

The National Implementation Research Network

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Ensuring that Evidence Has Impact: Active Approaches to Implementing and Scaling Evidence-Based Prevention Strategies

The ultimate success of prevention science will not be measured by the effectiveness of prevention programs, practices, and policies alone, but also by our ability to bring the full experience of effective prevention to children, families, and communities and to achieve intended wellbeing outcomes at scale. However, our usual *passive* methods of transferring evidence-based strategies into service settings (e.g., diffusion/dissemination of information, training, laws/mandates/regulation, providing funding incentives), when used alone, typically result in only 5 to 15% of the population experiencing interventions as intended.ⁱ



The effective implementation of prevention, at scale, involves key partners who collaborate to embed *active* implementation and scaling capacity, infrastructure, and best practices within community prevention systems.ⁱⁱ The National Implementation Research Network organizes effective implementation strategies within five Active Implementation Frameworks: Usable Interventions, Implementation Teams, Implementation Drivers, Improvement Cycles, and Implementation Stages. These frameworks involve responsible management strategies for complex systems environments to ensure that:

- practitioners are competent and confident delivering chosen prevention strategies within their organizations and larger community prevention system;
- core intervention components (i.e., “active ingredients”) are received by children, youth, and families as intended;
- system partners work in concert, eliminating silos and increasing access to effective services; and
- linked leadership and implementation team structures – across every level of a prevention system – continually improve and sustain prevention strategies over time using data.ⁱⁱⁱ

There is much work to do, but with the right partners success can be achieved. The Active Implementation Frameworks are being utilized in several federal and state initiatives at this time, including the Permanency Innovations Initiative (U.S. Administration for Children & Families), the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (U.S. Department of Education), the scaling of evidence-based child and family support strategies in North Carolina, and the scaling of evidence-based home visitation in Washington State and Montana.

More information about strategies for effective implementation and scaling can be found on the Active Implementation Hub: <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu>.

ⁱ Nutt, P. (2002). *Why Decisions Fail: Avoiding the Blunders and Traps That Lead to Debacles*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.

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ⁱⁱ Metz & Albers (2014) What does it take? How federal initiatives can support the implementation of evidence-based programs to improve outcomes for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 54, 592-596.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Metz, A., & Van Dyke, M. (2013). Statewide implementation of evidence-based programs. *Exceptional Children*, 79, 213-230.

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