How To Apply Implementation Theory and Research in a Statewide Public System?

UNC Institute on Implementation Practice

March 25, 2025

Collaborative for
Implementation
Practice
UNC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Welcome!

- We encourage you to have your cameras on but your microphones off.

- Please use the <u>chat</u> to share questions and ideas with panelists and attendees.

- We will be monitoring the chat and will do our best to make sure voices are heard that way.

- Session will be recorded and posted on our event page.

Collaborative for Implementation Practice

CIP is a multidisciplinary group who conduct implementation research and support evidence use.

We aim to spotlight the importance of implementation practice in building the science of implementation, and to support the field by:

- Building evidence
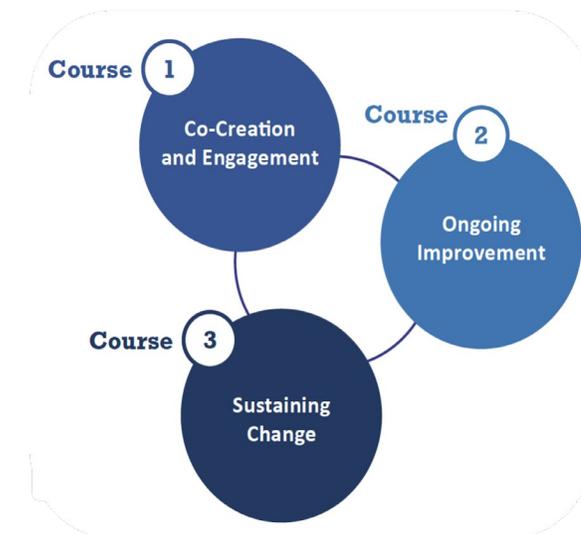- Growing the workforce
- Advancing equity

3

Our Approach to Implementation Science

We think about implementation science in three ways:

1. The use of **specific theories, frameworks, models and strategies with evidence** that can support effective, equitable and sustainable implementation;

2. The use of **'practical implementation science'** which refers to the translation of theories, models, and frameworks into user friendly tools and resources.

3. The development of specific **competencies** that support the **relational work of implementation**, which requires trust, psychological safety and co-creation.

4

Certificate Program in Implementation Practice

- Three live courses (two days each) delivered via Zoom

- Content **grounded in core competencies** for implementation support

- Hands-on opportunities to **apply tools and strategies** to current implementation efforts

- **Connection to peers** in small groups

- Access to **professional certificate**, **digital badge**, **continuing education credits** from UNC

Course 1 — Co-Creation and Engagement
Course 2 — Ongoing Improvement
Course 3 — Sustaining Change

For more details: implementationpractice.org/certificate

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

How to Apply Implementation Theory and Research in a Statewide Public System?
A case example describing how New Jersey's Department of Children & Families used implementation science to transform service delivery

Nancy Gagliano & Michael Doyle, Office of Strategic Development
Pamela Lilleston, Office of Applied Research & Evaluation

March 25, 2025

Objectives

1. Describe how New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJ DCF) developed a unified vision to embed implementation science in a large public system

2. Describe the infrastructure, organizing framework, and evidence-based strategies adopted by a public system to translate implementation research into its agency norms

3. Describe lessons learned as funders of a large, statewide network of community-based service providers on using implementation science to improve outcomes for children, youth and families

Who's in the room?

Context

Overview of NJ DCF

- **State's child welfare agency**
  - FY24 total budget = $2.2B
- **Services provided**
  - Family strengthening programs/services
  - Mental and behavioral health services for children
  - Gender based violence prevention and response services
  - Child protective services
- **Contracted service provider network**
  - 1000+ agencies
 - Just under $1B towards service provision

