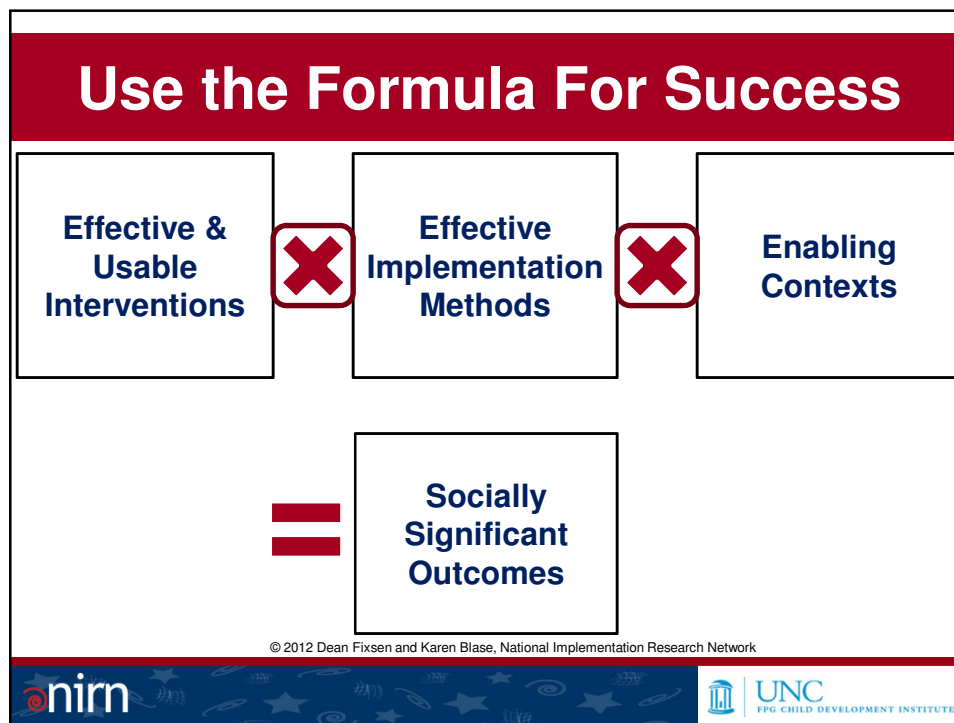
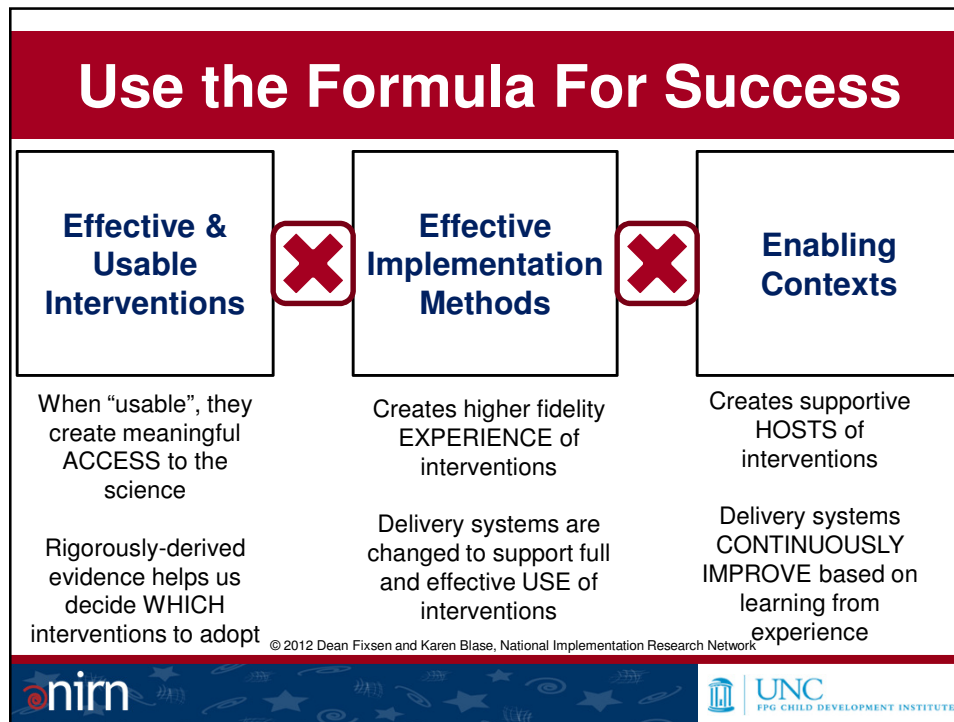
*If we want a better return on our investment,  
what might we do?*

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## What's the Way Forward



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## Active Implementation Frameworks

- **EFFECTIVE & USABLE INTERVENTIONS**
  - What works and what are people saying and doing that makes things better for children and families?
- **STAGES**
  - What steps lead to successful implementation?
- **DRIVERS**
  - What critical supports are needed to make this change?  
What are key elements of a functional infrastructure?
- **TEAMS**
  - Who takes responsibility for and helps guide the change process and scale-up?
- **IMPROVEMENT CYCLES**
  - How can we create more hospitable environments, efficiently solve problems and get better?

Effective & Usable Interventions

Stages

Drivers

Teams

Cycles

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Effective & Usable Interventions

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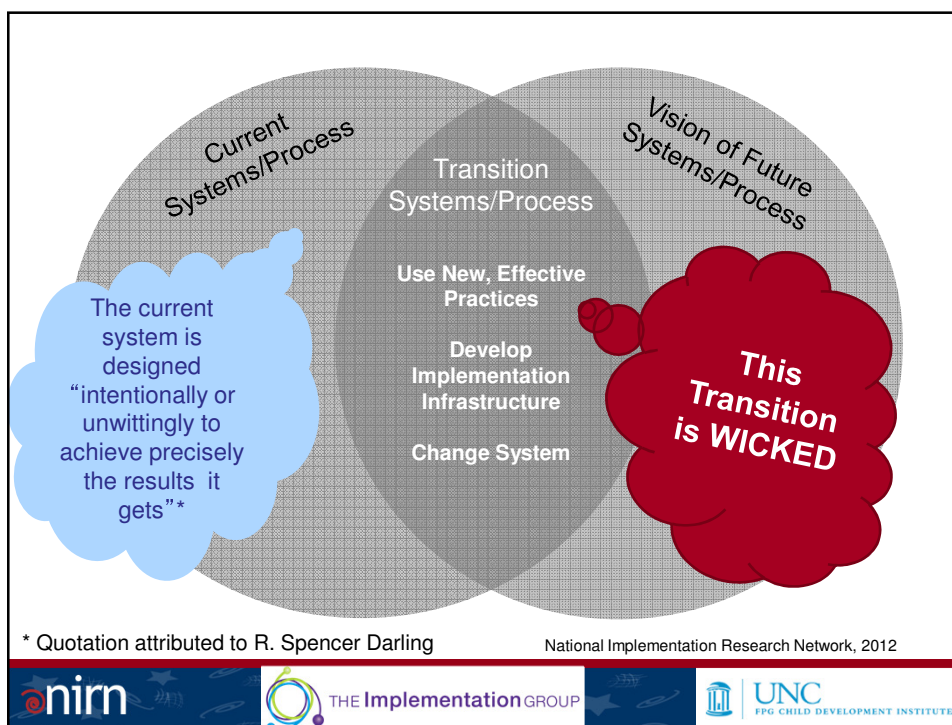
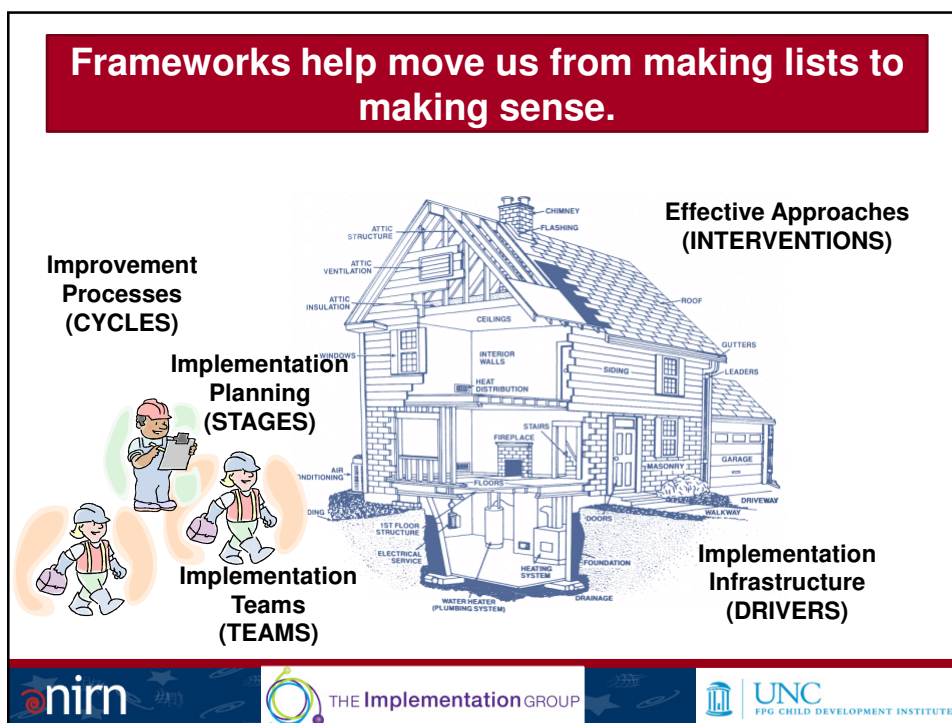
Drivers

Teams

Cycles

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**Use Data About Effective Implementation Processes**



## Change Challenges

- Tame Problems
  - Often complicated (e.g. safety of nuclear generators, air traffic control)
- Wicked Problems
  - They are messy, devious, and fight back when you try to “solve” them



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## Change Challenges

- Tame Problems
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- Wicked Problems
  - They are messy, devious, and fight back when you try to “solve” them

“Managers [or leaders] are not confronted with problems that are independent of each other, **but with dynamic situations that consist of complex systems of changing problems that interact with each other.** I call such situations messes. . . . Managers [or leaders] do not solve problems, they manage messes.

