



**ICTP**  
Implementation  
Capacity for Triple P

# Foundations of the ICTP Implementation Support Practice Model

ICTP Implementation Support Practice Action Guide Series  
Action Guide 5



THE  
**IMPACT CENTER** at  
UNC FRANK PORTER GRAHAM  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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# Overview

The Implementation Capacity for Triple P (ICTP) Implementation Support Practice Action Guide Series is intended to serve as a comprehensive guide and reference document for current and future Triple P Support System partners in North Carolina and South Carolina. It also serves as a model that can be generalized or adapted by funders, policymakers, and other implementation support providers to support the scale-up of similar programs and practices.

The ICTP Implementation Support Practice Action Guide Series contains three sections:

1. Effective Implementation Systems: Partners and Capacities
2. ICTP Implementation Support Practice Model
3. ICTP Project Infrastructure for Ongoing Learning and Improvement

Effective Implementation Systems: Partners and Capacities consists of:

- Action Guide 1: NC Triple P System Overview
- Action Guide 1 Resource: Support Systems in Action: Alignment of Support Among Triple P America and Intermediary Organizations
- Action Guide 2: NC Triple P Implementation Evaluation
- Action Guide 3: ICTP Integrated Theory of Change

ICTP Implementation Support Practice Model consists of:

- Action Guide 4: ICTP Practice Model: Background & Development
- Action Guide 5: ICTP Practice Model: Foundations
- Action Guide 6: ICTP Regional Implementation Support
- Action Guide 7: Digging Deeper into the Practice Model at the Regional Level
- Action Guide 7 Resource: Cross-Walking Implementation Practice Activities and Improvement Science Methods
- Action Guide 8: ICTP Design & Consultation Support
- Action Guide 9: ICTP Media & Networking Activities

ICTP Project Infrastructure for Ongoing Learning and Improvement consists of:

- Action Guide 10: ICTP Project Infrastructure for Ongoing Learning and Improvement

A Glossary is available that can help navigate key terms in each Action Guide.

In addition, the Practice Activity Deep Dive Resource (PADDR) provides comprehensive information about the 50 practice activities that operationalize the 10 core practice components (CPCs) of the ICTP implementation support practice model, and will be useful beginning with Action Guide 5.

Please refer to the [ICTP Implementation Support Practice Action Guide Series website](#) for links to each Action Guide (each with a brief description), two Action Guide Resources, Glossary, PADDR, and videos from the team.

In this action guide, we cover several foundational elements of the Implementation Capacity for Triple P (ICTP) implementation support practice model (referred to here as the “practice model”): theoretical underpinnings, fundamental values, and key principles. **Use of the practice model as intended requires alignment with these foundational elements.** In addition, a central focus of implementation support practice is equity. In this action guide, we detail the ways we currently are, and continue to work toward, embedding equity in ICTP implementation support practice. Recognizing that system change naturally creates tension, we also explore ways to navigate the tension of change in implementation practice. Finally, we describe the benefits of ICTP support teams’ co-practice, address common challenges to implementation support practice, and emphasize our commitment to continued innovation within implementation practice support.

## Theoretical Underpinnings

The ICTP practice model is grounded in *social cognitive theory*, which holds that learning and performance occur within a social context in which people are active agents who can influence and be influenced by their environment [1, 2]. This offers a useful framework from which implementation support practitioners (ISPs) may be able to influence *implementation performance* (i.e., the level of quality at which essential implementation practices are carried out [3]) at both individual/team and organizational/system levels. The following five key concepts within social cognitive theory are particularly useful for ISPs as they consider how to support positive changes in practice settings: reciprocal determinism, human agency, observational learning, self-regulation and self-efficacy, and goal-directed behavior.

### Reciprocal Determinism

Reciprocal determinism is the belief that human behavior is determined by cognitive factors, behavioral factors, and environmental factors, all of which interact with and influence each other [1]. Cognitive factors include *attitudes*, such as readiness for behavior change; *knowledge*, such as understanding of factors that influence implementation and the individual and team behaviors that create the conditions for such factors; and *expectations*, such as the likelihood of social or professional reinforcers or punishments, and one’s belief that they can positively effect change.

Behavioral factors include *skills* and *abilities* and the extent to which they have been refined through *practice*. In implementation practice, these may include co-creative behaviors; leadership and management behaviors; behaviors that support workforce development or the use of data for individual or organizational improvement; or behaviors that help create the conditions to influence social change through communications, messaging, and networking strategies.

Environmental factors include *existing social or organizational norms, incentives or disincentives, policies and standard operating procedures*, and the variety of other elements that make up the

*context* in which implementation is occurring. When considering environmental factors, **it is important to conduct an analysis of structural, institutional, and other environmental inequities that undergird all other factors determining human behavior. Without such an analysis, the role of structural supports or barriers to success may be minimized in deference to individual factors and opportunities for improvement.**

## EQUITY IN ACTION

For a primer on equity in implementation practice, see pages 17–27 of this Action Guide.

## Human Agency

Human agency—the ability of humans to intentionally influence their own functioning and life circumstances—is an essential concept for understanding human development, adaptation, and change [4]. Human agency helps us understand why we often maintain the status quo and also how we might influence change. Bandura wrote,

People are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are not simply onlookers of their behavior. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them. [4, p. 164]

In the context of implementation practice, the concept of human agency affords a lens through which to explore current implementation performance and a vehicle through which to improve implementation performance. To this latter point, recognizing and reinforcing human agency is necessary to create *change agency* (i.e., behavioral factors aimed at bringing about intended changes) in implementation practice. Change agency is widely recognized as an essential ingredient in the implementation of innovative programs and practices [5–8].

Bandura [9] extended the concept of human agency to *collective agency*—collective efforts and organizational contexts that influence outcomes. He noted that collective agency is important for understanding contexts in which interdependent factors influence performance, which is characteristic within implementation and scaling. Bandura stated that collective agency is exercised “through shared beliefs in the power to produce effects by collective action” [9, p. 75]. Thus, for the ISP, the intention is not only to promote individual agency, but to promote collective agency through implementation teaming structures, organizations, communities, and system partners. In fact, the use of individual agency, alone, is likely insufficient to generate the improvements needed for successful implementation.

## Observational Learning

Observational learning [10, 11] is one of the original concepts in social cognitive theory, first conceptualized within the theory’s close predecessor, *social learning theory*. Essentially, observational learning posits that humans learn through social models and vicarious reinforcement.

*Social models* are individuals or groups of people whom learners observe and whose behaviors they may reproduce. Social models are more effective than other methods of learning to the extent that the learner is able to identify with their behaviors, values, beliefs, and attitudes or otherwise perceives them to be similar to themselves.

*Vicarious reinforcement* is the extent to which the learner observes the social model being reinforced or punished for their behavior. This might take the form of facilitation (seeing others reinforced for an action), inhibition (seeing others punished for an action), or disinhibition (seeing others not punished for an action that the individual thinks should be punished).

Observational learning may also occur through *mass modeling*, such as through mass media or communication, including the way that organizational and social norms may be communicated.

Importantly, social cognitive theory differentiates learning from performance, defining learning as a change in mental structures (e.g., ideas, perceptions, beliefs) that creates the *potential* to demonstrate different behaviors. In contrast, performance is the actual demonstration of a learned behavior.

ISPs can use these concepts to

- understand support participants' prior learning that may have influenced their current behavior and
- plan experiential learning activities to shape the new behaviors needed to advance implementation performance goals.

Understanding the distinction between performance and learning can help ISPs to diagnose performance challenges. On the one hand, ineffective performance may be a condition of learning (or lack thereof). On the other hand, individuals or teams of individuals may have the learning they need, but not the organizational or system conditions that incentivize the demonstration of such learning (i.e., performance).