We Took a Look

- Inconsistent service delivery across service provider network

- Lack of implementation supports available to providers

- Uncertainty about fidelity of Evidence Based Program implementation

- Few program evaluations at the state level

- Minimal data feedback loops

We Took Action

- Develop a **unified vision and strategy** for service delivery

- Deep **structural improvement** in service management
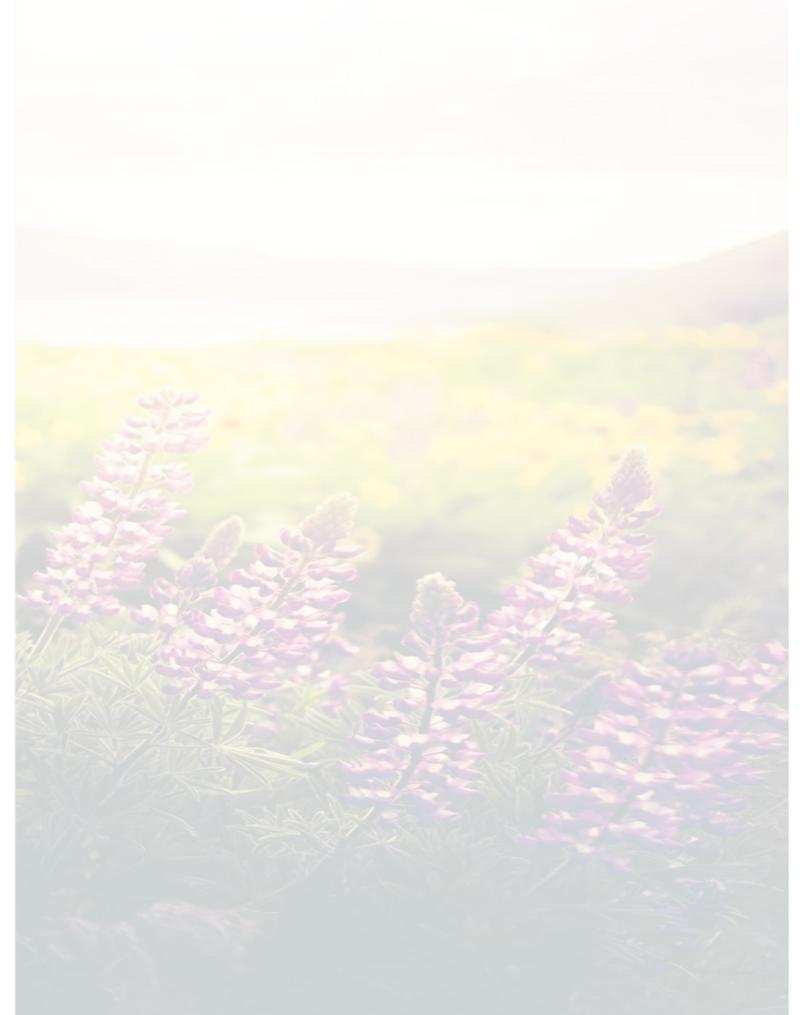
Research says focusing on implementation works!

Implementation research:
Effective implementation and enabling contexts play a key role in ensuring programs and practices aimed at improving family and child wellbeing achieve their intended outcomes

And, from the research, we know what's needed:
- ✓ Strong leadership and champions
- ✓ Adequate implementation supports (e.g., training, coaching)
- ✓ Supportive organizational culture
- ✓ Well-defined scale-up strategies attentive to the local context
- ✓ Effective coordination with clear role delineation
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation systems and the systematic use of evidence

Citations: Milat et al., 2015; Gray et al., 2012; Kitsen et al., 1998

But getting there can be hard.

You are here →
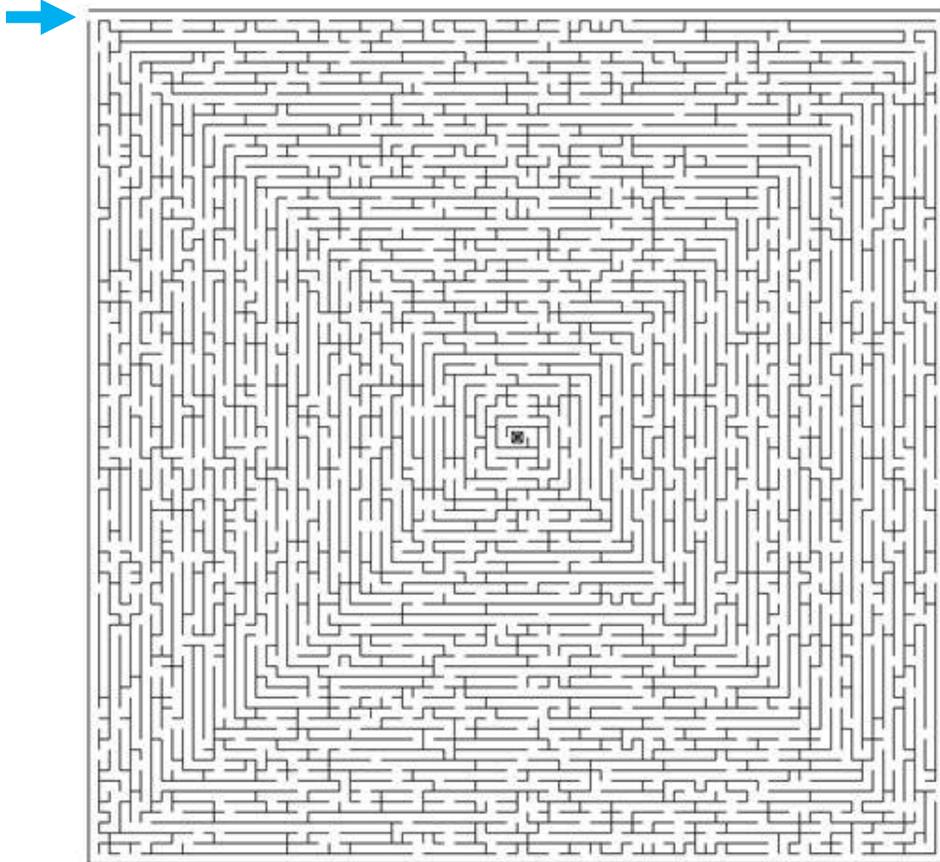
Many proven approaches fail to achieve their intended outcomes when implemented within large, complex systems