-- Russell Ackoff, operations theorists



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## What's the Way Forward



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## Right Strategy for the Challenge

- Different challenges call for different strategies
  - Technical Strategies
  - Adaptive Strategies to Address Wicked Problems
- According to Ron Heifetz and his colleagues at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, one of the biggest mistakes "leaders" make is to incorrectly identify the type of challenge they are facing
  - Using technical approaches for adaptive issues (and vice versa)

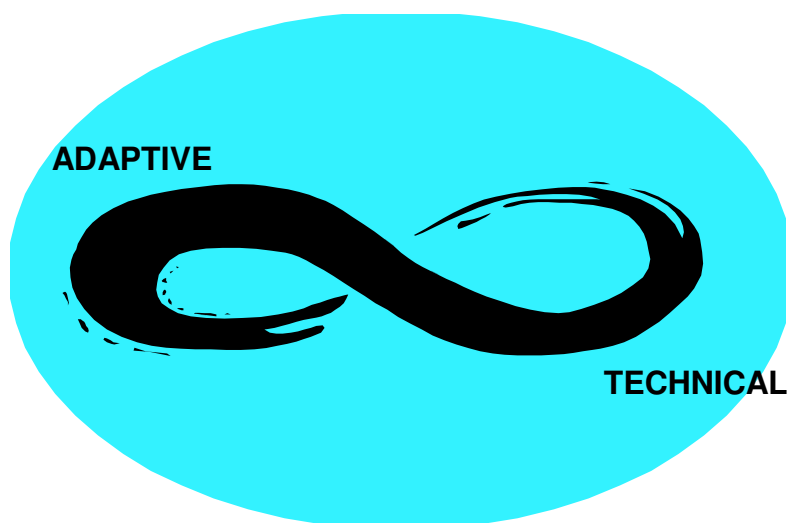


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## The Flow of the Work



## Examples

### Technical

- Funding scholarships
- Building hospitals
- Installing inventory controls for a food bank
- Developing malaria vaccine within a malaria-infected region

### Adaptive

- Reforming public education
- Providing affordable healthcare
- Increasing organizational effectiveness
- Achieving 80% vaccination rates

Heifetz, R. A., Kania, J. V., & Kramer, M. R. (2004).



## Technical

### Technical Challenges

- Perspectives are aligned (views, values)
- Definition of the problem is clear and agreed upon
- Solution and implementation of the solution is relatively clear, although may be complicated
- There can be a “primary” locus of responsibility for *organizing* the work

### Technical Responses

- Use established norms/ goals
- Define problems
- Provide solutions
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Assign tasks
- Manage conflict
- Maintain order

Heifetz, Leadership without Easy Answers, 1996



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## Adaptive

### Adaptive Challenges

- Legitimate, yet competing, perspectives emerge
- Definition of the problem is less clear
- There are different perspectives on the “issue” at hand
- Solution and implementation is unclear and requires learning
- Primary locus of responsibility is not a single entity or person

### Adaptive Responses

- Get on the Balcony
- Identify the Adaptive Challenge
- Regulate Distress
- Maintain Disciplined Attention
- Give the Work Back to the People
- Protect All Voices

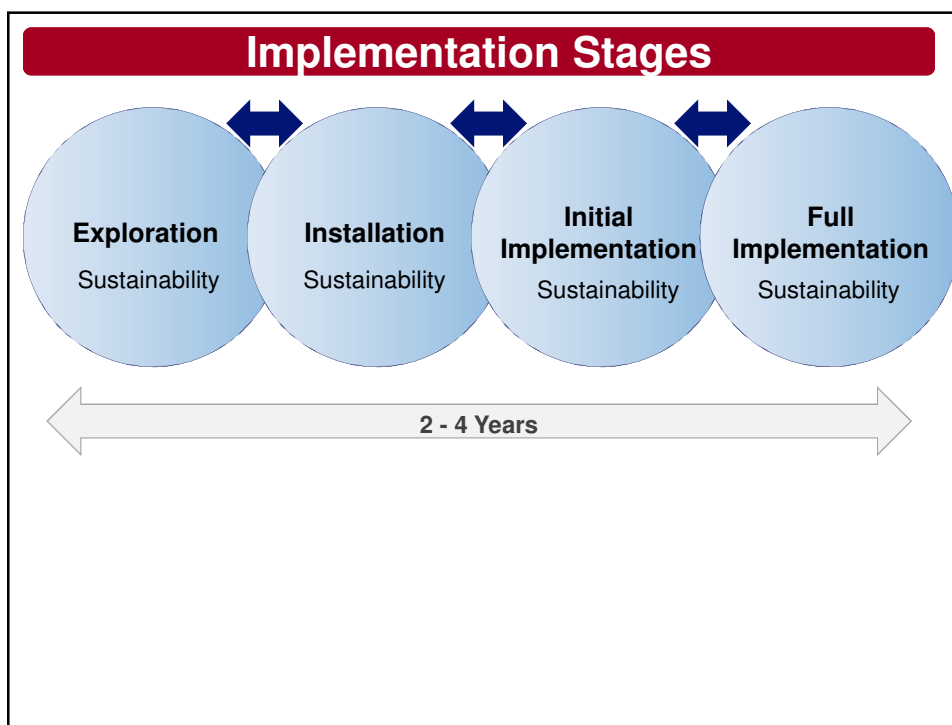
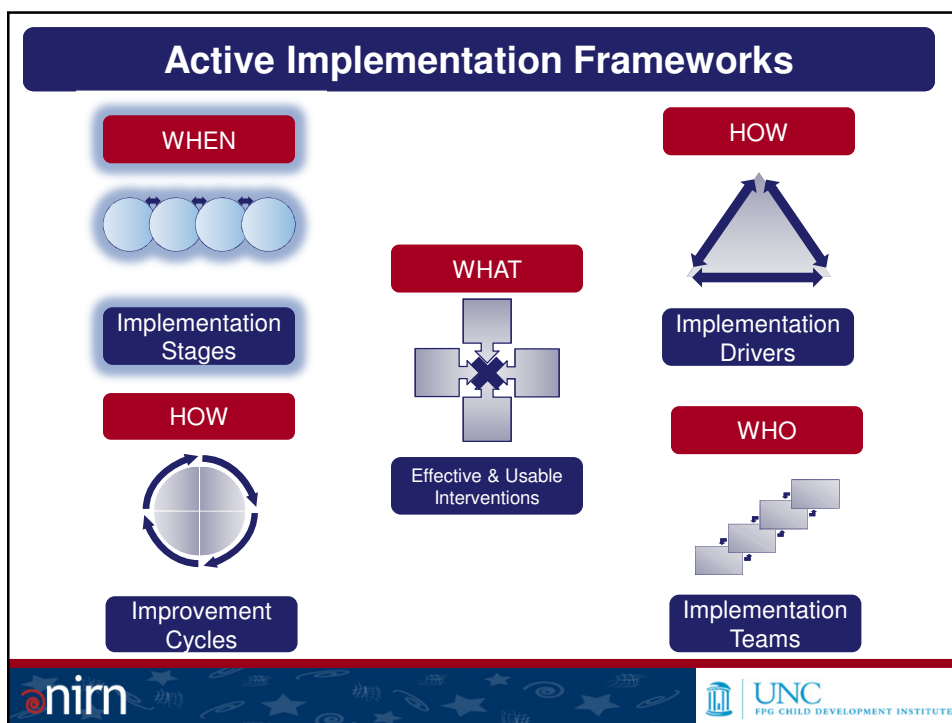
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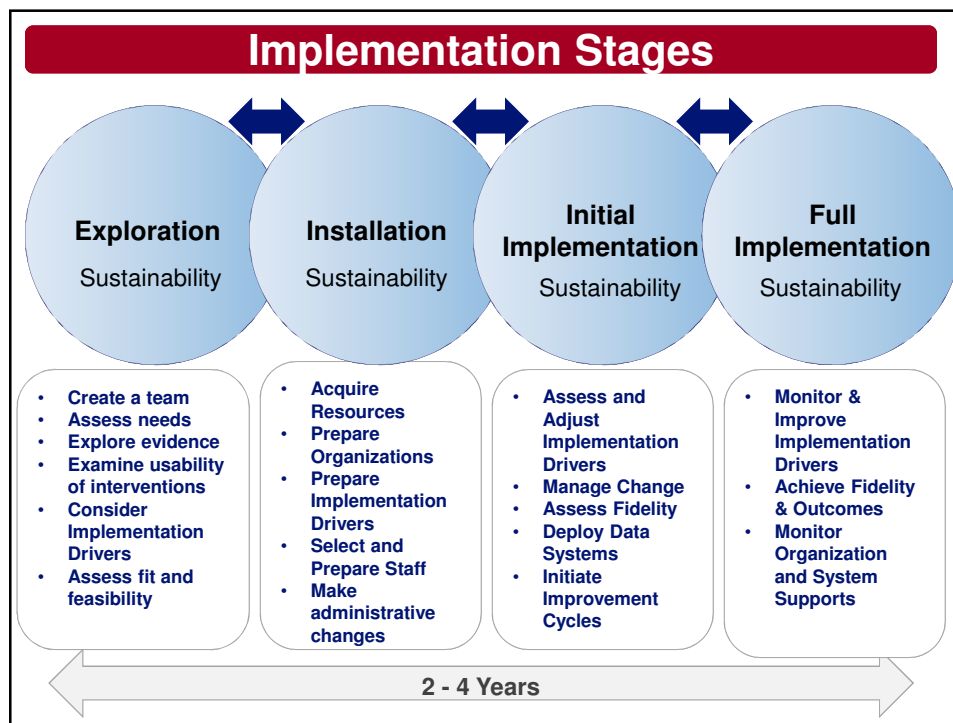


