

Core Implementation Capacities: Leadership and Implementation Teams

Background

What is it?

Leadership and implementation team capacity is all about the often missing piece for the process of implementation: “WHO?” This capacity focuses on having functional and purposeful teams at each level of a community coalition (i.e., lead agency and service delivery organizations) being sustainably organized, aligned, and resourced to provide necessary leadership and management for successful implementation and scale-up (**Community Implementation and Leadership Teams (CIT, CLT)** and **Agency Implementation Capacity (AIC)**). Overall, these teams install, manage, and sustain organizational and system practices that promote high quality innovation delivery, identify and address implementation barriers, and recognize and spread implementation successes. Additionally, leadership and implementation team capacity includes the teams’ use of best practices to solicit, document, and use information about agency and broader community systems policy and practice facilitators and barriers to improve implementation processes. These internal and external roles of leadership and implementation teams are outlined and measured in the **Facilitative Administration** and **Systems Intervention** sections of implementation capacity assessment tools, respectively.



What does it look like when Leadership and Implementation Teams are working well?

When leadership and implementation teams are working well, you have teams that serve explicit leadership and management functions and team members with clear, dedicated, and resourced roles. Their responsibilities are role based, not person- or position-title-based. Teams have clear and systematic links, communication, and feedback loops. Team members have formally allocated time. Teams systematically collect and summarize themes in data collected related to facilitators and barriers of implementation within and outside of the agency/community, and ensure that feedback loops and learning continue.

Why is Leadership and Implementation Teams capacity important?

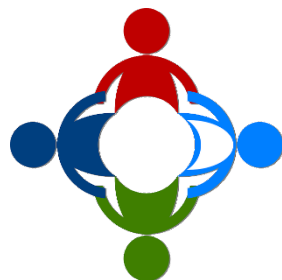
Leadership and Implementation Team capacity can lead the initiative to have sustainably organized and resourced teams of people to do the work of implementation. Well-resourced and sustainably organized teams withstand turnover that can be typical in human services fields which in turn promotes sustainability of the initiative.

Leadership and Implementation Team Best Practices



💡 Teams communicate and meet systematically within and between each other.

- 💡 Accountability- there is a clearly identified team that is responsible for ensuring components of the functions of that level team are present and functioning. Teams have the necessary skills, abilities, authority, and formally allocated time to do/lead the work.
- 💡 Teams have a document describing their organization, purpose, goals, membership, and sustainability plan.



- Community policies, plans, and practices reflect evidence-informed, active approaches to implementation and scaling.
- Teams solicit information, summarize themes, and provide feedback about agency and community facilitators and barriers to implementation of an innovation. Systematically, teams communicate about common themes found in information gathered with each other and to agency and other external partners
- ◆ The strategic plan for implementation of the innovation has been integrated into larger agency/community plans or initiatives.
- ◆ The team systematically and regularly solicits and uses feedback from staff/agencies about how well policies and practices support the use of the innovation.
- ◆ Teams systematically solicit and highlight successes from staff/agencies about the innovation.
- ◆ Teams have regular and systematic communication/feedback loops about the successes and feedback gathered across all levels and with a broad set of stakeholders, partners.

Important Knowledge & Skills

- ✦ Understand the function and purpose of teaming structures needed for a community wide prevention initiative (focus on leadership, coordination, and management functions for implementation); knowledge and competencies needed across different teams
- ✦ Understanding core characteristics of effective community coalitions, basic principles of collective impact, backbone organizations, and how they can inform the work of implementation and scale-up
- ✦ Ability to help teams through a process to flexibly develop forms and teaming structures to meet the functions needed of the team(s).
- ✦ Utilize and form communication protocols and feedback loops to systematically and purposefully communicate within and between teams.
- ✦ Learn and utilize responsibility matrices (e.g., RASCI)
- ✦ Interface, linkages with other implementation capacity domains and how they support Leadership and Team capacities
- ✦ Knowledge of connection between Leadership & Team, Facilitative Administration, and Systems Intervention best practices and measurement of them in the Implementation Drivers Assessment (IDA) and Community Capacity Assessment (CCA)

Resources and Tools

- Implementation Capacity for Triple (ICTP) Simulation Lab, <https://ictp.fpg.unc.edu/ictp-simulation-lab> . Click on Local Implementation Capacity and Scale-up on the visual, scroll down to Leadership & Teams
- Terms of Reference, <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-3/topic-5>
- Communication Protocols – Lesson 9, <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-lessons-and-short-courses>

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What does building capacity for Leadership and Implementation Teams look like? What might progress look like?

The Leadership and Implementation Team aspects described above take place across stages of implementation. Below, we use three functional stages of implementation to outline some questions that can guide the work of building leadership and implementation team capacity. *Please know* - each stage of implementation does not discreetly end as another begins. As we engage in the work of a certain stage [and learn], we might find the need to go back to address an issue that we missed previously or delve deeper into another issue that needs more attention.

Assessment, Exploration & Readiness <i>“From where are we starting? What are our strengths and areas of development?”</i>	Installation <i>How can we develop, acquire, repurpose, and strengthen resources for what it takes to effectively support this program?</i>	Initial Implementation <i>How are we doing, now that the program is being delivered? What are we seeing, what are we learning?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there a team formed to serve as the implementation team? Leadership team? ▪ Do team members have the skills and abilities to carry out their roles? ▪ Do team members have clear roles, responsibilities and formally allocated time to do the work? ▪ Is there a document describing the teams purpose, goals, functions, membership, etc? ▪ Has the team developed communication protocols? ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the core implementation team meet regularly? Do they systematically meet and communicate with leadership? ▪ Are implementation team members familiar with systems change? ▪ Are there processes in place to gather practice and policy facilitators and barriers to implementation? ▪ Are communication protocols being carried out as intended? ▪ In the event of turnover, how can ensure team capacity and competencies are maintained? ▪ Have policies, practices, and procedures been revised or developed to support the “new” way of working? ▪ How has leadership expressed and shown dedication to this work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are teams engaged in rapid cycle problem solving to detect strengths and gaps in the processes developed? ▪ What are data telling us about organizational and system supports of the innovation? What is going well? What changes to the system, policies, or practices to improve? ▪ Is the community/agency aligned with the mission of this initiative? ▪ Are practice to policy feedback loops within the community/agency effective?

* NOTE: Other local activities specific to program rollout are occurring at the same time as these implementation capacity activities. 3