"A more **comprehensive research and development infrastructure** is necessary to scale-up interventions that demonstrate strong evidence of effectiveness"

−*Society for Prevention Research's Mapping Advances in Prevention Science IV Translation Research Task Force*

Citations: Fagan et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2015

NJ DCF Framework, Strategies and Infrastructure

The Approach We Take

Frameworks and Strategies

Active Implementation

Well-defined Practice

- Logic Model
- Service Delivery Flow
- Practice Profile

✖

Effective Implementation Supports

- Job Descriptions and Interview Protocols
- Program Manual
- Training and Coaching

✖

Enabling Context

- Teams
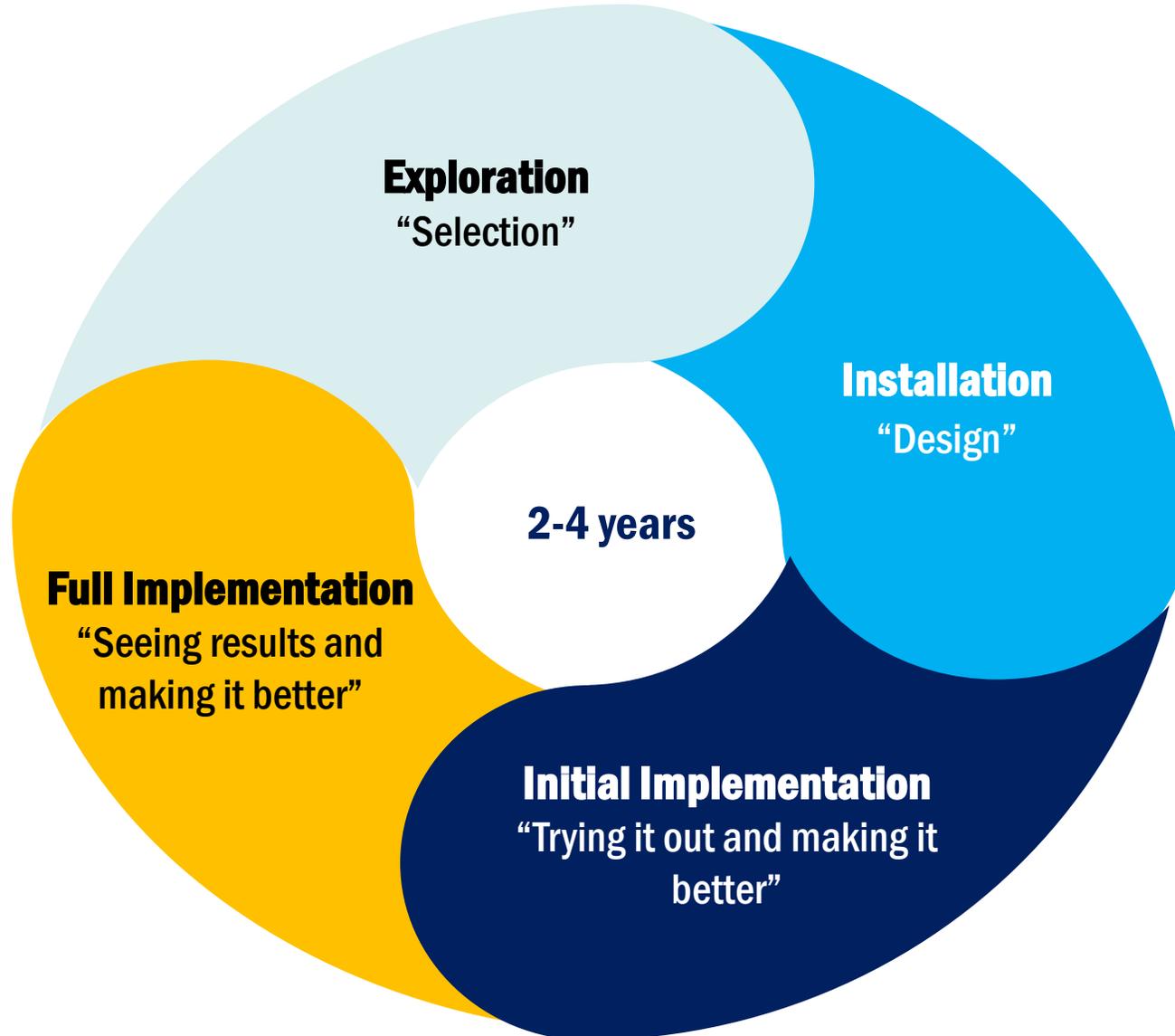- Evaluation Plan
- CQI

=

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Implementation Stages

Exploration
"Selection"

Installation
"Design"

2-4 years

Full Implementation
"Seeing results and making it better"

Initial Implementation
"Trying it out and making it better"

Project Management

Planning

- Define project scope
- Assess resources needed
- Develop workplans with timeframes

Teaming

- Organize & group functions
- Engage experts
- Outline roles & responsibilities
- Utilize formal processes

Execution

- Monitor tasks to meet milestones
- Mitigate project risks/issues

Reporting

- Communicate through tiered reporting status, risks/issues, key decision, and deliverables

Approach in Practice

Who and How

Program Development is an all-of-department effort

Programmatic	Operational	Administrative
• Family strengthening programs/services • Mental and behavioral health services for children • Gender based violence prevention and response services • Child protective services	• **Implementation** • **Research and Evaluation** • Monitoring • Quality Assurance • Information Technology • Data Management	• Human Resources • Fiscal • Procurement • Contracting • Regulatory • Legal • Legislative affairs • Communications

Champion Offices of Implementation Science

Office of Strategic Development

Program Development

Organizational Development

Project Management

Office of Applied Research & Evaluation

Research

Program Evaluation

Data Dissemination & Communication

Scientific Advising

Key Activities in the Exploration Phase

IDENTIFY NEEDS

EXPLORE MODELS

- RESEARCH PROGRAM MODELS
- ASSESS MODELS FOR EVIDENCE AND USABILITY

SUPPORT MODEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- COORDINATE TEAM
- IDENTIFY TARGET POPULATION

- SUPPORT DECISION-MAKING AROUND NEED, FIT, CAPACITY AND COST