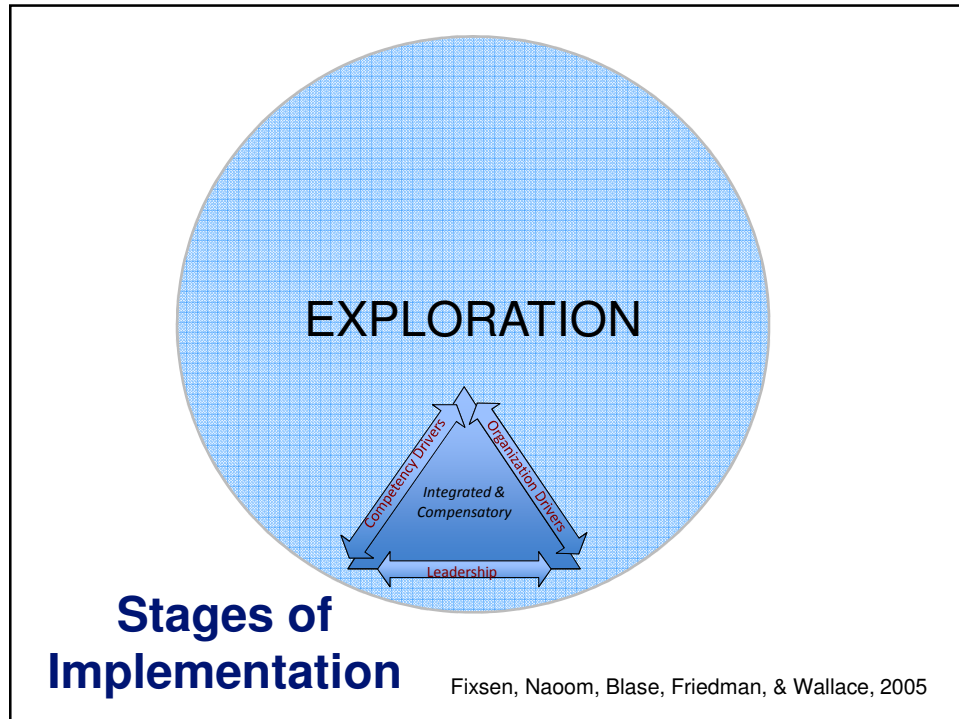


## Sustainability

- Sustainability attention at every stage:
  - Ensure funding streams for desired change and necessary infrastructure (fiscal sustainability)
  - Ensure high fidelity and positive outcomes through infrastructure improvement and maintenance (programmatic sustainability)
  - Plan for turnover (programmatic sustainability)

*“The only thing harder than getting there is staying there.”*








## Exploration

- Stage-matched activities:
  - Examine degree to which the Evidence Based Practice, best practice, systems change meets the needs in for the population of concern in the settings identified
  - Determine whether moving ahead with the initiative and implementation is desirable and feasible
  - Create readiness for change at many levels
  - Build your implementation team

*“Pay now or pay later.”*

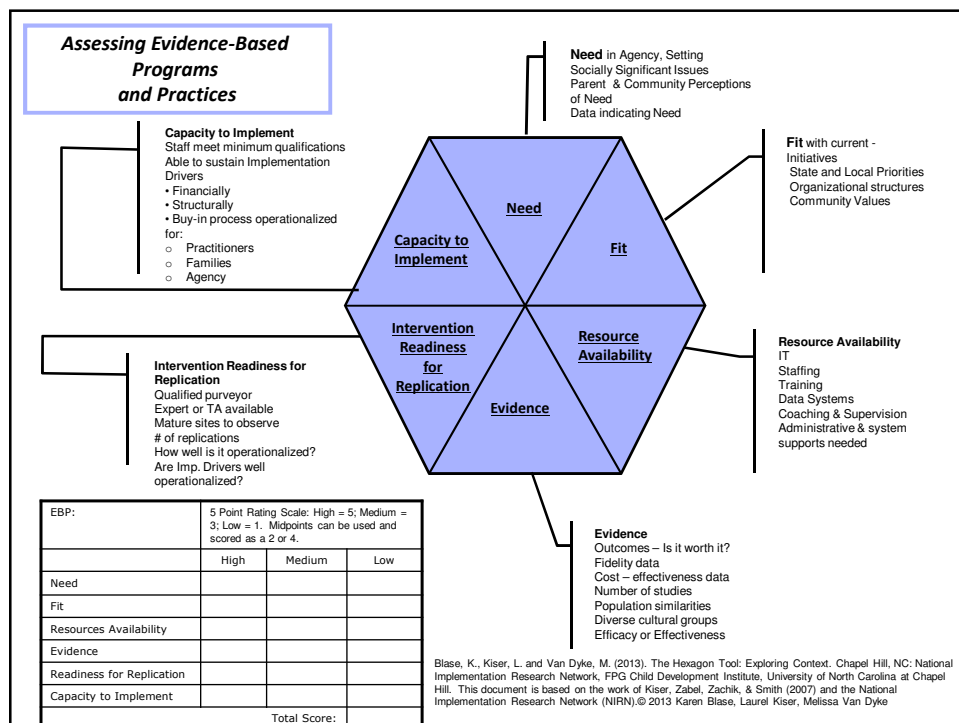
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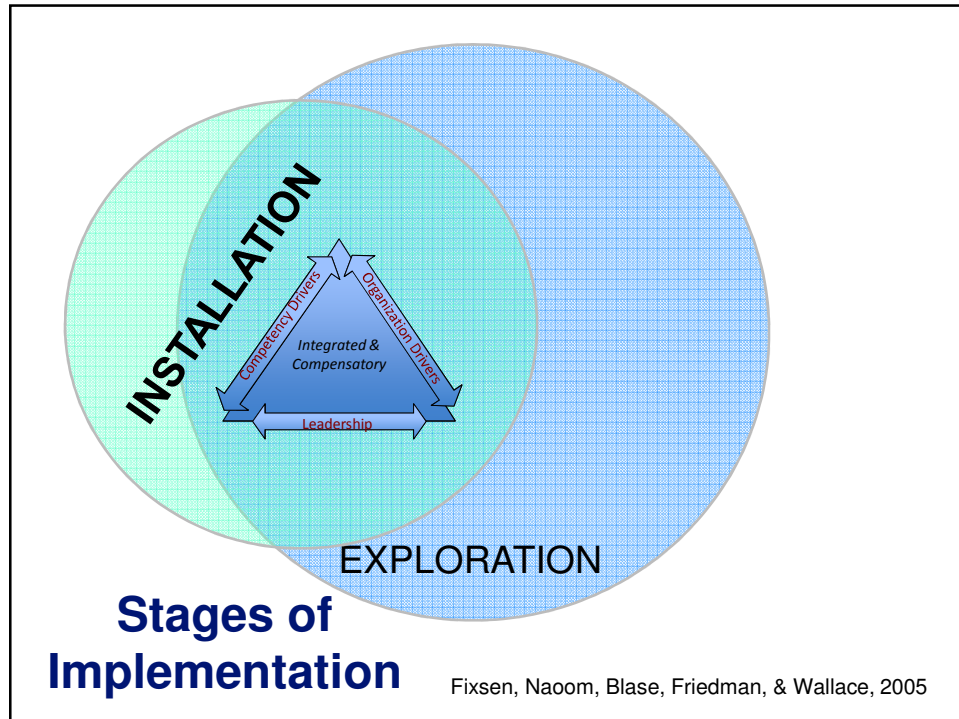
# Exploration

CREATE READINESS

## What happens during Exploration?

- Form “Exploration Workgroup”
- ➔ ▪ Analyze data related to “needs”
- Identify program and practice options and assess
- ➔ ▪ Reassess, revise, prioritize, re-scope
- ➔ ▪ Formalize structures (Implementation Team(s))





## Installation

- Stage-matched activities:
  - **Make the structural and instrumental changes necessary to initiate services**

*“If you build it, they will come” . . . but you actually have to build it!*

## Installation

- Initiate the implementation infrastructure by creating or doing the following:
  - ✓ Develop interview protocols – then actually select staff
  - ✓ Create training plan to respond for staff turnover
  - ✓ Ensure initial training is provided
  - ✓ Plan for initial and ongoing coaching
  - ✓ Plan for assessing performance/fidelity of staff, supervisors, coaches
  - ✓ Plan for modifications to or developing the data system
  - ✓ Plan for identifying administrative barriers
  - ✓ Plan for identifying broader systems issues

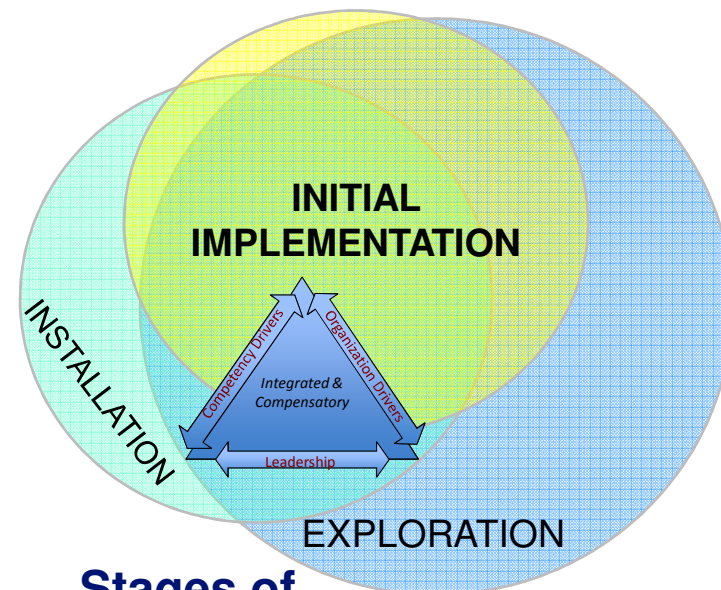


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### Stages of Implementation

Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005

## Initial Implementation

**\*Survive the awkward stage!\***

- Stage-matched activities:
  - Learn from mistakes
    - Use data and listen to stories
  - Continue “buy-in” efforts
  - Manage expectations, normalize the rocky road