ISPs are usually working toward collective change at organizational and system levels, which often extends beyond those individuals participating most directly in the support process. Therefore, leadership and mass communication strategies can be important vehicles to model and reinforce effective implementation practices across broader organizational and system partners. A final and critical point about social models is that it is essential for ISPs to see themselves as social models for support participants, and to see support participants as social models for others in their organization, community, or system.

## Self-Regulation

Self-regulation [12], the ability to influence one's own behavior and motivation, is a key concept in understanding behavior maintenance. A core element of this, *self-efficacy* [13], reflects an individual's belief about their ability to perform a course of action in a particular situation. Self-efficacy may be particularly important to change agency, where individuals or teams are intending to create changes to their organizational or system environments. Self-efficacy can be learned through social modeling, built by one's own performance accomplishments,

and nurtured through supportive behavioral coaching, all of which are important strategies available to ISPs.

Other aspects of self-regulation, including personal agency, self-sufficiency, self-management, and problem solving [14], likewise can be fostered through intentional practices (e.g., behavioral coaching) available to ISPs. By broadening their self-regulation, ISPs are better able to increase support participants' abilities to self-monitor, self-assess, and set future intentions for their own implementation-related behaviors.

Like other aspects of social cognitive theory, self-regulation and self-efficacy have been extended by Bandura and others to collective and organizational contexts [9, 12, 15–17], including to team-oriented implementation practice as described by Roppolo and colleagues [18]. Applying self-regulation and self-efficacy to these contexts is helpful in explaining why achieving organizational and system change can be complex. Wood and Bandura described how self-efficacy interacts with system constraints and opportunities, writing

. . . individuals who believe themselves to be inefficacious are likely to effect limited change, even in environments that provide many potential opportunities. Conversely, those who have a firm belief in their efficacy, through ingenuity and perseverance, figure out ways of exercising some measure of control in environments that contain limited opportunities and many constraints. [17, p. 374]

**It is important to note that this description of the interaction between self-efficacy and system environments should not supplant an analysis of structural, institutional, and other environmental inequities that may contribute to racial or other disparities in system environments.** There is a

constant need to identify structural factors that may inhibit individual and team efficacy, as identified in the concept of reciprocal determinism. Placing blame on individuals for structural problems not of their making is an inappropriate and unacceptable use of the concepts of self-regulation and self-efficacy.

Bandura believed that when people perceive a sense of collective efficacy within their group, the group becomes more committed to its mission, able to overcome challenges, and successful in its accomplishments [9]. However, he also acknowledged that collective self-regulation is considerably more complex than individual self-regulation, for the following reasons [12]:

- Activities in organizational and social efforts typically occur under time constraints and cannot be fully stopped during the change process.
- Group endeavors have heightened social and evaluative consequences.
- Actions taken at one point may change the options and effects of those options at later points.
- Individual factors can exert substantial impact on organizational and social efforts.

### EQUITY IN ACTION

For a primer on equity in implementation practice, see pages 17–27 of this Action Guide.

- Many of the rules that organizations and systems use in decision making can be learned only through exploratory experiences rather than through existing social models.

ISPs benefit from being realistic about these challenges and authentic and transparent about the change process with support participants. At the same time, by fostering self-regulation skills such as agency, efficacy, management, problem solving, and sufficiency at the team and collective level, they can enable support participants to influence and maintain intended implementation improvements despite these challenges [18].

## Goal-Directed Behavior

Finally, goal setting and the use of goal-directed behavior, particularly in organizational contexts, receive considerable attention in social cognitive theory [17]. Wood and Bandura wrote,

Goals provide a sense of purpose and direction, and they raise and sustain the level of effort needed to reach them. When people are unclear about what they are trying to accomplish, their motivation is low and their efforts are poorly directed. [17, p. 367]

This is of particular importance to ISPs for (1) understanding support participants' current implementation-related behaviors, and (2) creating the conditions through which support participants may improve their implementation behaviors and the performance of their organization or system. **In this latter case, the development of new goals is best done through collaborative processes and using procedures, such as co-design, that reduce the likelihood of bias when making decisions about goals. This also reinforces a sense of collective agency that is essential to accomplishing organizational and system changes.**

### PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Co-creation. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

When support participants experience implementation support as solely or primarily reactive rather than goal-directed, the following outcomes often occur:

- the purpose and intentions of support are unclear to support participants, the ISP, or both;
- they experience support activities as uncoordinated; and
- progress seems elusive.

Having clear, mutually identified goals directs the behavior of both support participants and the ISP and sustains their intentions even in times of disruption or distraction.

Implementation and scaling efforts are multiyear processes; it takes time to successfully advance both behavior change at the individual/team level and performance improvements at the organization/system level. In light of this, setting long-term goals with attainable short-term goals may best guide and sustain these efforts [17].

ISPs can work with support participants to define what long-term improvements will look like and set subgoals and short-term action plans that may afford smaller tests of change, create experiential learning opportunities, and increase the likelihood that longer-term goals will be achieved and sustained. **To do so, ISPs may benefit from drawing from improvement science methods and frameworks, such as those in the model for improvement [19].**

### **DIVE DEEPER**

For more information about how we integrate improvement science methods into our practice model, download the [Action Guide 7 Resource, Cross-Walking Implementation Practice Activities and Improvement Science Methods](#).



# ICTP Values for Implementation Support Practice

ICTP values represent the fundamental qualities and standards that guide ICTP projects team members when creating trusting relationships with support participants, system partners, and each other. **Values inform how ISPs are expected to show up with support participants and system partners** in all interactions and how ICTP projects team members are expected to conduct themselves in all projects team interactions. The ICTP values in Table 5.1 were collaboratively created by ICTP projects team members in late 2021 and early 2022. We include in Table 5.1 exemplar behaviors and skills that demonstrate these values.

**EQUITY IN ACTION**  
 For a primer on equity in implementation practice, see pages 17–27 of this Action Guide.

**Table 5.1** ICTP Values and Exemplar Behaviors and Skills

ICTP Values and Exemplar Behaviors and Skills	
Values	Exemplar Behaviors and Skills
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display commitment to the implementation process and the application of effective implementation practices within local context.</li> <li>• Conduct frequent process checks to ask for feedback and allow for self-reflection to ensure support is aligned with ICTP values and principles.</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish shared roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the support partnership.</li> <li>• Follow up and follow through by doing what you say you will do.</li> <li>• Provide support in accordance with The Impact Center at FPG’s implementation support practice principles.</li> </ul>
Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show up with the intention of meeting partners where they are and with what they need.</li> <li>• Collect and use qualitative and quantitative data to assess strengths, desired change, levels of support, and improvement opportunities.</li> <li>• Be observant of partner interactions to respond to both verbal and nonverbal cues about readiness for change or next steps.</li> <li>• Provide positive reinforcement, supportive feedback, and acknowledgment of specific successes and contributions.</li> <li>• Guide, motivate, and encourage rather than simply instructing or directing toward specific ways.</li> </ul>

Values	Exemplar Behaviors and Skills
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be genuine in interactions by being honest and transparent in an appropriate and respectful way.</li> <li>• Approach partnerships without judgment and take responsibility for your own actions.</li> </ul>
Awareness of Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead with curiosity and use humility and respect to understand and honor the beliefs, customs, knowledge, habits, and capabilities carried from partner context and history.</li> </ul>
Mutual Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume positive intention and create a safe space for authentic engagement that supports the exchanging of ideas to foster innovation.</li> <li>• Demonstrate reliability, competence, and commitment to partner change efforts.</li> </ul>
Two-Way Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use active and responsive listening to ensure people are understood and heard by reflecting back what you heard, using I statements, and checking for clarity.</li> <li>• Translate relevant concepts using language specific to the context and audience.</li> <li>• Pose questions to tease out partners' description of facilitators and barriers to change or next steps.</li> </ul>
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and listen to different perspectives and expertise.</li> <li>• Be aware of bias and racial privilege and how that may influence how support is provided.</li> <li>• Identify disproportionate outcomes through disaggregated data and guide conversations to identify and address underlying inequities.</li> <li>• Invite in and support all voices, particularly those from historically marginalized and disproportionately affected communities.</li> <li>• Seek to shift and defer power in ways that promote community-driven decision making.</li> </ul>

