

Core Implementation Capacities: Workforce Development Systems

Background



What is it?

Workforce development systems (WFDS) are the plans, procedures, and activities to develop, improve, and sustain people’s abilities to put programs and innovations into practice with fidelity and flexibility and intended benefits. They include three core components: 1) **recruitment and selection**; 2) **training** (pre-service preparation); and 3) **coaching** (in-service support).

What does it look like when the WFDS is working well?

People feel competent and confident to deliver the program as intended and know where to go to share needs and get support. The organization – supervisors, managers, other leaders, and the practices they ensure - builds the confidence and skills of staff at *all* levels – those delivering the program and the supervisors, managers, and other leadership supporting them. Tools and resources are being used to assess diverse staff needs and support the coaching role of supervisors. Data are being shared to understand program delivery and the quality and effectiveness of workforce development activities to support it.

Why are WFDS important?

When you screen for specific skills and pre-requisites, select for “tough-to-teach” traits, and set expectations with clear job descriptions, you can improve the likelihood that ongoing support yields successful program implementation and even staff retention. When you base training and ongoing coaching systems on specific skills needed for that program, you increase the likelihood of growing new, necessary knowledge and skills that can be applied, practiced, and transferred into a range of real-world contexts.

WFDS Best Practices



- 💡 Having a “Usable” Intervention (core components behaviorally defined so we can select for it, train to it, coach to it, measure for it, and repeat it)
- 💡 Accountability - Clearly identified who (person or team) responsible for addressing components; proficient in knowledge, skills, abilities of the program; dedicated, allocated time; regularly well supported
- 💡 Written expectations and roles for those responsible for components
- 💡 Data being used: about recruitment & selection decisions to inform training and coaching; from training (strengths and needs) to inform coaching; from coaching used to evaluate effectiveness of coaching, to provide feedback to those providing coaching and training



- ➔ Use the right selection criteria (aligned with the program)
- ➔ Clear and communicated expectations for practitioner engagement (i.e., onset of delivery; coaching participation; data submission)
- ➔ Ensuring the right people for the review and selection process (proficient in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the program)



- ➔ Uses observational assessments of key program abilities and willingness to be coached (behaviorally based interviews)
- ◆ Agency processes ensure full participation in training and that training before delivery of services.
- ◆ Clear and shared roles, expectations for supervisors in the training process (i.e., auditing, communicating expectations and process)

- ✓ Written plan that details coaching expectations
- ✓ Those providing coaching are fluent in the innovation
- ✓ Ensure regular participation in coaching
- ✓ Review coaches' adherence to coaching plan
- ✓ Ensure access to fluent coaches
- ✓ Use observational assessments to support coaching
- ✓ Coaches use multiple sources of data as feedback

- Those providing Training and Coaching are trained and supported/coached
- Both Training and Coaching developed and delivered using adult learning best practices

Important Knowledge & Skills

- ✦ Knowledge of usable interventions and practice profiles; adaptations to be flexible to context yet faithful to core functions
- ✦ Rationale behind Recruitment/Selection, Training, and Coaching components of workforce development systems
- ✦ Interface, linkages with other implementation capacity domains and how they support workforce development systems
- ✦ Functions of coaching
- ✦ Motivational Interviewing
- ✦ Flip the Classroom and blended learning strategies
- ✦ Competent coaching (joint planning, observation, reflection leading back to joint planning)
- ✦ Coaching for competence – coaching to the program's core components versus general supervision/appraisal of performance
- ✦ Knowledge of connection between WFDS best practices and measurement of them in the Implementation Drivers Assessment (IDA) and Community Capacity Assessment (CCA)

Resources and Tools

- Usable Interventions, <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-lessons-and-short-courses> - Lesson 2 and Lesson 3; also <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-6>
- Training plans and Coaching plans, , <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-lessons-and-short-courses> - - see Lessons 4, 5, 8 and related Handouts and Planning Tools
- Related tools from Foundation Professional Development

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What does building capacity for WFDS look like? What might progress look like?

The Workforce Development System 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 workforce development 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.

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"> ▪ What skills and traits are needed for this program to be delivered as intended? ▪ Will staff with the necessary pre-requisites for implementing this program be available? ▪ How might we use what we learn in community assessments to inform workforce development system planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have agencies been selected to join the community effort for this program? ▪ Does agency leadership (i.e., managers, supervisors) understand their role to support those trained to deliver it? ▪ Has the first cohort of staff been selected for training? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is being done to support ongoing readiness of practitioners, supervisors, managers for implementing this program? ▪ Has there been staff turnover? If so, how is this being addressed to ensure we have the trained practitioners we need to deliver this program and reach families?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is Training for this program available and affordable for us? ▪ Does training meet known best practices for skills development? ▪ How does training for this program align with other programs for which staff are already expected to deliver? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are the program’s essential elements being deliberately connected to training? ▪ How are staff at different levels of the agency becoming familiar with this program? ▪ Has initial training occurred? What is the initial feedback from training participants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How might we strengthen training to address ongoing needs identified by practitioners once they have begun delivering the program? ▪ Who else might need “training” to support the work of trained practitioners?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who ensures that coaching services [for what] are provided now? ▪ Who will ensure that coaching for this specific program will be provided? ▪ What steps will we need to so that a coaching service delivery plan is in place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How might coaching services be embedded into current supervision practices? ▪ Have coaching plans been developed to support people in the new way of work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are practitioners receiving coaching as planned? ▪ What is contributing to the success or getting in the way of trained practitioners being able to participate in coaching sessions?

NOTE: Other local program rollout activities occur at the same time as these implementation capacity activities are occurring.