*“Anything worth doing...is worth doing poorly.”*



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## Initial Implementation

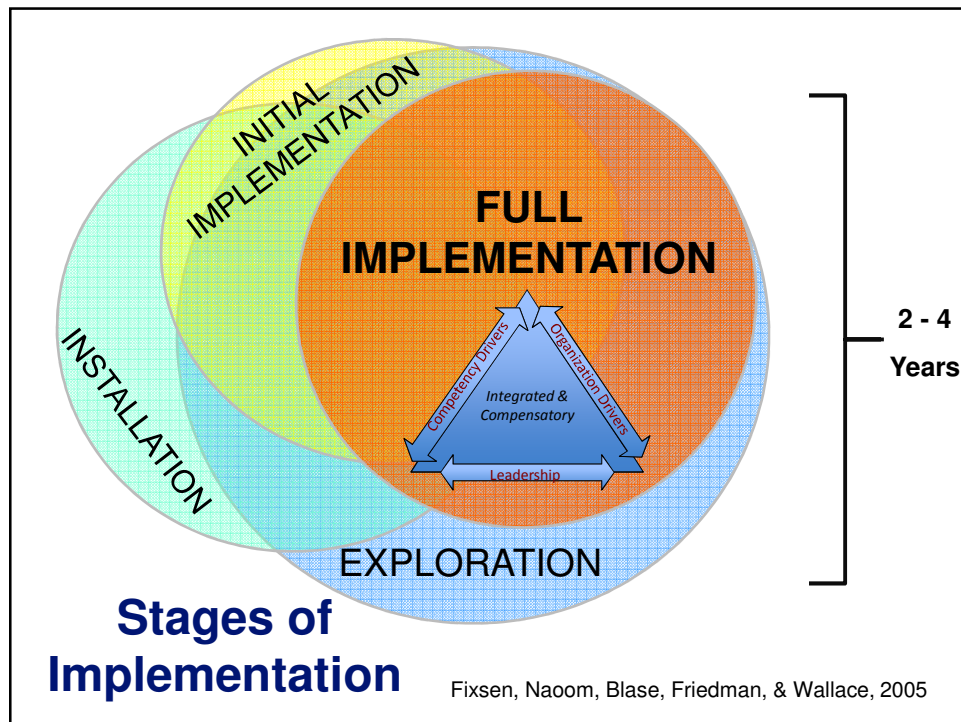
- Begin managing the initial phases of implementation...
  - Provide new, effective strategies
  - Manage staff turnover
  - Manage change process
    - High rates of coaching and support
    - New processes and communication protocols
    - Put infrastructure components in place
    - Overcome fear and inertia



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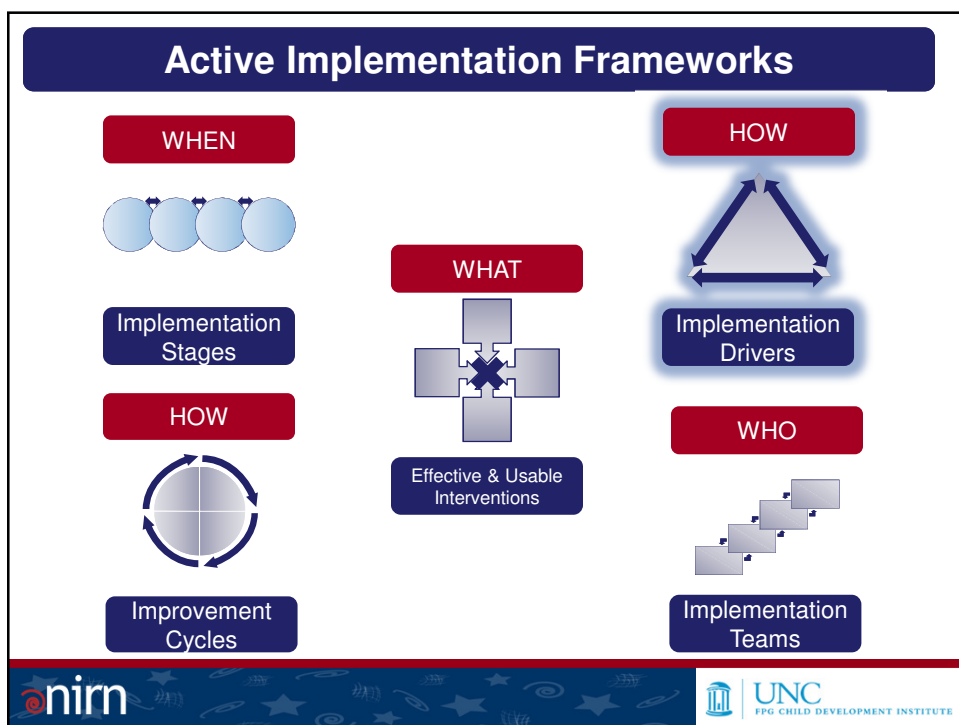
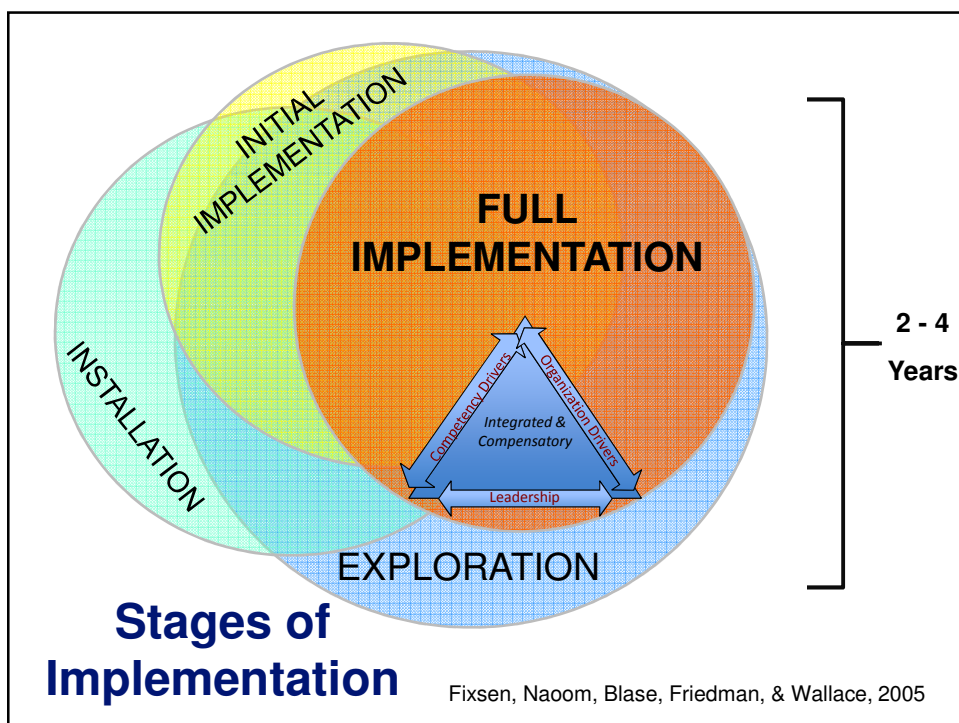
## Full Implementation

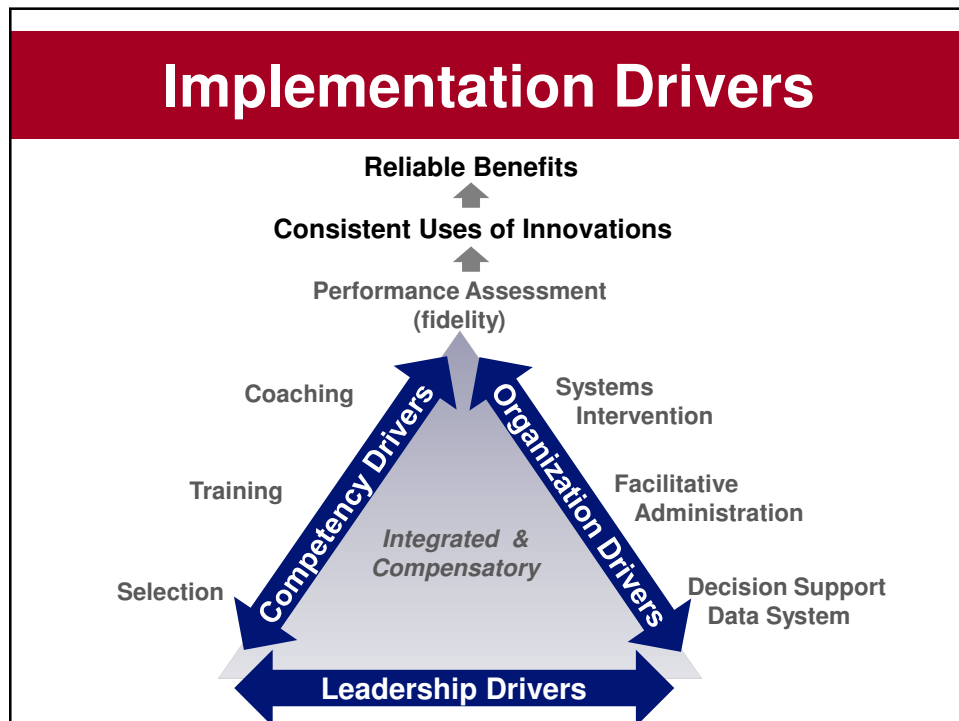
- Stage-matched activities:
  - **Maintaining** and **improving** skills and activities throughout the system
  - Components integrated, fully functioning
  - Skillful practices by front line staff, supervisors, administrators
  - Changes in policy that are reflected in practice at all levels
  - Ready to be evaluated for expected outcomes

