How organisations sustain innovations whilst others do not, lessons from implementation science and research

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Implementation Science

There is an emerging body of academic evidence which supports implementation science as a distinct discipline. See the Journal Implementation Science (open source)
http://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com

Implementation Science has roots in the diffusion of health innovations, change management, systems theory and the study of organisations amongst many other theoretical strands.

The National Implementation Research Network (USA)
http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu has many online training tools and articles which are useful, for example the fidelity model and hexagon tool.
http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/modules-and-lessons
Five key questions to answer for commissioners and practitioners when considering evidence based practices

1. Does it work?
2. Does it work in this setting?
3. Does it work in this setting, funded in this particular way?
4. Can I implement it?
5. Can I sustain it?
Does it work

- Who does it work for? Edge of care or custody (1001 definitions, discuss)
- What evidence supports who it works for
- What evidence do you have of need and what analysis can you do to prove this
- What support will you need to demonstrate your case and who do you need to convince
- Different evidence for different audiences – one page, four page, manual, video, external supporter, case study
- The ‘compelling case’ will be different for different audiences
- Everyone can find a ‘good case study’
Does it work in this setting?

- What is the organisational/political/structural/agency context into which you are introducing this practice?
- What are the first set of barriers to establishing this service?
- What is your target group and how identifiable is it?
- What is different here to what might exist (or not) in another area?
- What or who can help me?
- How much time do you have for this to succeed?
Does it work, in this setting, funded in this particular way?

- A new question, which relates to the method of commissioning
- Outcomes based commissioning
- Social Impact Bond
- In house or out sourced
- Pilot, project or business as usual
- How will it be performance managed
- How much trust is there in the system
Can I implement it?

• Implementation frameworks can be helpful in understanding the processes which are evolving during implementation.
• They can be helpful to think about the right questions to ask and to remind one about the things to pay attention to.
• They take account of an organisation as a multi layered and complex system in which many processes are taking place and are often in dynamic tension.
• They establish concepts and definitions which can be useful in developing a language to describe the experience of implementation.
• Rarely does one ask others to do something and it ‘happens’
Construct headings within the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (Damschroder et al 2009)

- Intervention characteristics
- Outer setting
- Inner setting
- Characteristics of individuals
- Process
Examples of constructs

**Inner setting** – Culture
- Implementation climate
- Tension for change

**Characteristics of individuals** – Knowledge and beliefs about the intervention

**Process** – Planning
- Engaging (opinion leaders, formally appointed internal implementation leaders, champions, external change agents)
Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (Dams Schroder et al 2009)
Applied research example

Working title
‘Factors contributing to successful and unsuccessful implementation of an evidence-based programme; a qualitative analysis of three sites (Metro City, Isolated Seaside and Expanded City) which implemented Multi Systemic Therapy.’

Secondary question
Does effective implementation lay the foundations for long term sustainability?
Research summary

- 3 sites for MST in single tier authorities
- 13 interviews with professional staff using semi structured interviews
- Coding analysis using Nvivo
- Initial coding using grounded theory methods (Charmaz)
- Secondary coding informed by the concepts identified by the CFIR (Damschroder et al 2009)
- Potential for refinement of concepts and new learning
Emerging findings 1

- The implementation of evidence-based interventions such as Multi Systemic Therapy is a complex undertaking requiring committed leadership, organisational change, and adaptation.
- Understanding implementation processes at a conceptual level can help organisations to successfully introduce interventions and make better use of them as well as to understand some of the barriers to their adoption.
- There are examples of failure of interventions such as MST at both an early stage and at a late stage as well as examples of sustainment and expansion.
- Narratives emphasise leadership and systemic/distributed leadership, in particular.
- The organisational system needs to be alive to risks of turnover and change and constantly refresh itself to maintain critical mass.
Emerging findings 2

• MST appears to work best when introduced into systems with a high collaborative environment
• The ‘adaptation paradox’ for the developer and the organisation
• The risks of abandoning the project group
• Three key risks – supervisor leaves, financial pressure, change in senior leadership
• Succession planning
• The fit with the strategic objectives
• It is what we do around here
• Cultural connectivity and constituencies of support
Towards sustainability

- The foundations make a difference to the long term
- Anticipation of the system shocks
- Constantly refresh the professional system
- Attention paid to the referral flow and pipeline
- Return locally generated evidence to the system
- Develop new supporters
- Distributed leadership is the greatest asset
- Make the system enabling
Questions