DCF Model Exploration Analysis Tool

The structure and questions used in this tool were derived from the Hexagon Discussion & Analysis Tool (Metz & Louison, 2018), "A Discussion Tool: Questions to ask the model developer" by Chapin Hall, DCF's Operational Offices, and DCF's Race Equity Steering Committee.

Process to explore models

EVIDENCE

- Of the Targeted Outcomes, which outcomes have favorable effects?
- For studies with favorable effects, what population was included in the study and in what setting was it studied?
- Has this model been shown to be more or less effective for different racial/ethnic/gender/class/socioeconomic/age subgroups (e.g., low income, Hispanic, African American, urban/rural)?

Model Developer Questions:

- Does this model include a process to engage and obtain feedback from recipients of the services? If so, what does that look like?
- Does this model include a process to include recipients of services included in the planning and evaluation discussions? If so, what does that look like?
- How do you ensure cultural humility training is effective and integrated to meet the needs of the target population?

DCF Cost Calculator Tool

Process to estimate costs

Model Developer Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+	Notes
Initial Implementation Costs (include costs for initial training, licenses, consultation, etc.)				
Cost 1	$ 14,000.00			
Cost 2	$ 18,000.00			
etc	$ 7,000.00			
etc	$			
Ongoing Implementation Costs (include costs for ongoing training, licenses				
Cost 1				
Cost 2				
etc				
etc				
Total Model Developer Costs	$			

Service Costs

Variable Expenses

Staffing & Benefits					
Program Director/Coordinator		$87,300	$87,300	$87,300	
Supervisor		$477,300	$477,300	$477,300	
Therapist		$1,759,200	$1,759,200	$1,759,200	
Bachelor-level Staff		$0	$0	$0	
Support Staff (20% of total salaries)		$464,760	$464,760	$464,760	
Fringe Benefits	$	1,003,881.60	$ 1,003,881.60	$ 1,003,881.60	
Fees (average around 3k for FPS per county)		$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	
Materials and Supplies (5k)		$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	
Facility Costs		$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	
Specific Assistance to Clients		$70,200	$70,200	$70,200	
Other		$160,358	$160,358	$160,358	
Start-up Costs	$	50,000.00	$ –	$ –	
Total		$4,107,000	$4,057,000	$4,057,000	
Percentage of Direct Costs (assumes 75% in first year to allow for hiring, etc.)		75.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Total Direct Service Costs	$	3,080,250.00	$ 4,057,000.00	$ 4,057,000.00	