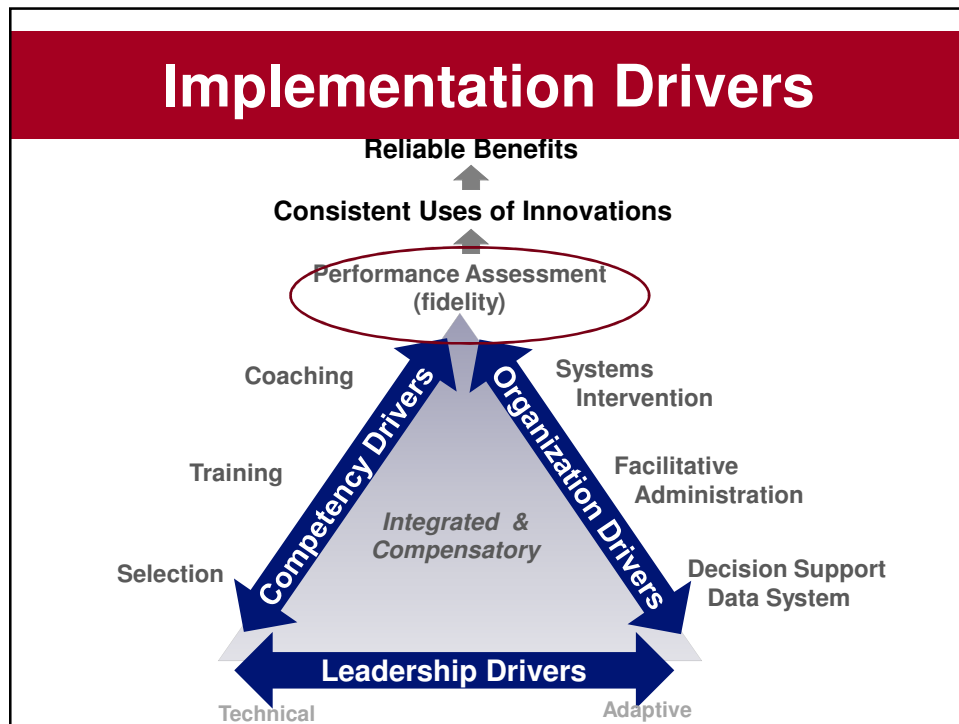
*“The only thing worse than failing and not knowing why you failed, is succeeding and not knowing why you succeeded.”*

*~ Jane Timmons-Mitchell*





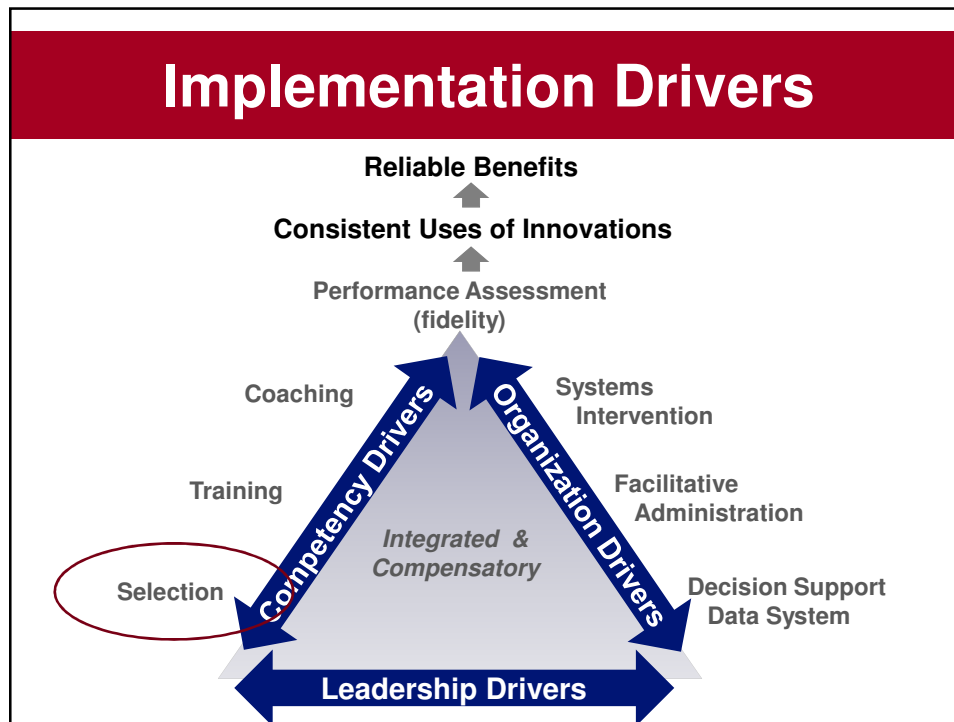




## Performance Assessment/Fidelity

- ❑ Practitioner (*teacher, clinician, medical provider, case manager, child care worker, probation officer*) performance assessments are designed to answer the question, “Are we doing what we said we would do?”
  - Reflect the philosophy, values, principles that are associated with the intervention
  - Demonstrate the competent use of the core components of the approach (non-negotiables)

**Drivers**

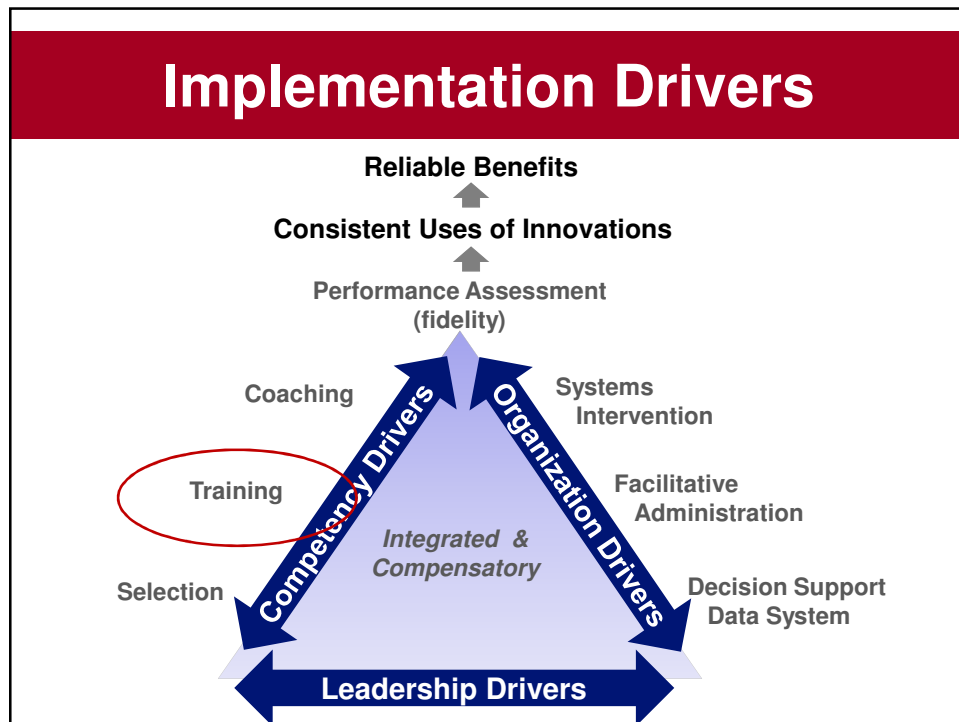


## Selection

Selection of *sites/agencies or practitioner* (case manager, teacher, trainer, supervisor, coach, administrator, etc.) should align with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to deliver the effective practice with fidelity

- Consider recruitment methods that will successfully select “well-suited” candidates
- Develop processes and criteria that assess the critical skills & abilities necessary to deliver the program or practice as intended **AND** that are difficult to teach in training or improve through coaching (e.g. social skills, common sense, empathy, good judgment, ethics, knowledge of the field, ‘coachability’)

Drivers

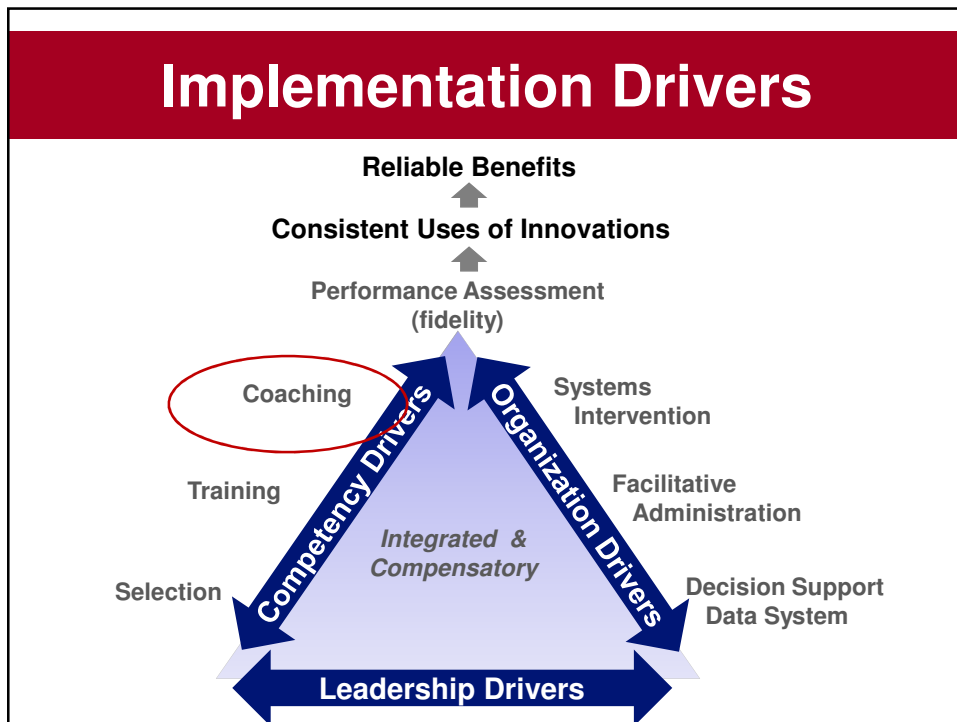


## Training

Pre-service and in-service training are efficient ways...