Values	Exemplar Behaviors and Skills
Growth Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce that learning means growth and growth requires learning.</li> <li>• Embrace challenges as opportunities for ongoing development and improvement.</li> <li>• Regularly assess yourself to keep track of personal and professional growth.</li> <li>• Seek personal and professional opportunities for improvement in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.</li> <li>• Utilize experience gathered from various contexts to better inform current implementation strategies and activities.</li> </ul>
Teaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-create implementation support plans, based on local context and shared goals informed equitably by system partners at all levels.</li> <li>• Engage in shared problem solving and decision making, involving broader system partners when the need is identified.</li> <li>• Co-design and manage the work of implementation intuitively, thoughtfully, and in a way that feels feasible for support participants, system partners, and ICTP ISPs.</li> </ul>
Risk Taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be willing to adapt and try something new to achieve a desired result.</li> <li>• Step back occasionally to gain a different perspective and objectively observe actions, patterns, and processes that may not be otherwise obvious.</li> <li>• Within psychologically safe spaces and places, normalize the discomfort and anxiety that typically accompanies organizational and system change.</li> <li>• Lean into change processes to create the necessary system disruptions that will foster more equitable co-creation conditions and increase the likelihood of achieving intended implementation and programmatic outcomes.</li> </ul>

*Note.* ICTP = Implementation Capacity for Triple P; ISP = implementation support practitioner.

# Principles of Implementation Support Practice

Like other projects within The Impact Center at FPG, the ICTP projects promote the use of eight practice principles to guide the provision of implementation support to communities, organizations, and partners. These eight principles are considered the *rules that govern ISP practice behaviors*. Only by firmly practicing in accordance with these eight principles can ISPs maximize the effectiveness of their practice work. The principles are derivatives of our values. We seek to follow these practice principles within all implementation support practice activities.

## 1. Co-creation:

The development of implementation capacity is recognized as an outcome of co-creation. Co-creation joins scientific resources, governance capabilities, and practice capabilities into a shared body of usable knowledge and involves collaborative leadership at multiple and whole system levels [20, 21]. Authentic, equitable partnerships must be developed and nurtured among all partners for co-creation success and sustainability. ISPs fully participate in and seek to reinforce the co-creation process, including equitable power sharing and the inclusion of historically marginalized voices [22]. The following essential functions support the principle of co-creation:

- *co-learning* – multiple system partners share knowledge and experiences to inform system processes and learning
- *brokering* – connecting system partners or bringing in external partners to meet system needs
- *facilitation* – thoughtful and intentional leading of partners through development and/or implementation of a process or problem solving
- *addressing power differentials* – identifying how power is showing up and finding strategies to share or redistribute power
- *co-design* – working alongside multiple system partners to develop and design approaches that blend content and experiential knowledge
- *tailored support* – providing support that aligns with the needs of the context, system, and system partners and is proactive and responsive to changing needs or context

## 2. Implementation scientist-practitioner model:

ISPs' activities are grounded in the transdisciplinary science of implementation, including the dual roles of implementation research and practice [23]. Implementation research informs the exchange of ideas among all co-creation partners, within varied specific contexts, engaged in implementation practice. Conversely, lessons and learning from implementation practice inform the advancement of implementation research.

3. Proactive support:

Proactive implementation support involves anticipating needs and incorporating strategic approaches to bring new knowledge, skills, and opportunities for support participants to apply and test new learning—with reinforcement and supportive feedback—in their own organizational and system environments.

4. Contextualized and responsive support:

Implementation strategies need to be considered and tailored according to key features of local context, such as history (including historical trauma and inequities), size, resources, culture, population density, and political and social complexities [22]. Ongoing implementation support needs to be responsive to local progress, setbacks, feedback, and key events.

5. Adaptive leadership:

Adaptive leadership recognizes that implementation and scale-up typically present adaptive challenges (i.e., situations wherein deeply held beliefs are challenged, the values that made us successful become less relevant, and legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge; see [24]). ISPs must develop an appreciation for, and comfort with, the diverse perspectives held within community and system environments and recognize these as clues to the presence of adaptive challenges embedded within the context and its people. Heifetz and Laurie [25] put forward six principles of adaptive leadership that can be used to manage adaptive challenges:

- *Get on the balcony*: Step back from daily system operations to see larger patterns of individual and collective behavior and local history that may be either facilitating or hindering the system's willingness or ability to change.
- *Identify the adaptive challenge*: Take time to clearly define adaptive challenges, taking into account an understanding of the people within the community, the community and system history, larger system pressures, and identified sources of conflict.
- *Regulate distress*: Balance the stress in the system by using conflict as an opportunity for learning and creativity, sequencing and pacing work, and preventing stakeholders from feeling overwhelmed by change.
- *Maintain disciplined attention*: Maintain focus on tough questions and prevent the avoidance of adaptive work by recognizing when people slide back into familiar routines or engage in distractive behaviors.
- *Give the work back to people*: Build the collective problem-solving confidence of system stakeholders rather than providing expert solutions or letting the burden of adaptive work fall on the few identified vocal leaders.
- *Protect voices of leadership from below*: Ensure that the people often marginalized in change initiatives, including front line staff and community members, are able to voice their experiences and ideas and play an equitable role in generating solutions so that they will be the most successful and sustainable.

6. Iterative, stage-based approach:

Implementation and scale-up require iterative, or repetitive, series of inquiries, actions, and adjustments, often across long-term engagements. Dynamic stage-based approaches to implementation have been widely utilized to address these demands, and ISPs must be mindful of this to pace and modify support activities across such stages.

7. Data-driven progress monitoring and improvement:

ISPs collect and use mixed-methods (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) data to identify local needs and plan tailored support strategies, monitor the progress and outcomes of implementation efforts, monitor the effectiveness of their own support, and make data-driven quality improvements. Improvement science methods, such as the model for improvement [19], may greatly benefit ISPs' activities.

8. Local ownership of progress:

ISPs promote local partners' ownership of implementation processes and successes and do not perceive ongoing success to be due to, or dependent on, external implementation support. ISPs can demonstrate this principle by developing and continually reinforcing local partners' self-regulation, meaning, in this context, their ability to effectively implement practices within their community.

## Equity in Implementation Practice

The ICTP projects adopt the definition of equity as “the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair” [26, p. 3]. Implementation science is an evolving field that aims to close gaps—in both quality and outcome—between research and practice in health and human services. However, we still have work to do as a field to advance equity, particularly for historically underserved populations. We must also critically assess the gaps between the intentions and the impact of our work.

Equitable implementation requires us to engage in social justice inquiry of our work and pursue fair, restorative, and equitable outcomes. Through such inquiry, we believe that all ICTP supports and accompanying implementation strategies used at state and local levels must attend to social determinants of health (SDOH)—the broad range of social, economic, political, and psychosocial factors that directly or indirectly shape health outcomes and contribute to health disparities. In this section we discuss various aspects of our work that must be considered regarding equity in implementation.

## Where We Have Control in our Work

When applying an equity lens to implementation support practice, ICTP ISPs should discuss and actively identify potential inequities both internally, in institutional and project teaming environments, and externally, in the system, organizational, and partnership environments in which we practice. When working in this way, ISPs must consider three practice elements that are in their control:

- how they show up with support participants and system partners,
- their commitment to ongoing equity-focused professional development, and
- the degree to which an equity lens is embedded into ICTP implementation tools and resources.