Indirect Expenses

Indirect Costs					
Administration estimated at 15%	$	468,412.50	$ 608,550.00	$ 608,550.00	formula to input your jurisdiction's indirect rate.
Total Indirect Costs	$	468,412.50	$ 608,550.00	$ 608,550.00	
Total Service Costs	$	3,548,662.50	$ 4,665,550.00	$ 4,665,550.00	

Other Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+	
Total Evaluation Costs	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Total CQI Costs	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Total IT Costs	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Total Costs	$ 3,591,162.50	$ 4,665,550.00	$ 4,665,550.00	
Total Cost per Case	$ 3,836.71	$ 4,984.56	$ 4,984.56	

Spotlight!

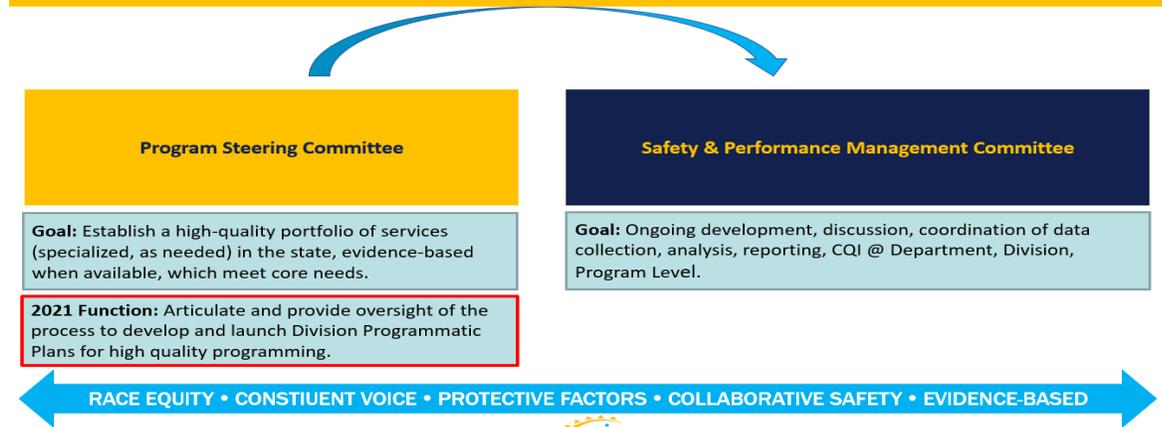Program Plans: Statewide Scale-up of High-Quality Programming
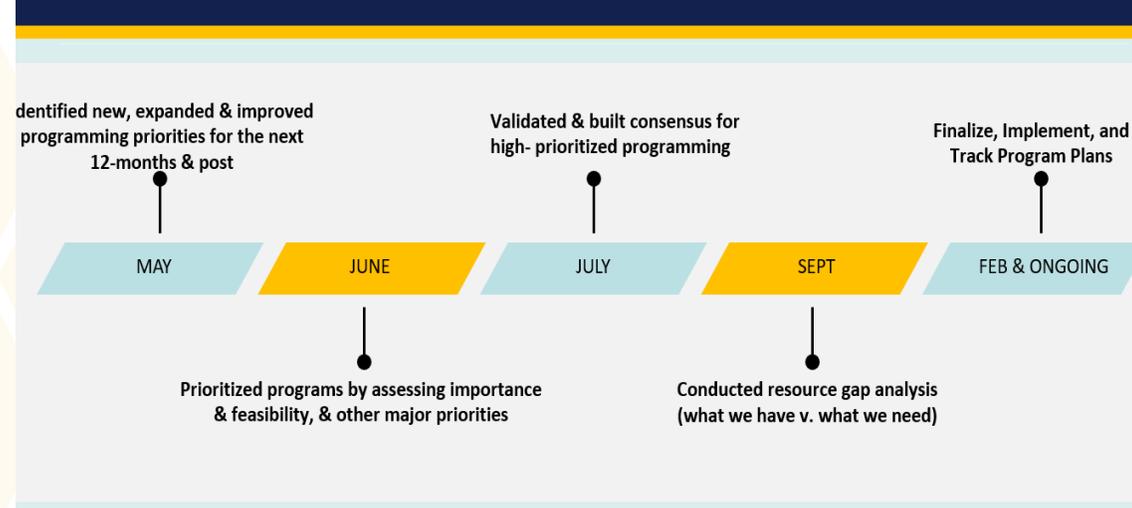
Bold Vision!

