Practical Tips for Conducting High-Quality Implementation Studies

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Participants will have...

- Concrete tools, tips, and resources for designing and executing a high-quality implementation study that may be used to inform state/local policies and practices.

- Identified the existing resources available to conduct an implementation study, critical information gaps and needs, and action steps for addressing them.
Identify one or two implementation-focused research questions you would like to answer about your program.
Research Design

• Start with the end in mind
  – What questions do you want answered

• Clarify research purposes (e.g., test fidelity, describe an intervention)

• Anchor data collection and analysis in best available evidence

• Balance research purposes with level of effort and respondent burden

• Encourage collaboration (e.g., sites, I-team, within the project team)

• Think outside the box (e.g., permeable firewall)

• Allow for midcourse corrections
What practical tips have you implemented? What tips would you like to use in your work?
Data Collection

• Build in initial and ongoing training and project communication (e.g., content and methods)

• Implement strategies for improving data consistency and quality

• Develop simple, focused interview guides that support triangulation and analysis

• Create a targeted, systematic data collection process (e.g., stick to the protocol)
What practical tips have you implemented? What tips would you like to use in your work?
Data Collection (con’t)

• Triangulate your data sources (e.g., Integrate multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources)

• Capitalize on researcher skills, abilities, and strengths (e.g., authenticity, trustworthiness)

• Share examples (prototypes) for data collection and summaries
Data Analysis

• Create an organized, accessible data repository

• Organize processing sessions for efficient and effective analysis

• Rely on qualitative and quantitative evidence to support study findings

• Implement an iterative analysis process at multiple levels
  – Grapple with the data
  – Identifying defendable final themes/findings requires a process of expanding and retracting

• Use an analytic outline for capturing hierarchy, ideas (themes), and facts
Reporting

• Know your audience

• Tell a compelling story

• Write relevant and accessible reports/briefs (e.g., highlight and support main points, link section headers)

• Solicit feedback from site participants

• Use findings immediately to plan for change and subsequent rounds of data collection
For Resources and Guidance

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