We explore each of these elements below.

## How We Show Up With Support Participants & System Partners

In the context of equity in implementation support practice, *showing up* requires explicitly attending to equity (1) during the provision of ICTP implementation support and (2) in broader interactions about Triple P system implementation and scale-up. This includes—but is not limited to—having conversations about identifying and sharing power, attending to SDOH, identifying process and outcome disparities, facilitating root cause analysis when needed, “leaning in” and “leaning out” of elements of the work as appropriate, using culturally appropriate language, demonstrating allyship, and engaging in personal and professional development around equity and inclusion in implementation. To engender accountability for and alignment with our funders, system partners, and each other in these expectations, the projects have embedded equity-focused terminology in our language and emphasized a focus on equity in our grant and contract proposals.

## Our Commitment to Ongoing Equity-Focused Professional Development

The ICTP projects have often included resources in our grants and contracts to help us grow in equity-focused directions as a team of ISPs. For example, recent grant funds have included resources for training, coaching, and facilitation of equity-focused learning and application within our internal projects team and in our external facing project work. From 2021 to 2023, the ICTP projects team worked closely with [Race Matters Institute](#) and Educational Equity Institute in these ways, including hosting a three-day racial equity training, participating in ongoing coaching sessions at leadership and team levels, and facilitating an organizational document review of this *ICTP Implementation Support Practice Action Guide Series*.

Broadly, ICTP projects team members are expected, and provided support, to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities focusing on health equity generally and equity in implementation. Historical and current examples include:

- **Impact Center at FPG Foundational and Ongoing Professional Development sessions focusing on equity in implementation**

- **Training and coaching sessions facilitated by ICTP racial equity and inclusion consultants** (e.g., Race Matters Institute, Educational Equity Institute)

- Equity-focused sessions at professional conferences relevant to the ICTP projects, such as:

- the [Society for Prevention Research](#)
- the [Society for Implementation Research Collaboration](#)
- the [Global Implementation Conference](#)
- the [International Congress on Evidence-based Parenting Support](#)
- the [PCANC Learning & Leadership Summit](#)
- the [Building Hope for Children Conference](#)

- Equity-focused sessions led by colleagues in the field in other organizations and collaboratives, such as:

- [The Center for Implementation](#)
- [The UNC School of Social Work Collaborative for Implementation Practice](#)
- [The Collaborative for Anti-Racist Dissemination & Implementation Science](#)

- **Professional development opportunities, events, and affinity groups sponsored by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute**

- The UNC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research Certificate Program and events and opportunities sponsored by the UNC University Office for Diversity & Inclusion

## CONTACT US

These resources are available by request. Please contact [Will Aldridge](#) or [Jessica Reed](#) if interested.

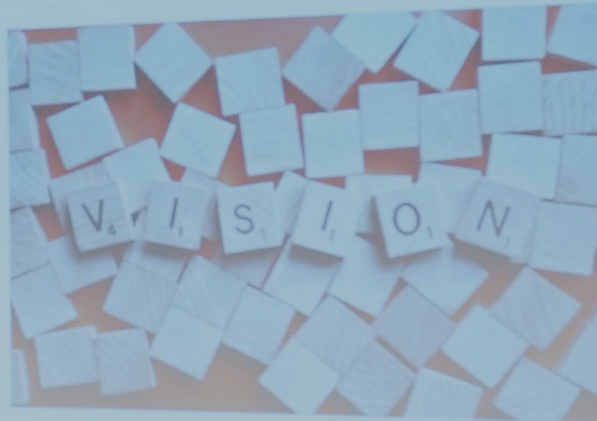
## DIVE DEEPER

Information is available to ICTP project team members on [FPG's Employee Resource Network \(FERN\)](#).

The expectation to participate in these ongoing professional development opportunities is written annually into ICTP projects team members' UNC performance development plans, alongside expectations to meet annual performance goals in ways that embed equity and inclusion practices.

## Visioning Activity

- To work towards a vision for your change, start to think about:
  - What is the change you would like to see?
  - If you're successful with this change, how will things look different in X years?
  - What strengths does your organization bring?
  - What obstacles might you anticipate?



## Embedding Equity Factors & Considerations into ICTP Implementation Tools & Resources

Efforts to advance equity in implementation practice within the ICTP projects have led to additional considerations **within the ICTP integrated theory of change—the project’s primary framework for implementation learning and application with all co-creation partners—**and related ICTP tools and resources. Although efforts will remain ongoing, here we describe where the ICTP projects are headed as we continue to advance project tools and resources with a focus on equity in Triple P system scale-up.

### DIVE DEEPER

For more information about the ICTP integrated theory of change, download [Action Guide 3](#).

Tools and other resources for implementation learning, application, communications, and measurement are crucial to support collective efforts to scale evidence-based interventions like Triple P. However, limited systematic processes exist for developing such tools with an equity lens. Therefore, the ICTP projects developed the ICTP Tools and Resource Equity Impact Assessment (EIA), a protocol to guide ICTP tool development that embeds equity best practices. The EIA protocol engages tool developers in three phases: (1) planning, (2) tool development, and (3) dissemination and ongoing assessment of the tool. Phase 1 includes identifying the scope of the tool or resource. Phase 2 focuses on assessing the tool or resource for usability and equity. This includes checking for accessibility and bias-free language and refining the tool or resource based on community feedback. Phase 3 consists of identifying equitable dissemination strategies and creating a plan to ensure the tool is being used as intended and is adapted and updated appropriately.

To examine the usability and feasibility of the EIA, EIA developers conducted a focus group with five members of the ICTP projects team who had used the EIA protocol. Developers asked focus group members to retrospectively reflect on facilitators and barriers to using EIA equity best practices in their prior tool development processes. Focus group participants were also asked to respond to questions about what works well when the EIA is put into practice and future improvements that may be beneficial.

Focus group participants reported that the EIA was a useful driver to incorporate more equity best practices in future ICTP tool development processes. They also provided feedback on how to make the EIA easier to use, such as shortening the assessment and making it available in a digital format. More broadly, the focus group recommended cultivating an internal culture around the use of equity best practices and advocating for the incorporation of equity best practices into the planning and scoping phases of projects to ensure adequate time, talent, and resources for effective implementation support practice. EIA developers shared a summary of themes and recommendations from the focus group with the broader ICTP projects team.

To ensure that the ICTP projects have funds to compensate community and system partners to participate in the EIA process, the projects team has included community consultant funds in

recent grant proposals for system, community, and field partners to work closely with ICTP tool and resource developers. The goal of collaborating with community consultants is to ensure more inclusive development of and a stronger equity lens in ICTP practice strategies, tools, and resources.

## Where We Must Advocate & Exert Influence Through Our Work

ICTP ISPs do not have the ability to control equity-related efforts in all areas of implementation practice. Three environments in which ICTP ISPs lack control and must maintain disciplined influence are

- the broader systems in which community Triple P partners are operating;
- the individual organizational or agency environments in which community Triple P partners are operating; and
- the institutional environments in which ICTP ISPs are, themselves, operating.

In the broader systems environments in which community Triple P partners are operating, system leaders, funders, and policymakers have control over Triple P-related and broader systems strategy and resource allocation. In several cases, even some Partnership for Strategy and Governance (PSG) members may not have approval for decision making to move forward with certain strategies or resources. Triple P developers control Triple P program development. Relatedly, Triple P America controls rights related to the acquisition and use of Triple P program materials. These realities can present a host of challenges to community Triple P partners and ICTP ISPs when trying to advance equity in implementation, for example, when advocating for

- incentives and reimbursements for Triple P practitioners and providers to deliver Triple P programs,
- culturally- and trauma-informed services and case management for parents of color mandated to attend Triple P because of their interaction with the justice or child welfare systems,
- more equitable pay and system supports for regional Triple P coordinators,
- more flexible use of Triple P materials in program delivery, and
- more accessible pricing for Triple P training and materials.