We Took a Look

- Inconsistent service delivery across service provider network
- Lack of implementation supports available to providers
- Uncertainty about fidelity of Evidence Based Program implementation
- Few program evaluations at the state level
- Minimal data feedback loops

Integrated Planning & Communication Process

Program Steering Committee

Goal: Establish a high-quality portfolio of services (specialized, as needed) in the state, evidence-based when available, which meet core needs.

2021 Function: Articulate and provide oversight of the process to develop and launch Division Programmatic Plans for high quality programming.

Safety & Performance Management Committee

Goal: Ongoing development, discussion, coordination of data collection, analysis, reporting, CQI @ Department, Division, Program Level.

RACE EQUITY • CONSTIUENT VOICE • PROTECTIVE FACTORS • COLLABORATIVE SAFETY • EVIDENCE-BASED

Process for Prioritizing Programs & Developing Plans

Identified new, expanded & improved programming priorities for the next 12-months & post

Validated & built consensus for high- prioritized programming

Finalize, Implement, and Track Program Plans

| MAY | JUNE | JULY | SEPT | FEB & ONGOING |

Prioritized programs by assessing importance & feasibility, & other major priorities

Conducted resource gap analysis (what we have v. what we need)

Management of Program Plans

Planning | Teaming | Execution | Reporting

STAGE	ACTIVITY	ACTUAL START	ACTUAL DURATION	Status (Completed, In Progress, Not Started, N/A)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.0 Exploration	1.1 Explore Models	0	0	Complete						
	1.2 Develop Teams & Engage Stakeholders	0	0	Complete						
	1.3 Identify Finances	0	0	Complete						
2.0 Installation	2.1 RFP, Execute or Modify Contracts	1	4	On Track	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75		
	2.2 Launch teams & communication	0	0	Complete						
	2.3 Refine or Develop Model	1	3	On Track	34.33	34.33	34.33			
	2.4 Refine or Develop Fidelity Tool	1	4	On Track	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25		
	2.5 Refine or Develop Program Manual	1	3	On Track	72.67	72.67	72.67			
	2.7 Refine or Develop & Initiate Training/Coaching	1	6	On Track	12.67	12.67	12.67	12.67	12.67	12.67
	2.8 Refine or Develop Evaluation Plan	1	3	On Track	8.00	8.00	8.00			
	2.9 Refine or Develop Data System	1	3	On Track	24.00	24.00	24.00			
3.0 Initial Implementation	3.1 Launch provider consultation	3	24	Not Started			2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17
	3.2 Initiate QA & CQI	3	24	Not Started			2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17
	3.3 Initiate Monitoring	3	24	Not Started			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	3.4 Initiate Formative or Process Evaluation	3	24	Not Started			0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
	3.5 Implement Practice & Refine Implementation	3	24	Not Started			3.33	3.33	3.33	3.33

Management of Program Plans

Planning	**Teaming**	Execution	Reporting
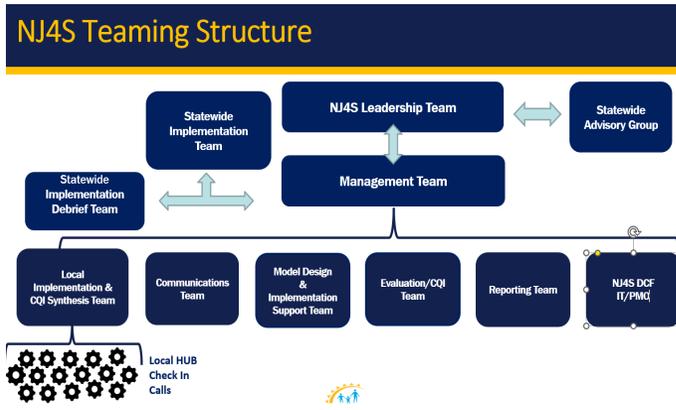
NJ4S Teaming Structure
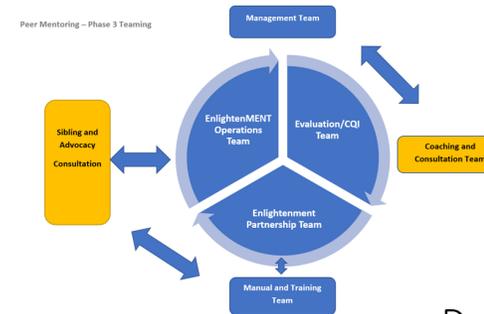
DVL Phase 2 Teaming Structure

