



## Practical Fit

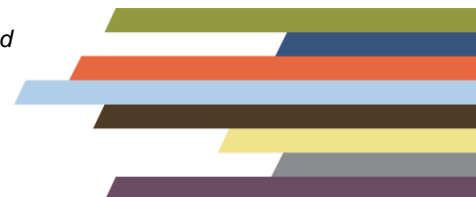
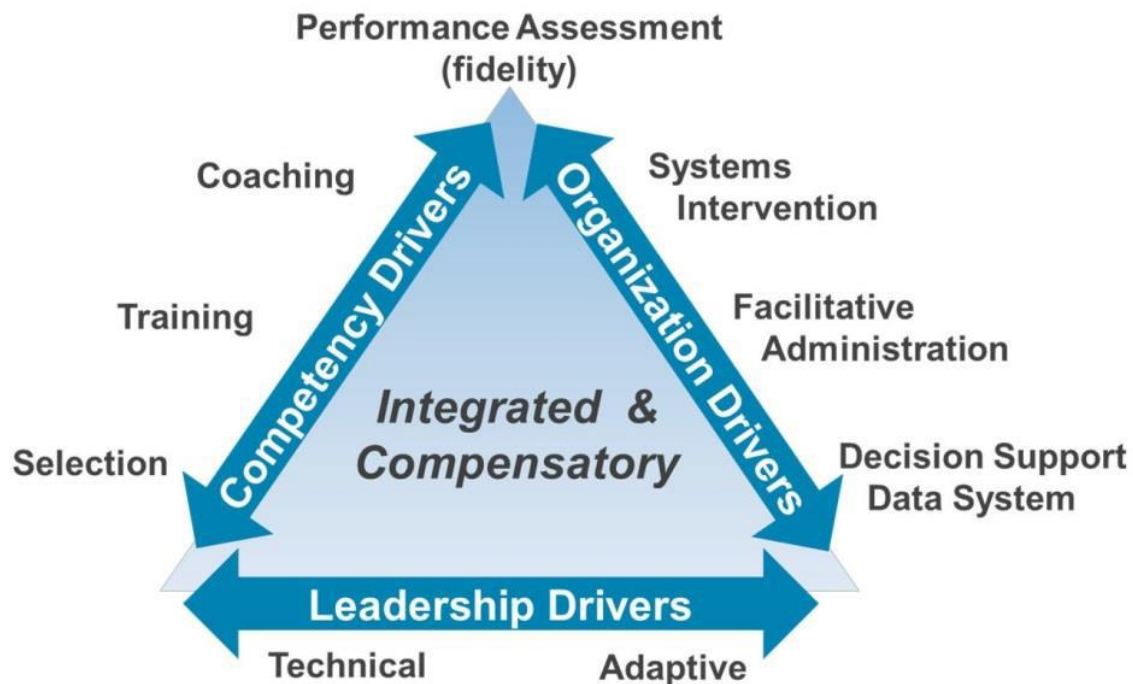
### Implementation Drivers

When considering the **practical fit** of an intervention, it is essential to consider your resources within your agency or organization to both implement it well and sustain it over time once positive outcomes are achieved. In this instance, the resources necessary include competent staffing, adequate organizational structures, and leadership support. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) has extensively researched this topic and outlined three types of **Implementation Drivers**:

- Competency Drivers
- Organization Drivers
- Leadership Drivers

According to NIRN, “*Implementation Drivers* are key components of **capacity** and **infrastructure** that influence a program’s success. They are the core components needed to initiate and support”...an intervention or innovation.

Understanding *Implementation Drivers* will help you think about what resources you need to implement a particular evidence-based or promising program or practice.



## Competency Drivers – Think People!

Competency drivers are mechanisms to develop, improve, and sustain staff members' abilities to implement an intervention. They focus on the selection, support, and monitoring of those specific individuals who will directly implement the intervention.

### *Selection*

Selecting competent staff begins with developing processes for *recruiting* a competent workforce who have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to carry out evidence-based practices. This includes identifying the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention—both what is needed immediately and what can be developed over time.

### *Training*

Professional development opportunities to train staff to use new approaches and new skills relevant to the intervention are essential. To implement a program well, it is beneficial for those who are directly implementing to understand

- Underlying theory, science-base, and values of the intervention;
- Core components of and rationale of each component for the intervention; and
- Skills and abilities to carry out the intervention.

Training should be provided to those responsible for implementation in a manner that actively engages participants and provides substantial opportunities to practice key skills and delivery of the intervention.