In the individual organizational or agency environments in which community Triple P partners are operating, organizational leaders may have control of Triple P-related and broader decision making. Moreover, when organizational leaders are not regularly involved with Triple P activities or ICTP implementation support activities, this can hinder or even paralyze the organization's Triple P implementation efforts. This presents a host of challenges to community Triple P partners and ICTP ISPs when trying to advance equity in implementation, for example, when advocating for

- interorganizational partnerships to expand funding opportunities or ensure broader community representation,
- the acknowledgment and addressing of organizational policies and practices that may be perpetuating outcome disparities,
- the collection and use of data disaggregated by race and ethnicity or other sociodemographic characteristics, and
- more authentic co-creation processes with community members and families.

In the institutional environments in which ICTP ISPs, themselves, are operating, state legislative, university, and institutional leaders and funders have control over multiple aspects of strategy, resource allocation, and decision making. Additionally, university culture and priorities may not prioritize community engagement or outreach activities in the same way as they do more traditional academic pursuits. This can create a challenging work environment for ISPs, for example, when advocating for

- the equitable involvement of community and system partners in the development of project activities and related resources,
- equity-focused training and coaching to help assess their personal beliefs and commit to more equitable practices,
- promotion or salary adjustments, and
- mentoring focused on engaged scholarship or community-engaged practice work.

## Equitable Implementation Capacities

The values and practice principles embedded within the ICTP practice model guide ICTP ISPs to advance equitable implementation processes across the NC Triple P System. The ICTP projects team continues to gather case examples and formulate high-level conceptualizations about what this requires and looks like in practice. Initial descriptions of system processes, resources, and abilities to support equitable implementation are presented below, focusing, for now, on two areas of the **ICTP integrated theory of change**. As with all areas of the ICTP action guide series, this section will be updated as our learning continues.

### DIVE DEEPER

For more information about the ICTP integrated theory of change, download [Action Guide 3](#).

## Quality & Outcome Monitoring Systems

To be universally impactful *and* equitable, community Triple P scale-up must focus on improved population-level outcomes (e.g., reduced rates of child maltreatment, increased family well-being) *and* the reduction or elimination of disparities related to SDOH [27, 28]. This latter effort requires NC Triple P System resources and abilities at all levels to disaggregate data, or

break down data by subcategories such as race and ethnicity, geographic regions (e.g., urban/rural, neighborhoods), family characteristics (e.g., single parents, family members who identify as LGBTQ+), or other demographic and social constructs. Disaggregated data allow system partners to identify disparities in implementation, program, and population-level outcomes. Once disparities are identified, system partners may engage in activities to identify current and historical inequities that may be perpetuating them, and program and implementation strategies that may be helpful in addressing them. Ongoing data monitoring ensures collective accountability for achieving intended disparity reductions.

Partners in several NC Triple P regions, including the Wake (now merged with Durham), Albemarle, and Mecklenburg Triple P regions have engaged in efforts to disaggregate data to identify inequities and gaps in services. ICTP ISPs have worked with these regions to improve their abilities to disaggregate data and select implementation strategies that may improve Triple P implementation outcomes such as accessibility, reach, and acceptability.

Reducing disparities in population-level outcomes within complex systems requires *all levels* of the NC Triple P System to adjust. For example, the PSG and the North Carolina Learning Collaborative (NCLC) need to continue efforts to advance data collection, evaluation, reporting, and analysis methods to better identify the impacts of Triple P on population-level outcomes and the presence of disparate outcomes among racial/ethnic, geographical, and other demographic subgroups in the population. Likewise, Support System partners need to continue developing implementation support strategies that contribute to system partners' resources, abilities, and opportunities to engage in efforts to reduce outcome disparities.

## Co-creation Partners & Processes

Metz and Bartley [21] defined co-creation for public services as

the active involvement of stakeholders in all stages of the production process resulting in a shared body of usable knowledge across scientific, governance, and local practice boundaries. From this perspective, the use of evidence is often a result of iterative, messy, and dynamic interactions among public agencies, policymakers, researchers, intervention developers, practitioners, communities, and families. (p. 117)

NC Triple P system co-creation partners (i.e., community members, families, and partners; community service provider leadership, staff, and practitioners; state and local funders and policymakers; Triple P America and intermediaries, including ICTP ISPs; and Triple P developers and researchers) must work together in these ways to create the resources and abilities needed to ensure equity in community and statewide Triple P systems.

Authentic co-creation processes center choice, context, lived experienced, brave conversations, and power sharing in interactions and decision making. Community members and families, in particular, must be empowered and supported to speak about system characteristics, the potential impact of policies and practices, and community values and needs. Partnership formation with historically oppressed and marginalized communities often requires the acknowledgment of historical injustices and current inequities. Efforts to atone may be required to engender trust and renew collaborative relationships.

**ICTP ISPs advocate and help create the conditions for co-creation partnerships and processes.** In a unique example beyond typical support activities, several ICTP ISPs worked together to submit a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) grant proposal to convene NC Triple P System partners and center community voice in the design of statewide Triple P evaluation efforts.

#### **DIVE DEEPER**

For more information about co-creation partners and processes, download [Action Guide 3](#).

#### **PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION**

Co-creation. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

## **How the Broader Field Is Informing ICTP Efforts Toward Equity in Implementation**

Within implementation science, the focus on equity is still relatively young. The inclusion of equity best practices in the ICTP practice model has been guided by frameworks and strategies from implementation science and other fields that focus on human-centered design, community engagement, community participatory research, health equity, social justice, and more. These frameworks all emphasize the importance of building relationships, developing mutual trust, and engaging in two-way communication with local communities impacted by the practices, programs, and policies being implemented.

The following strategies, identified within implementation science and related fields, have informed ICTP equity work to date:

- **developing a shared language and common definitions [29] (see ICTP equity-related definitions in the glossary);**

#### **DIVE DEEPER**

For additional terms, download the [Action Guide Series Glossary](#).

- engaging communities in the selection of interventions and development of tools, resources, strategies, and practices [30];
- sharing segments of data through “data walks,” community participatory research, and other strategies with the goal of including communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and initiatives;
- adapting programs and practices for the local context;
- encouraging the analysis of root causes of outcome disparities; and
- creating multisector/multilevel partnerships to address social determinants of health.

Other strategies informing ICTP equity work to date come from justice-oriented work and have sought to change system-level barriers, structural paradigms, policies, and practices. These efforts have been aimed at challenging and developing new ways of thinking to address institutional racism or structural inequalities [31, 32]. Some of these strategies include

- shifting power dynamics through funding to ensure local partners and consultants are paid fairly,
- ensuring partners’ representation in journals and peer-reviewed journal committees, and
- modifying hiring and promotion practices to ensure equitable representation on project teams and in leadership roles.

## The ICTP DEI Leadership Team & Related Efforts

The ICTP DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) Leadership Team was formed in the fall of 2021 to advance equity in ICTP. Effectively, it was responsible for scientific and project-related leadership related to equity in implementation practice as detailed in this section, “Equity in Implementation Practice.” The ICTP DEI Leadership Team kept abreast of the continued evolution of equity in the broader implementation science field.

The ICTP DEI Leadership Team prioritized ensuring an equitable and inclusive climate and culture within the ICTP projects team. This included a focus on professional development to improve how we individually show up in our work with each other and our partners, how we develop ICTP tools and resources, and how we influence and advocate more equitable and inclusive environments in the broader collaborative, institutional, and systems environments in which we operate. When this work is underway, we can more authentically, effectively, and sustainably

explore ways to advance equity in ICTP implementation support practice with regional and community Triple P partners.