Enlightenment

Peer Mentoring – Phase 3 Teaming
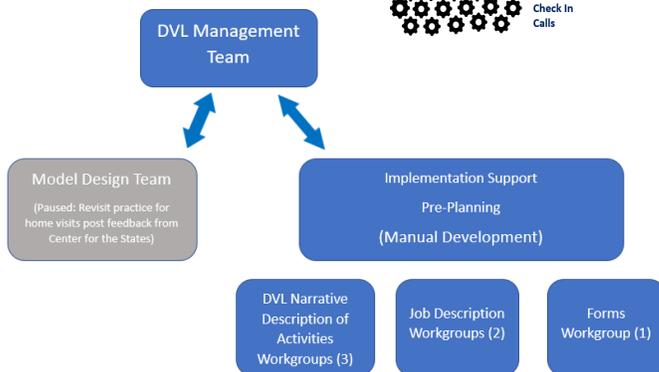
Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy
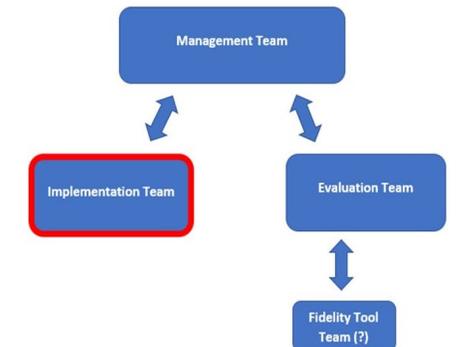
Management of Program Plans
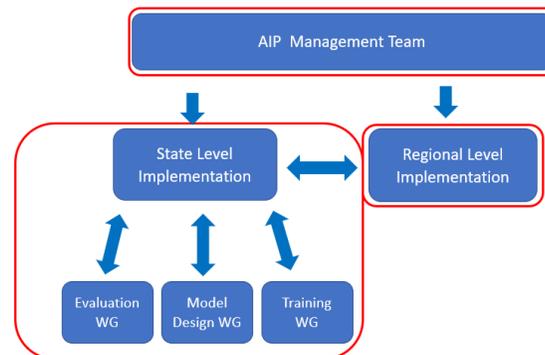
Planning	Teaming	Execution	Reporting

OVERALL ▲	COUNT ▼
On Track	26
Needs Correction	7
Completed	5
Not Started	2
Paused	2
Total	42

BUSINESS DIVISION/PROJECTS	OVERALL
FCP	
FPS	●
FSC Supports	●
FSS CPP	●
FSS NonCPP	●
Helpline	●
KFT	●
KNP	●
Life Skills	●
NJ4S-New	●
PACES	●
Parent Leadership	●
Peer Mentoring	●
SBYS	●
SVS	●
Universal EBHV	●
Youth Housing	●