- To provide knowledge about the effective program or practice related to...
  - Philosophy, values, principles
  - Core components (non-negotiables)
  - Rationales for key practices
- To provide opportunities to practice new skills to criterion
- To provide opportunities to receive feedback in a 'safe' and supportive training environment
- To improve "buy-in"

**Drivers**



## Coaching

- Coaches have four main roles: **supervision, teaching in context, assessment and feedback, and emotional support.**
- Coaches can **support the practitioners** through the early stages of implementation until the new practice behaviors are more skillfully used in the practice setting.
- Skilled coaches are able to provide practitioners with the craft or **practice knowledge** that is needed to supplement the formal knowledge that is presented in training.
- Emotional support** without attention to skill development can be counterproductive

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Training and Coaching			
	OUTCOMES		
	% of Participants who Demonstrate Knowledge, Demonstrate New Skills in a Training Setting, and Use new Skills in the Classroom		
TRAINING COMPONENTS	Knowledge	Skill Demonstration	Use in the Classroom
Theory and Discussion	10%	5%	0%
...+Demonstration in Training	30%	20%	0%
...+ Practice & Feedback in Training	60%	60%	5%
...+ Coaching in Classroom	95%	95%	95%

Joyce and Showers, 2002



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## Reminder About Adaptive Challenges

### Adaptive Challenges

- Legitimate, yet competing, perspectives emerge
- Definition of the problem is less clear
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- Solution and implementation is unclear and requires learning
- Primary locus of responsibility is not a single entity or person

### Adaptive Responses

- Get on the Balcony
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Heifetz, Leadership without Easy Answers, 1996

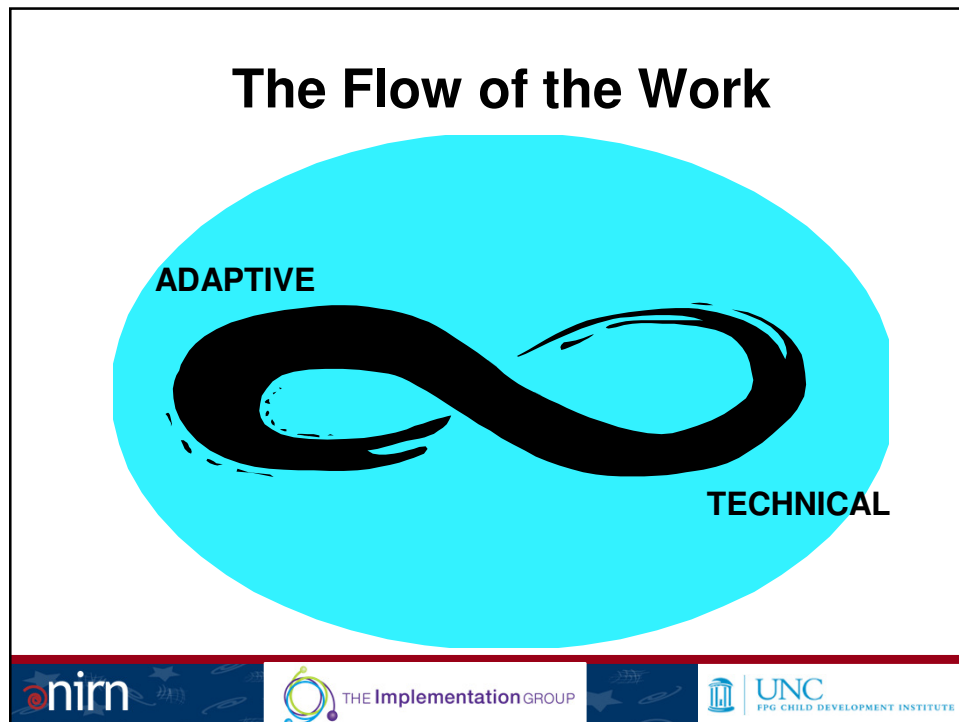


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### Competency Driver Adaptive Challenges

#### Performance Assessment/Fidelity

- Experience with the 'blame game'
- Union issues And....

#### Selection

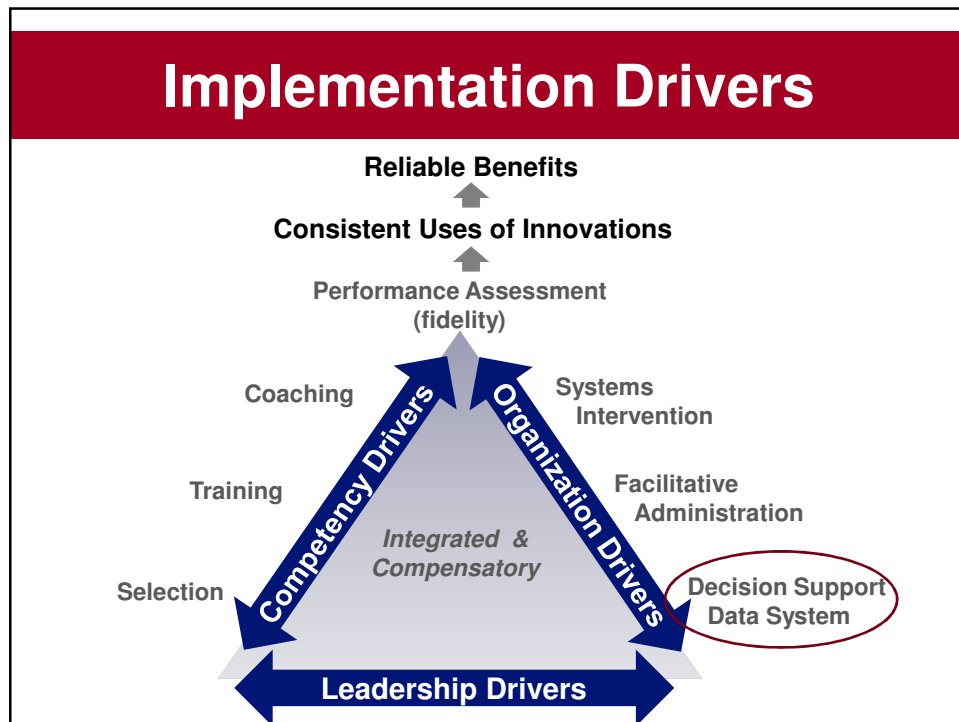
- HR issues Such as?
- We have who we have – no opportunity to select And?

#### Training

- Feedback provided by 'not quite qualified' people. And so?
- "If they are in training, they are not billing hours!" And?

#### Coaching

- Initial Implementation Challenges – what do you think they are?
- Observation and feedback gradually disappears? Why?
- And?

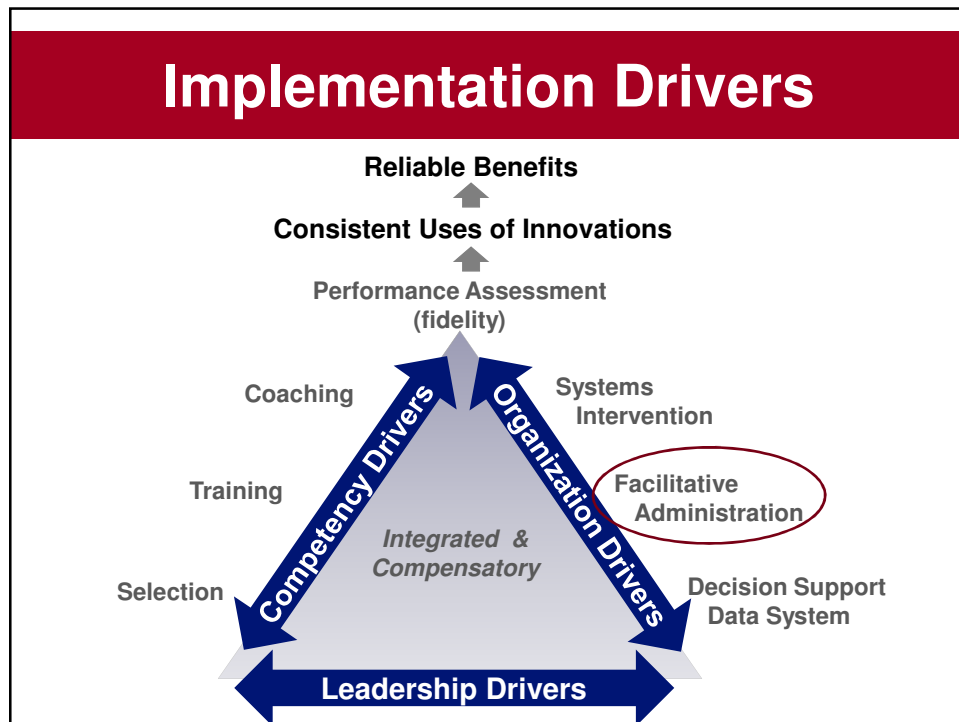


## Decision Support Data System

System to assess key aspects of the overall performance of the organization and system to help ensure continuing implementation of practitioner competencies over time

- Data or information is available to make decisions related to the overall performance of the organization and system
- Data or information is available to develop and improve the use of the core components so that the intervention continues to be delivered as intended and meets the needs of individuals across staff and over time

Drivers



## Facilitative Administration

- Facilitative administrative practices purposefully install and implement policies and practices. . .
  - to support the work of practitioners
  - to reduce implementation barriers
  - to create hospitable environments for practitioners to fully and effectively implement the effective program or practice

Drivers

Drivers

## Facilitative Administration

- Facilitative administrative practices purposefully install and implement policies and practices. . . .
  - to support the
  - to

“For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation.”  
 - Harvard Professor Richard Elmore