The ICTP DEI Leadership Team and several other ICTP projects team members and leaders have advanced the incorporation of equity in ICTP projects infrastructure. **These efforts have resulted in the development of a shared vision, goals, and language as well as improved teaming and staffing practices. Efforts have also focused on hiring and onboarding projects team members and interns with skills and experience applying equitable and inclusive practices in implementation support, as well as increasing racial diversity within the team.** Although our efforts to advance a shared vision and goals for this work continue to evolve, the initial outcomes of this work were meaningful.

The ICTP DEI Leadership Team was sunsetted in 2024. Regardless, explicit funding for further embedding equity within the ICTP projects has resulted in new practice coaching priorities, advancing equity within the ICTP implementation support practice model and related tools and resources, and supporting team and professional development priorities that enable equity-focused support and teaming activities. Examples include

- the expansion of ICTP implementation learning and application resources focused on increasing community member participation within their local Triple P efforts (i.e., see the ICTP **Equitable Family Voice Content Framework** and related tools and resources);
- improvements to our tool and resource development process to (a) increase accessibility, readability, and usability and (b) improve our engagement of support recipients in the design and development of tools and resources; and
- regular data-driven reviews and reflections on our implementation support activities to inform improvements and practice approaches that better integrate equity considerations.

### CONTACT US

These resources are available by request. Please contact [Will Aldridge](#) or [Jessica Reed](#) if interested.

### DIVE DEEPER

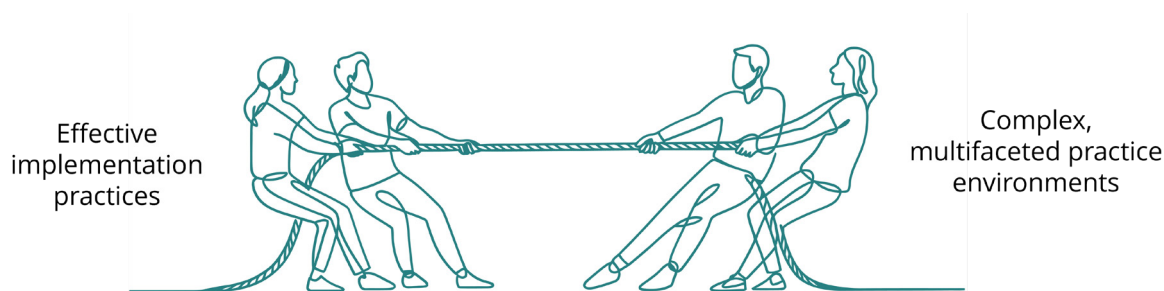
To access ICTP Content Frameworks, see Action Guide Series Appendix E.

# Navigating the Tension of Change

Human service systems are dynamic, often chaotic, and constantly adapting to changing contextual factors. Turnover, changes in leadership, current priority initiatives, policy and funding changes, and other factors create natural tensions in these systems. These tensions can be exacerbated by systematic efforts to create implementation practice changes—such as those facilitated by ICTP ISPs—at individual/team and organizational/system levels. For example, these efforts can cause

- confusion in response to new and unclear terminology and role expectations;
- frustration when new tasks don't yet align with existing timelines, activities, or incentives; and
- challenges with the feasibility and appropriateness of adapting generally effective implementation practices, often identified through research or other practice environments, for the unique community and state Triple P service systems and environments in North Carolina and South Carolina.

The nature of these challenges can influence regional Triple P partners' willingness and ability to engage in ICTP implementation support practice. When readiness for change diminishes, regional Triple P partners may return to practices that are more familiar, comfortable, and aligned with historical system approaches and incentives for program implementation and scale-up. Often, these practices are not well suited to the outcomes the systems hope to change through new program implementation and scale-up. Thus, central to the role of ICTP ISPs is helping support participants to navigate the tensions inherent in complex systems while (1) facilitating their movement toward more effective implementation practices and (2) managing the tensions inherent in the change process.



**Figure 5.1** An illustration of navigating the tensions inherent in complex systems.

When navigating system complexity and the tension of change, ICTP ISPs need to understand system factors that can affect implementation and program outcomes, whether for whole populations or individual community groups. These factors include

- structural determinants (e.g., awareness, accessibility, resources, institutional racism);
- historical and present political and policy environments;
- leadership commitment and skill; and
- ongoing engagement with the full array of co-creation partners, including those with lived experience.

Additionally, support participants need a strong understanding of

- the individual, team, and system resources and abilities to facilitate change and positively impact outcomes;
- well-paced, iterative, stage-based approaches to implementation that make use of small tests of change;
- methods for collecting and using well-sourced data and feedback for ongoing learning and communication loops; and
- effective practices for recruiting, training, and supporting a community-wide Triple P delivery workforce.

With these elements in place, ICTP ISPs and support participants can utilize strategies to mitigate the tension between system change and the tendency to remain as is. Some of these strategies include

- establishing common ground by leaning on the power of collaborative working relationships;
- ensuring that change processes are equitable, broad system partners are engaged, and power differentials are identified and appropriately addressed;
- modeling and reinforcing **adaptive leadership strategies**;
- using motivational interviewing strategies;
- ensuring that the co-creation of new, usable knowledge with regional, state, and scientific partners enables a shared understanding of strengths and developmental opportunities;
- co-designing implementation support activities;
- **utilizing iterative, stage-based support approaches reflecting well-paced and repeated inquiries, actions, and adjustments within the support process**; and
- collecting and using mixed-methods data to
  - better define local needs and system challenges,
  - plan tailored support strategies,
  - monitor the progress and outcomes of community Triple P implementation efforts,
  - monitor the effectiveness and acceptability of ICTP implementation support,
  - make data-driven quality improvements, and
  - enable system learning.

#### PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Adaptive Leadership. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

#### PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Iterative, Stage-based Approach. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

# ICTP Support Team Co-practice

ICTP ISPs provide most forms of implementation support, especially those **tailored to regional Triple P partners**, with a paired co-ISP. Whether a new ISP or a skilled support practitioner, all ISPs benefit from having a stable co-practitioner to share lead roles in practice activities, provide a different perspective on the support process and participants' progress, and ensure continuity when one ISP transitions off the support team. Such teaming also allows for collaborative reflection, planning, and facilitation of support activities. Table 5.2 shows the co-practice structures for all levels of ICTP implementation support practice.

## ICTP TIERED MODEL OF SUPPORT IN ACTION

Tailored implementation support is characteristic of ICTP support activities in both the 'intensive, broad-based' and the 'brief, narrow-focused' tiers of support. It is not characteristic of support activities in the 'universal support' tier or 'design and consultation support.' For more information about the ICTP Tiered Model of Support, download [Action Guide 6](#).

Table 5.2 ICTP Implementation Support Co-practice Structures

ICTP Co-practice Structures		
Regional vs. Statewide	Type of Support	Number and Type of Support Practitioners
Regional Support Offerings	Intensive, broad focused	2 regional support specialists
	Brief, narrow focused	2 regional support specialists
	Universal	2 regional support specialists
Statewide Support Activities	Partnership for Strategy and Governance	1 principal investigator (PI) and 1 co-PI or co-investigator
	North Carolina Learning Collaborative	1 assigned regional support specialist, 1 ISP focused on media and networking strategies, 1 DSS Triple P Coordinator, and rotating participation of other ISPs as needed
	Support System Coordination Team	1 PI and 1 co-PI or co-investigator

Note. ICTP = Implementation Capacity for Triple P; ISP = implementation support practitioner; DSS = Division of Social Services.

When one ISP is in a lead facilitation role, the other can take detailed notes or observe support processes, including participants' reactions to individual comments and activities or overall support directions. Because they can take more of a birds-eye view, ISPs in secondary roles may also be able to provide unique insights or key reflections during support activities. Within the ICTP projects team, the diversity of ISPs' educational and professional backgrounds affords support teams the ability to draw from diverse ISP strengths, experiences, and expertise. This enables ISP pairing to be done in such a way that each member complements the other and that benefits the support recipients.