### *Coaching*

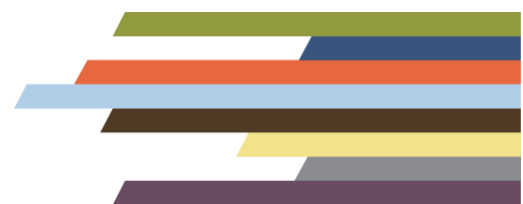
Once trained, implementers need ongoing information, encouragement, and opportunities to practice skills specific to an intervention. On-the-job practice and mastery greatly benefits from ongoing coaching and technical assistance that includes regular feedback on their implementation for continual improvement of delivery.

### *Fidelity Assessment*

Entire organizations are ultimately responsible for interventions being implemented with fidelity. Many interventions have fidelity assessments, but if an intervention does not, a fidelity assessment should be developed based on the underlying theory and core components of the intervention. Accurately assessing fidelity is essential for providing feedback to both the implementer and the agency or organization. This allows for continuous quality improvement, practice fidelity, and improved organizational and systems support.

## Organization Drivers – Think Organization!

Organization drivers intentionally create the infrastructure necessary to sustain organizational and system environments for the new intervention.



### *Decision-Support Data Systems*

The availability and accessibility of data result in better decisions—decisions about needs for more staff training or coaching; whether to make adaptations to an intervention; or determine additional resources, systems, or infrastructure to ensure fidelity and quality of the implementation. Organizations need data systems that are accessible and useful to staff. They should be developed and ready for use prior to implementation beginning and provide both process and outcomes data.

### *Facilitative Administration*

Administrators provide critical support for and decision-making about policies, procedures, structures, culture, and climate to align with staff needs for effective program implementation. This includes internal problem solving and proactive support for staff, systems, and infrastructures. Think about what processes and procedures are in place to drive decision-making within the organization and the level of commitment that administrators have for the new intervention.

### *Systems Interventions*

Strategies for working with external systems or partners to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of staff are in place. This also relates to problem solving but refers to external procedures and policies that are pushing onto the organization that are outside of your control. This may require engaging other partners to make decisions.

## Leadership Drivers – Think Problem Solving!

Leadership drivers are strategies for effectively preparing for and responding to diverse types of leadership challenges. Effective leadership will identify and respond to different types of challenges when implementing a new intervention.

### *Technical Challenges*

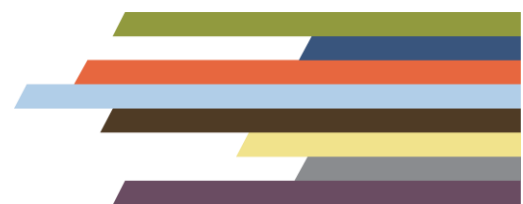
With new interventions, technical challenges can (and likely will) emerge. These types of challenges are common, can be easily defined, and have relatively clear solutions available. This does not mean they are easy to solve, but more traditional management approaches with leadership guiding the process can be effective.

### *Adaptive Challenges*

Adaptive challenges emerge when different, competing philosophies or perspectives among stakeholders occur and a solution is not readily apparent. To solve these challenges, leaders should rely on a highly inclusive and supportive problem-solving approach rather than a traditional, top-down approach.

## Implementation Drivers: Key Feature

Implementation drivers do not work in isolation. A key feature is that they are both integrated and compensatory.



### *Integrated*

The integration feature of the implementation drivers means that all aspects (underlying theory of change, purpose, knowledge, and skills) of the intervention are incorporated into each Implementation Driver. For successful implementation, staff development, organizational development, and leadership should be enacted specific to the intervention to ensure appropriate competencies are developed and maintained; processes, procedures, and protocols should support implementation; and leadership should be prepared to address a variety of challenges throughout implementation.

### *Compensatory*

A component of one implementation driver can compensate for another when a specific skill or other key aspect is missing from one driver but present in other drivers. When something is lacking in one area, leaning on the strengths of other drivers can support successful implementation overall.

## *Summary*

When considering possible interventions to implement, considering what capacity and resources you already have and what resources can be developed in advance of trying an intervention can make a huge difference in terms of implementing a new intervention with success. Examining potential interventions with an eye towards what is needed regarding staffing, systems, infrastructure, and leadership and comparing that to existing resources can be very helpful in making a final selection!

## Reference

All information in this handout was retrieved from the National Implementation Science Network:

- [Active Implementation: Implementation Drivers](#)
- [Module 2: Implementation Drivers](#)