Program Plans Program Development Progress
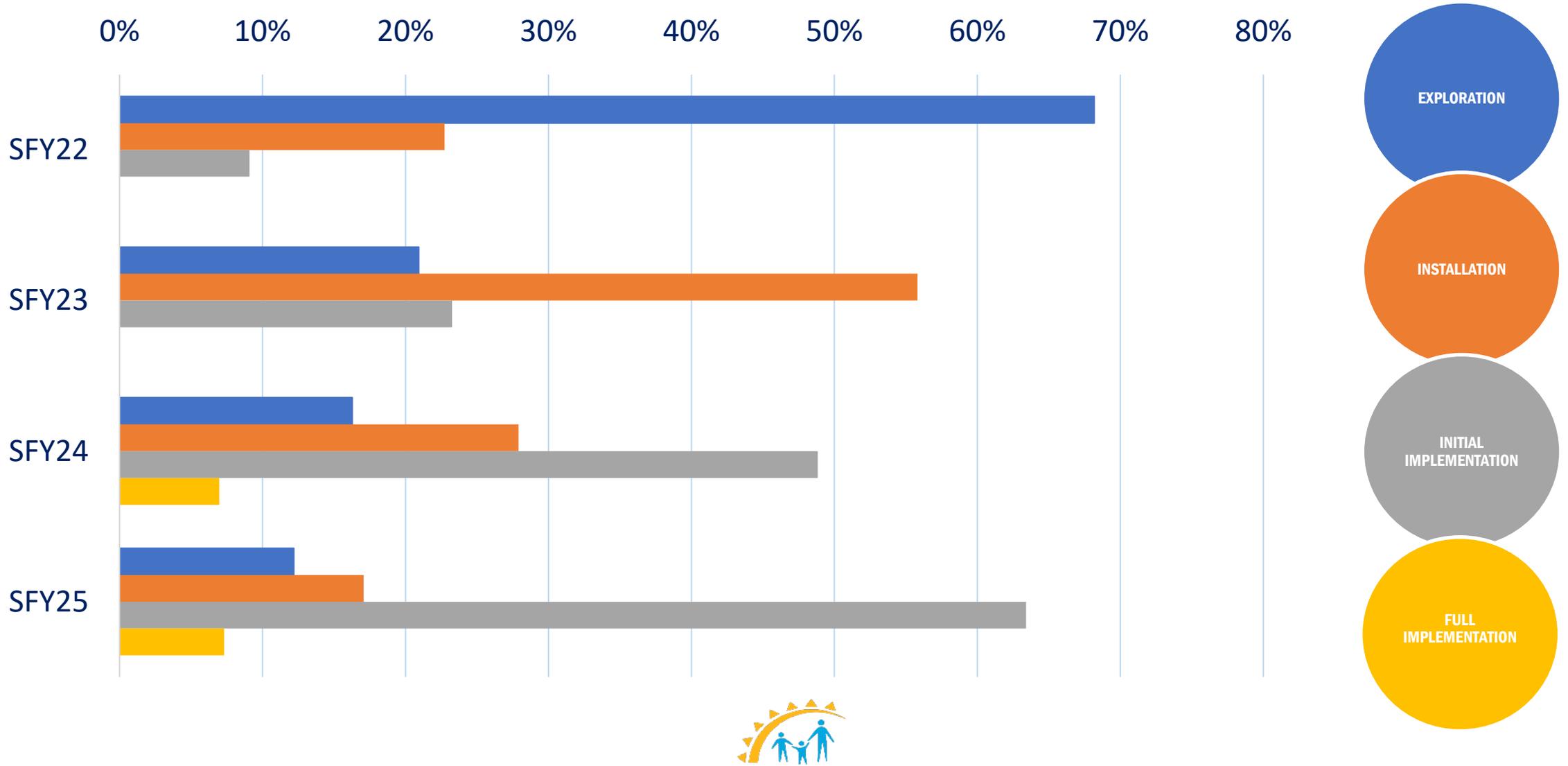
So how did we get here?

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

Start small
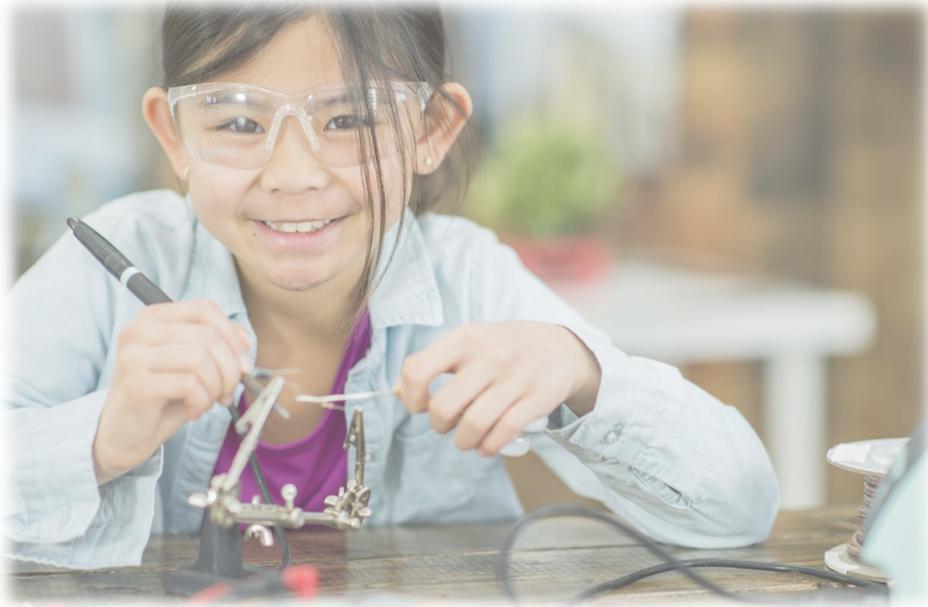
Learn and innovate

Hone Messaging

Build Trust

Start Small

Look for a few opportunities to start embedding the work

Scale up and institutionalize

Learn & Innovate

Build capacity with others

Learn and Innovate

Hone Messaging

- **Simplify communication**

- **Use familiar terminology**

Build Trust

- **Co-create, vet and build consensus every step of the way**

- **Build accountability structures for increased transparency and buy-in**

- **Deliver high-quality products**

Systems Change

- **Established relationships, institutional knowledge**

- **Shared values and vision for service delivery**

- **Capacity building and sustainability**

Questions

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