

METHODS WORKSHOP

Title

Methodological Challenges and Strategies for Conducting Implementation Research

Presenter

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Abstract

One of the greatest challenges for researchers and practitioners is the translation of knowledge into evidence-based programs and policies. University-based research yields a growing supply of new findings which, unfortunately, are often “lost in translation” for 15-20 years before their incorporation into practice. Within translational research, implementation research (IR) constitutes the scientific study of how to move efficacious practices from clinical research into routine, real-world use. Implementation research is considered “T2” research, or the second translational step in moving discovery into community practice. While dissemination research addresses the spread of information, implementation research is concerned with the adoption and use of actual practices. Implementation research (IR) has been hampered by underdeveloped concepts and measurement tools, a dominance of exploratory research yielding barriers to implementation but not strategies to overcome those barriers, and complex and expensive research designs. Methodological limitations prevent us from developing the knowledge needed by every researcher, administrator, policy maker and individual practitioner facing decisions about implementing evidence-based practices. This workshop will introduce participants to methodological challenges in implementation research (IR) and present innovative methods to meet those challenges. It will address the importance of stakeholder engagement in implementation research to ensure that implementation is sensitive to local factors, diverse cultures, and diverse populations to be served.

Topics addressed in the workshop include:

- Key definitions of implementation research
- Conceptual models of IR and research implications
- Multilevel influences and multiple stakeholders inherent in implementation processes, to ensure relevance, acceptance and appropriateness to local context and populations
- Implementation outcomes and tools for measurement (acceptability, feasibility, sustainability, etc.)
- Mixed methods of data collection, including stakeholder assessment methods
- Design challenges and innovative approaches

- Strategies for enhancing efficiency in IR

At end of this, participants will understand what implementation research is, be familiar with guiding conceptual models, understand key methodological choices and tools, and be able to identify key components in IR and methodological decision junctures.

Career Level and Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites, but participants are expected to be familiar with the fundamentals of service system research and distinctions between efficacy and effectiveness research. Dr.

Proctor's article is a helpful adjunct to the workshop content:

Proctor, E. K., Landsverk, J., Aarons, G., Chambers, D., Glisson, C., Mittman, B. (2009).

Implementation research in mental health services: An emerging science with conceptual, methodological, and training challenges. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research. 36, 24-34.

Methods and Approach

The workshop format will be didactic and interactive. Attendees will be provided with information about NIH funding opportunities for Dissemination and Implementation Research, and examples of implementation studies that are in the field. They will engage in exercises to help them draw distinctions between key concepts and to apply them to a real-world practice situation where an agency desires or is striving to increase the use of evidence-based approaches in their service to clients. Forms, models, and worksheets will be distributed that are useful in shaping IR studies.

Materials

Participants will receive a set of PowerPoint slides and illustrative forms and materials.

Presenter Bio

Dr. Enola Proctor, is Frank J. Bruno Professor of Social Work Research and Associate Dean for Research, George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. She leads a Dissemination and Implementation Research Core for Washington University's CTSA grant (Clinical Translational Science Award). She directs the Center for Mental Health Services Research and a doctoral and post-doctoral Training Program in Mental Health Services Research (T32), both funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Her research grants have been supported by the NIMH and NIA, and most recently she was Principal Investigator of an NIMH R34 grant to adapt and implement collaborative care for depression in community long term care settings for older adults. She is a member of the National Advisory Council for the National Institute of Mental Health, has served on the strategic planning group for the NIH Office of Behavioral and Health Services Research (OBSSR), and was Scientific Co-Chair for the Eighteenth NIMH Research Conference on Mental Health Services, "Broadening the Scope of Scientific Investigation" in July 2006. She has served on numerous

journal editorial advisory boards, and currently is a member of the Editorial Board for Implementation Science—the sole journal devoted specifically to D&I research.