Beyond paired ISPs providing support within stable team structures, all ICTP implementation support teams can arrange for ICTP projects team members to assist in their support activities for discrete needs and issues, depending on the team members' expertise and experience. For example, ICTP ISPs with expertise and experience developing quality and outcome monitoring systems may be asked to provide design and consultation support to regional or state partners or to lead tailored capacity-building support activities, depending on the need and request. Among the broader areas of project team member expertise and experience available to all ICTP implementation support teams are

- developing quality and outcome monitoring systems, evaluation plans, and improvement activities for Triple P implementation and scale-up;
- developing media and networking systems for Triple P implementation and scale-up;
- supporting Triple P implementation within child welfare systems, including county departments of social services; and
- attending to health equity in Triple P implementation and scale-up.

Senior ICTP ISPs may also be brought into regional or state implementation support activities for issues that require higher levels of experience, skill, or expertise.

In all cases, ICTP co-practice necessitates an extra layer of communication and coordination among ICTP ISPs. Foremost, co-ISPs must ensure time to co-plan and debrief all implementation support activities. Roles for discrete support activities must be clearly defined so they can be carried out with strong alignment. Co-ISPs must balance their time spent with support participants to prevent support participants' over-identification with one ISP. Indirect support activities (e.g., behind-the-scenes research and resource procurement, ICTP technical assistance tracking, arranging travel and catering resources) must also be shared to prevent overburdening one ISP. When subject matter experts or senior ISPs are involved in regional or state implementation support activities, these same layers of communication and coordination apply.

Although it may seem more efficient or expedient for individual ICTP ISPs to provide implementation support, the benefits of co-practice are believed to greatly outweigh the extra layers of needed communication and coordination. Especially in complex, multilevel, multi-partner system environments, implementation support greatly benefits from more than one set of eyes, ears, and hands from broader sets of experience and expertise.



When working in stable implementation support teams, ICTP ISPs may be tempted at times to provide solo implementation support without explicit prior communication and coordination with, and agreement from, their co-ISP and, typically, support participants. However, ISPs should be very cautious, if not hesitant, before doing so. This especially includes engaging in practice activities designed to build collaborative relationships or increase working alliance with support participants.

Exceptions to team-based implementation support may occasionally arise due to the extended unavailability of individual ISPs in situations such as medical or family leave or turnover within ICTP project teams. Alternatively, urgent support needs can arise when only one ISP is available to respond on the timeline needed. In these cases, temporary arrangements, best discussed in anticipation of these situations, may be made to ensure continuity of support. ISPs should always work to close communication and coordination gaps as soon as possible following these unique situations. In any case, ICTP ISPs working in stable team-based support structures are best experienced as just that: teams.

# Common Challenges to Implementation Support Practice

Despite the sturdy theoretical foundation, comprehensive practice model, co-practice structures, and numerous resources that make ICTP implementation support practice successful, challenges to the quality, consistency, and stability of ICTP implementation support practice are inevitable. By outlining typical challenges and identifying strategies to address them, we hope that ISPs can take steps to mitigate the impacts of these challenges on their work.

## Limited Case Examples & Professional Development Opportunities

Implementation support practice is dynamic in nature and requires ICTP ISPs to draw from experience and knowledge to adapt to diverse contexts and situations. Even the most skilled ISP can find delivering support in typically complex and varied practice environments to be challenging. Exposure to case examples illustrating ISPs working through practice dilemmas and related strategies is therefore helpful to both the novice and experienced ICTP ISP. However, because the field of implementation practice is still very young, access to professional development offerings—particularly those involving case examples of implementation support practice—is limited. Therefore, increasing the availability of professional development opportunities can be an especially important contribution to both the ICTP projects and the broader field.

Without access to external professional development and case examples, ISPs can feel directionless at times and find it difficult to know if they are engaging in implementation support practice as intended. When there are field examples from which to learn, it's easier for ISPs to know if they are on the right path. The Impact Center at FPG is on the developing edge of the practice side of the implementation science field. In a “pre-mortem” of implementation science, Beidas and colleagues [33] discussed the field-level threat of recreating the research to practice gap. **The authors encouraged the integration of learning from implementation practice into implementation research as a strategy to support the field in its entirety. As professional development opportunities grow and case examples become more available, we expect the use of this strategy to expand considerably.**

### PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Adaptive Leadership. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

## Partners' Lack of Readiness for Participation in ICTP Implementation Support

**Implementation support may be only as effective as the willingness and ability of the individuals, teams, organizations, and systems to engage.**

Factors such as deficient administrative or funding support, lack of engagement among leadership, staff turnover, organizational cultures that reinforce compliance rather than learning, and resistance to community partnerships or addressing historical and structural inequities can impede engagement. ICTP ISPs can influence readiness by building collaborative relationships, assessing context and using data, and co-designing with support participants and co-creation partners the goals on which to focus support.

### DIVE DEEPER

For more information about readiness to participate in ICTP implementation support, download [Action Guide 6](#).

In addition to these typical approaches to increase readiness, ICTP ISPs can offer alternative formats of support, such as universal or design and consultation supports. *Universal supports* include system-wide learning opportunities that are not tailored to a specific need or context. *Design and consultation supports* are brief, time-limited exchanges of information designed to be carried forward by the recipient of the consultation and not facilitated by the ISP. However, even with an intentional focus on these practice strategies, change efforts can be slow or stalled at times.

## Role Confusion in Statewide Triple P Systems

Role clarity is an important factor in any facet of implementation practice but is especially important when ISPs are collectively working across multiple levels of statewide Triple P systems. Being valued partners in statewide Triple P systems can strengthen ISPs' influence as change agents. For example, in North Carolina ICTP activities, the ICTP project team's dual roles—providing tailored implementation support at regional levels and providing design and consultation supports at state leadership levels—enables ICTP ISPs to facilitate information sharing across system levels. However, if role confusion exists, this process is hindered. For example, if regional Triple P partners experience ICTP ISPs as their main conduit for regional advocacy or problem solving on issues requiring state leadership, or vice versa, there can be an overreliance on ICTP ISPs.

Because ICTP ISPs work to build strong collaborative relationships with support participants at the levels of the system they support, this can create hardships on ICTP ISP teams or risk tension between ICTP ISPs working at different system levels. This is particularly true if ICTP ISPs begin to overidentify with their support participants rather than maintain a supportive stance toward the full statewide Triple P system.

These challenges are best mitigated by clearly defining and operationalizing system actor roles and responsibilities. For example, early and often in the support engagement, ICTP ISPs benefit from reinforcing support participants' **own agency in identifying and addressing adaptive system issues with appropriate system partners at other system levels**. Rather than being communication conduits themselves, ICTP ISPs reinforce existing relationships and communication channels within and across each system level.

## SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY IN ACTION

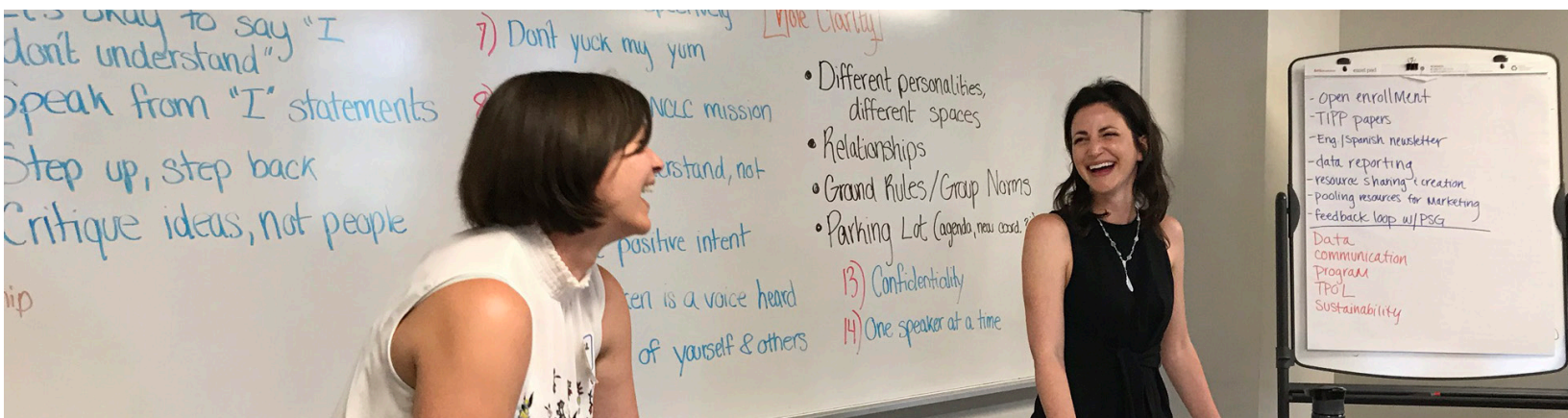
Human Agency. For more information on the theoretical underpinnings of the ICTP implementation support practice model, see pages 6–11 of this Action Guide.

# Our Commitment to Continue Innovating Within Implementation Support Practice

The field of implementation practice is nascent, still with limited models, approaches, theory, and, as discussed above, case examples. The ICTP projects were fundamentally designed to innovate within implementation support practice. The initial plan was to secure funding to develop an implementation support plan for the NC Triple P System, test it with a limited number of regions, and then gradually scale it out based on regional readiness for participating in intensive implementation support. Since their inception, **the ICTP projects across both North Carolina and South Carolina have continued to adapt and innovate within our approach to implementation support practice, largely based on data, ICTP ISP experience, system-wide partner feedback, and innovations in the broader field.**

## PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Data-Driven Progress Monitoring and Improvement; Implementation Scientist-Practitioner Model. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.



However, as mentioned earlier, tension can exist between stabilizing whatever variant of ICTP implementation support practice is currently being used by individual ICTP ISPs and continuing to innovate and explore collectively. **In alignment with our values, we take a growth mindset within the ICTP projects** and therefore navigate this tension, to the best of our abilities, to continue evolving and innovating. Moreover, we view our practice experiences, practice evaluation, and professional networking and development activities in the broader field of implementation science as mechanisms for *collective* growth. Our commitment to our support participants, our broader system partners in North Carolina and South Carolina, our projects team, and the broader field anchors this approach.

We regularly assess project aims and activities and seek opportunities for practice improvement. Where possible and as a team, we identify opportunities to innovate within our practice approach both internally (e.g., within the design and structural supports around our practice approach) and externally (e.g., testing new strategies with support participants). We strive to balance these efforts with collective activities to ensure ICTP projects team members feel confident and competent to practice in accordance with our theory, values, practice principles, and core practice components and related activities.

To work well, this approach to practice innovation requires balanced **risk-taking, two-way communication, teamwork, awareness of context, authenticity, mutual trust, and the realization that learning doesn't always mean getting it right the first time**. We view the implementation of the ICTP practice model and our practice approach like the implementation of any other innovative practice: it's an **iterative, stage-based process**.

### ICTP VALUES IN ACTION

Growth Mindset. For more information about ICTP values for implementation support practice, see pages 12–14 of this Action Guide.

### ICTP VALUES IN ACTION

Authenticity, Awareness of Context, Mutual Trust, Two-Way Communication, Teaming, and Risk-Taking. For more information about ICTP values for implementation support practice, see pages 12–14 of this Action Guide.

### PRACTICE PRINCIPLE IN ACTION

Iterative, Stage-based Approach. For more information about ICTP Practice Principles, see pages 15–17 of this Action Guide.

# Key Takeaways

- The main theory underlying the ICTP practice model is *social cognitive theory*, which states that learning occurs within a social context in which people can influence and be influenced by their environment. Applied to the practice model, this means that implementation support practitioners (ISPs) can understand the conditions contributing to current implementation performance and contribute to new conditions wherein support participants have the resources and opportunities they need to pursue their intended performance improvements.
- The following concepts of social cognitive theory are central to ISPs' roles:
  - People are influenced by cognitive factors (e.g., attitudes, knowledge, and expectations); behavioral factors (e.g., skills, abilities, and practice); and environmental factors (e.g., norms, structures, policies, and procedures).
  - People can influence their own functioning and life circumstances.
  - People learn through observing other people's behaviors and whether those behaviors are reinforced or punished.
  - People can influence their own behavior and motivation.
  - Identifying and using short- and long-term goals enhances and sustains performance.
- In their interactions with support participants, system partners, and each other, ICTP ISPs and all projects team members are guided by 11 values: integrity, accountability, responsiveness, authenticity, awareness of context, mutual trust, two-way communication, growth mindset, equity, teaming, and risk taking.
- ICTP ISPs seek to incorporate eight practice principles into their implementation support practice activities:
  - **Co-creation:** developing partnerships designed to combine scientific resources, governance, and practice capabilities into a shared body of usable knowledge
  - **Implementation science-practitioner model:** utilizing implementation research to guide practice, and, conversely, learning from implementation practice to enhance implementation research
  - **Proactive support:** anticipating needs and incorporating strategic approaches to bring new knowledge, skills, and opportunities for support participants to apply in their own organizational and system environments

- **Contextualized and responsive support:** tailoring implementation support based on specific features of the environment (e.g., history, size, resources, culture, social and political factors)
  - **Adaptive leadership:** responding to adaptive challenges in implementation practice (i.e., challenges wherein deeply held beliefs are challenged, the values that made us successful become less relevant, and legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge) with the following appropriate strategies: getting on the balcony, identifying the adaptive challenge, regulating distress, maintaining disciplined attention, giving the work back to people, and protecting voices of leadership from below
  - **Iterative, stage-based approach:** recognizing that implementation and scale-up require repetitive series of questioning, acting, and adjusting approaches over the long term
  - **Data-driven progress monitoring and improvement:** gathering and using qualitative and quantitative data to identify needs, plan support strategies, monitor effectiveness of support and implementation, and make adjustments as needed
  - **Local ownership of progress:** developing and reinforcing support partners' ability to effectively implement practices within their community, rather than perceiving their success as being due to external implementation support
- The ICTP projects are committed to advancing **equity in implementation**. ISPs must “show up” with an equity lens with support participants and system partners, participate in ongoing equity-focused professional development, and incorporate equity in ICTP implementation tools and resources. ISPs also participate in broader organizational and system environments where they have little or no control and must rely on advocacy and influence to advance equity. The ICTP projects have provided tools, resources, trainings, coaching, support, and other means to facilitate these processes. From fall 2021 into 2024, the ICTP DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) Leadership Team was tasked with overseeing the use and effectiveness of these strategies and keeping abreast of progress with regard to equity in implementation practice in the broader field.
  - Central to the role of ICTP ISPs is helping support participants to facilitate their movement toward more effective implementation while navigating and managing the tensions inherent in changing complex systems.
  - ICTP ISPs generally provide implementation support with a co-ISP. Such co-practice enables collaborative reflection, planning, and facilitation of support activities and ensures continuity when one ISP transitions off the support team.

- Despite the sturdy theoretical foundation, comprehensive practice model, interactive systems, broad collaboration, evidence-based practices, and numerous resources that make ICTP implementation support practice successful, three main challenges exist: (1) limited case examples and professional development opportunities, (2) lack of readiness among potential support partners, and (3) role confusion within and across system levels. The ICTP projects have a firm commitment to continue addressing these challenges and innovating in implementation support practice.

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