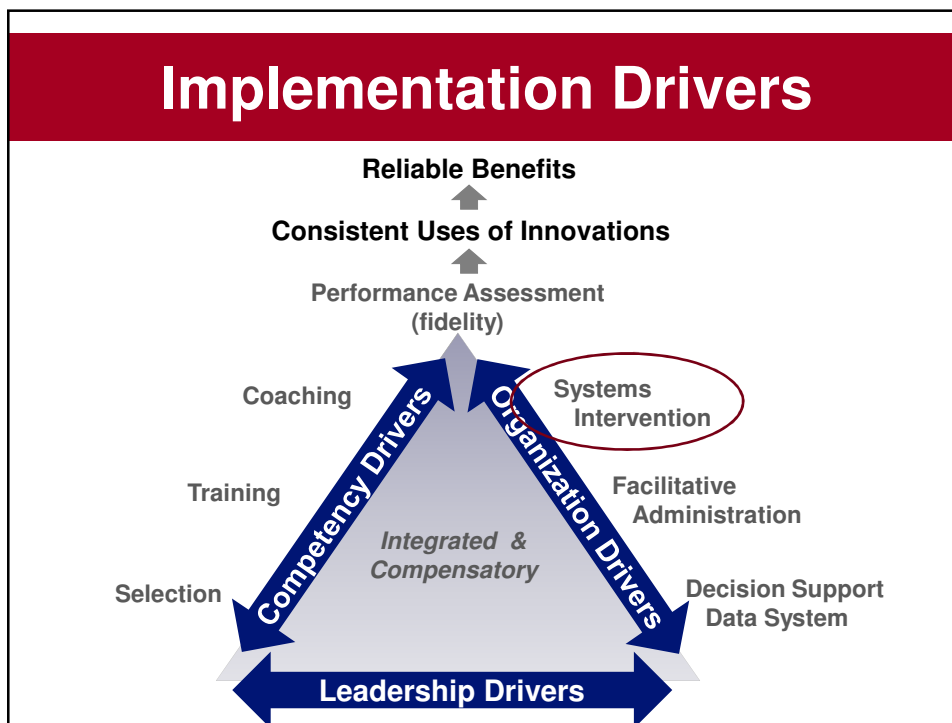
... effective program or

Drivers





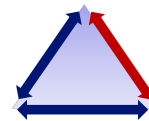




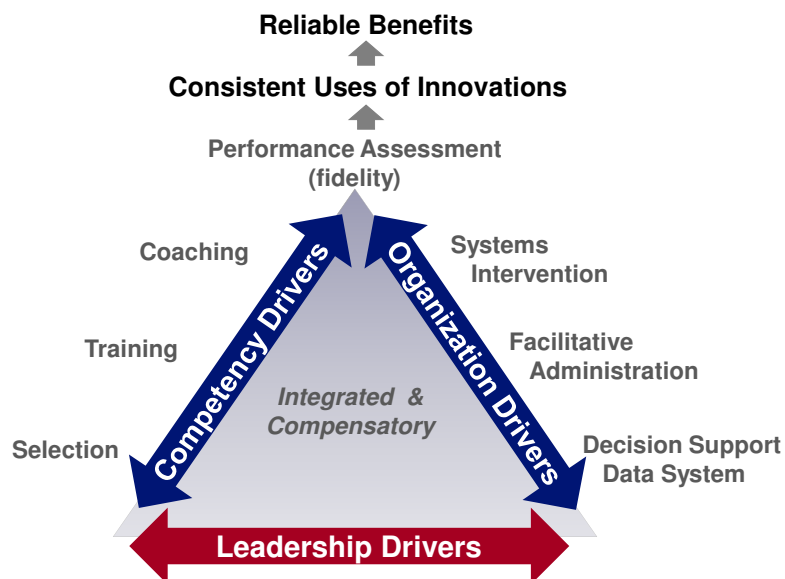
## Systems Intervention

- Systems intervention addresses:
  - issues outside of the organization's direct control
  - issues that impede practitioners' ability to provide effective programs to individuals
- Critical systems intervention activities:
  - To identify and eliminate or reduce such barriers or to enhance and sustain those policies and regulations that facilitate the work at hand
- Purpose of systems intervention:
  - to create an environment and a set of conditions that supports the new way of work

Drivers



## Implementation Drivers



## Leadership Driver

- Volumes have been written.
- Case studies analyzed.
- Products and courses developed to ‘assess, support, coach leaders’
- We’ll focus just on the leaders’ roles in attending to Adaptive Issues – they trip us up.
- We’ll do that in the context of analyzing leader support for the Competency and Organization Drivers.



## Breaking Good

- Based on a meta-analysis of 30 years of leadership studies, transformation leaders make changes that “disturb every element of a system.” They:
  - Break with the past,
  - Operate outside of existing paradigms,
  - Conflict with prevailing values and norms,
  - Find solutions that are emergent, unbounded, and complex.

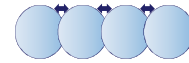
Waters, Marzano, McNulty (2003)



## Drivers X Stages

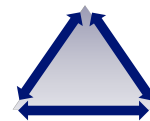
In each *Stage*, we are considering the competency and organizational *Drivers*?

Stages



- In **Exploration**, WE ASK: How are we planning for...?
- In **Installation**, WE ASK: How are we developing and/or installing...?
- In **Initial Implementation**, WE ASK: How we are supporting and problem solving...?
- In **Full Implementation**, WE ASK: How are we improving and sustaining...?

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## A Key to Successful Implementation

**The way in which a change process is conceptualized is far more fateful for success or failure than the content one seeks to implement.**

*You can have the most creative, compellingly valid, productive idea in the world, but whether it can become embedded and sustained in a socially complex setting will be primarily a function of how you conceptualize the implementation-change process.*

(Sarason, 1996, p. 78)



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## Supporting the Change Process

- **Successful implementation on a useful scale requires organized, “expert” assistance:**
  - An individual or group of individuals with programmatic content expertise who actively work to implement the approach as intended and to good effect
  - These experts accumulate data & experiential knowledge, & become more effective and efficient over time
  - They work simultaneously at Multiple Levels of the systems



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## Organized, Expert Assistance

- **Purveyors** – a group of individuals representing a program or practice who actively work with organizations and communities to help them implement a practice or a program with fidelity to good effect
- **An Intermediary Purveyor Organization** that develops expertise in implementation and a “bridge” or expert with multiple effective strategies (a new way of doing T & TA) connecting providers and purveyors
- **“Local” Implementation Team** with the knowledge, skill, freedom, and authority to act (e.g. within a larger organization or a collaboration of agencies)



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## Organized, Expert Assistance

***...[practice] change is an ongoing process that requires constant attention.***

*Once a new practice has been embedded in an agency or system, [we] cannot just walk away.*

*There must be systems and procedures in place to assure fidelity and adherence to the model. Without some type of CQI in place, whether it is delivered by the intermediary or whether it is built into the provider agency or system itself, there is likely to be model drift over time.*

Franks, 2010



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## Implementation Teams

- Focus is on
  - Quality, integration, sustainability of Drivers
  - Data-based Decision-making (e.g. fidelity & outcomes)
  - Alignment (funding and policy)
  - Problem-Solving and Sustainability
- Provide the structure to support organizational capacity development to support sustainable, high quality, integrated services



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## Implementation Teams

- **Minimum of three people (four or more preferred) with expertise in:**
  - The usable, effective practice
  - Implementation Best Practices
  - Organization Change
  - Use of Improvement Cycles
- **Tolerate turnover; teams are sustainable even when the players come and go**  
(Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012; Klest & Patras, 2011)



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## Changing on Purpose

**New practices do not fare well in existing organizational structures and systems**

- Effective innovations are changed to fit the system, as opposed to existing systems changing to support effective innovations.

**People, organizations, and systems. . .**

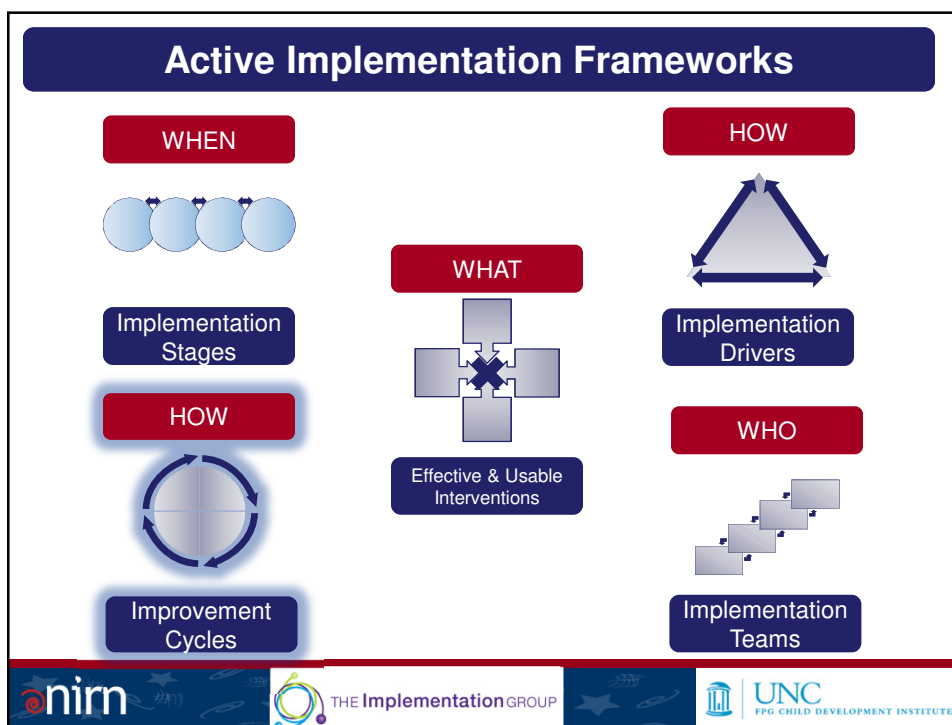
- Cannot change everything at once (too big; too complex; too many of them and too few of us)
- Cannot stop and re-tool (have to create the new in the midst of the existing)
- Cannot know what to do at every step (we will know it when we get there)
- Many outcomes are not predictable (who knew!?)



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## Why Improvement Cycles?



- It's a hallmark of a Learning Culture
- Learning is Good!
- Perfection is impossible
- Avoid having the "perfect" become the enemy of the good
- In a complex environment your "solution" will change the problem – You need to see what "emerges" from implementation



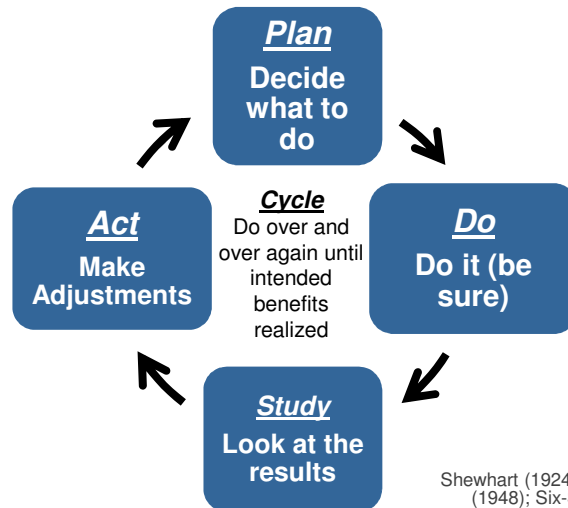
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## PDSA Cycles: Trial & Learning



Shewhart (1924); Deming & Juran (1948); Six-Sigma (1990)



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## Improvement Cycle Uses

- **Rapid Cycle Teams**
  - Problem-solving
  - Practice Improvement
- **Usability Testing**
- **Policy-Practice Feedback Loops**
- **Transformation Zones**



## Improvement Processes

- Rapid Cycle Teams
  - Problem-solving
  - Practice Improvement
- Usability Testing
- **Policy-Practice Feedback Loops**
- Transformation Zones



## Policy-Practice Feedback Loops

### Policy-Practice Feedback Loops

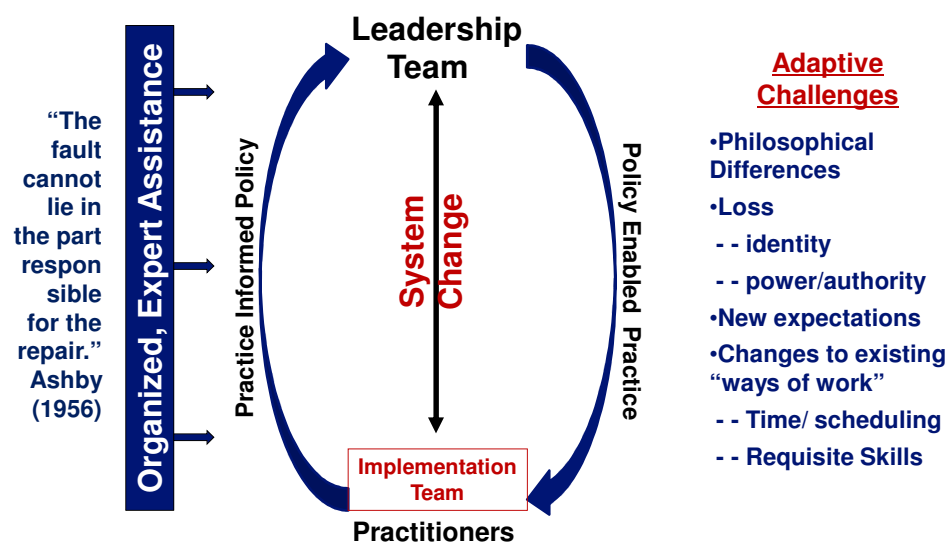
- Policy that enables practice
- Practice that is informed by policy

### The PDSA cycle in slow motion

- Monthly or quarterly instead of hourly, daily, or weekly cycles



## Creating an Enabling Context



## Improvement Processes

- **Rapid Cycle Teams**
  - Problem-solving
  - Practice Improvement
- **Usability Testing**
- **Policy-Practice Feedback Loops**
- **Transformation Zones**



## Building Capacity to Scale Up

- **Effective strategies may not fare well in existing organization and systems structures**
- **Organization and system changes are essential to successful implementation of effective practices and policies**
- **Scaling up the desired outcomes requires BOTH effective approaches AND effective implementation practices**
- **Scaling up effective practices requires the scale-up of capacity**





## Transformation Zones

- A “vertical slice” of an organization or system
  - Small enough to be manageable
  - Large enough to include nearly all of the relevant aspects of the current system



## Transformation Zones

- Make use of an innovation in practice (operationalize, fidelity, outcomes)
- Establish implementation supports (work on practical Drivers and Stages)
- Engage leaders in the PEP-PIP improvement cycle to align system components and functions
- Create capacity and momentum for larger scale changes



Analysis and Assessment of Leadership Driver: Discussion Tool

Locus of Responsibility	What challenges do you expect? How can they be avoided or minimized?	What challenges are on the table now? Technical, adaptive, combo?	Who needs to be part of the solutions?	What 'next right steps' seem appropriate given the nature of the challenge?
<b>Competency Drivers for</b>				
<b>Position:</b> _____				
<b>Selection</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Training</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Coaching</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Fidelity/Performance Monitoring System</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Organization Drivers</b>				
<b>Decision Support Data Systems - Client Outcomes</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Decision Support Data Systems - Fidelity or Other Process Measures</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Facilitative Administration at Agency Level</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				
<b>Systems Intervention Work Outside the Agency</b> ___ Direct ___ Indirect ___ No one				

# Adaptive

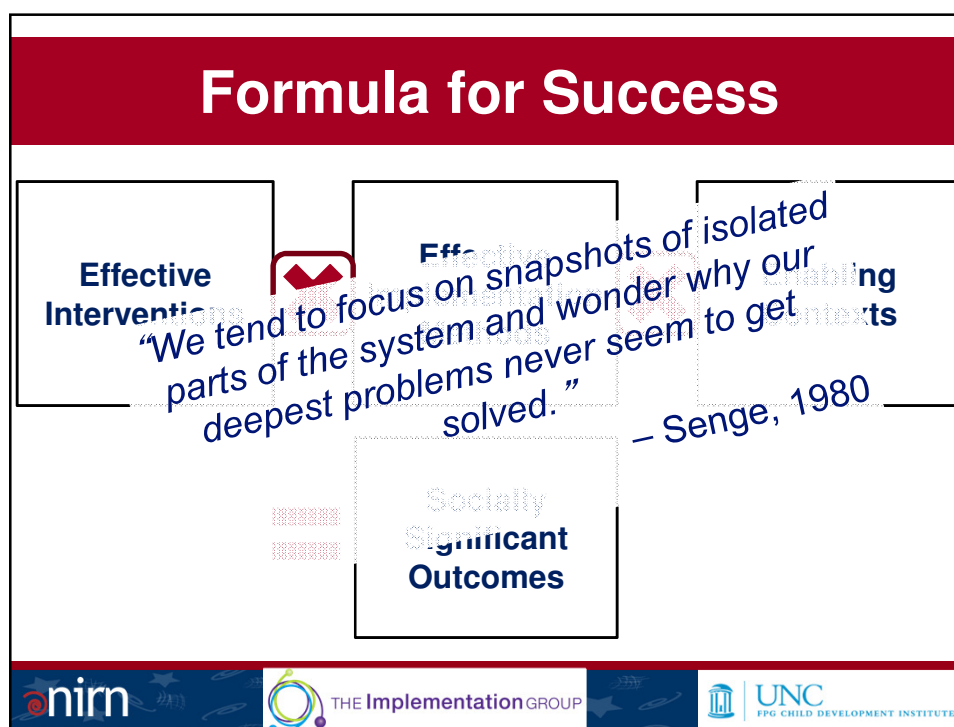
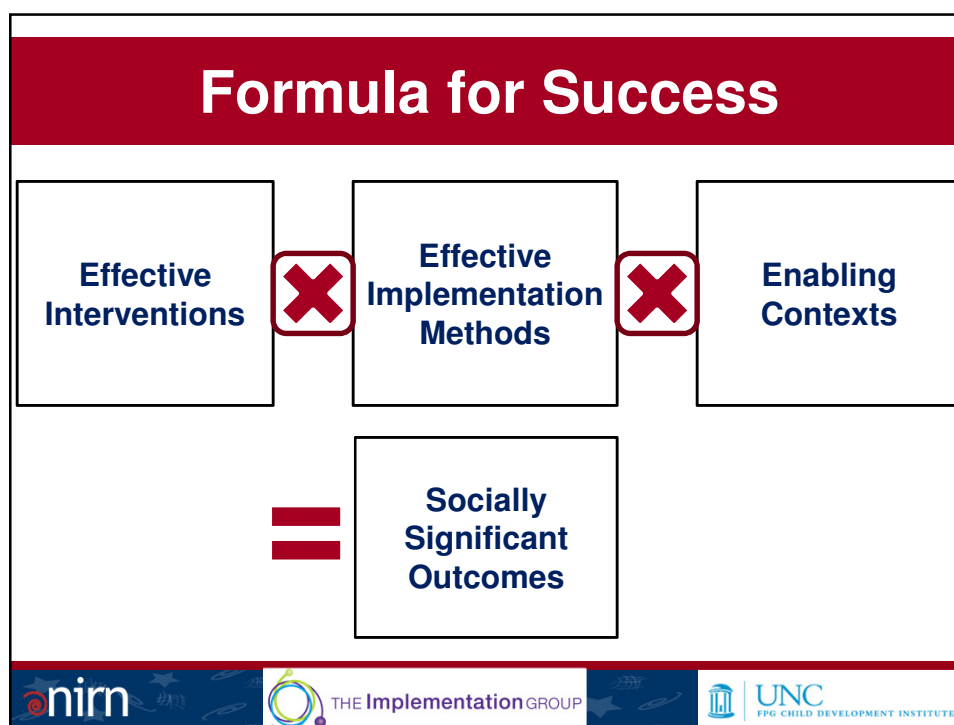
## Adaptive Challenges

- Legitimate, yet competing, perspectives emerge
- Definition of the problem is less clear
- There are different perspectives on the "issue" at hand
- Solution and implementation is unclear and requires learning
- Primary locus of responsibility is not a single entity or person

## Adaptive Responses

- Get on the Balcony
- Identify the Adaptive Challenge
- Regulate Distress
- Maintain Disciplined Attention
- Give the Work Back to the People
- Protect All Voices

Heifetz, Leadership without Easy Answers, 1996



## What Will It Take Achieve Socially Significant Outcomes?

- ☐ Science and Data Related to....
  - ✓ Interventions and Programs
  - ✓ Core Components and Fidelity Correlated with Outcomes
  - ✓ Implementation, Organization, and Systems Change
- ☐ Stage-Based Work
- ☐ Funded Infrastructure (Drivers)
- ☐ Competent Implementation Teams and Resources
  - ✓ Skillful Purveyors & Intermediaries
  - ✓ Supportive Provider Agencies with Implementation Teams
  - ✓ Engaged families, communities, and stakeholders
- ☐ Hospitable & Aligned Systems
- ☐ Leadership at All Levels

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Willingness to Tackle Wicked Problems  
All Along the Way

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**See you in  
Dublin in 2015!**



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