



## **Workshop 7 – 2018 Nordic Implementation Conference**

### **Implementation Specialists: A New Profession?**

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### **Presentation 1: Moving Implementation Science into Social Welfare Practice: Developing Implementation Specialists (B. Albers, A. Shlonsky, J. Zhou)**

#### *Background*

Government and non-government organisations that operate within human services in general and social welfare in particular wish to enhance the uptake of evidence in practice and seek knowledge and guidance on how to do this best. This has led to a marked increase in opportunities for professional development in the science and practice of implementation.

#### *Project aim*

This presentation will combine the knowledge generated through two projects: 1. The development of the 'Specialist Certificate of Implementation Science' for professionals working in human services in Australasia. It focuses on applied methods of implementation and on tailoring content to the developmental needs and work contexts of adult students 2. A training and consultation process provided to a team of implementation specialists from the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), who support others in the uptake and sustainment of evidence in practice.

#### *Project methods*

Both projects utilised key concepts and models from implementation science. These concepts and models were embedded into concrete social welfare case studies and used to engage implementers attending the course and consultations in discussions and joint work processes aimed at enhancing implementers'

- theoretical knowledge about implementation science and practice
- skills to actively use implementation science in social welfare practice
- skills in solving implementation problems and removing implementation barriers

#### *Project results*

Project (1) pointed to a number of challenges for implementers in the application of theoretical knowledge in social welfare practice - in particular having a clear understanding of what constitutes evidence, understanding the relationship between evidence and implementation and translating implementation science concepts to ever changing contexts.

Project (2) led to the development of a framework for implementation specialist knowledge and skills based on the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR). These results will be shared as part of the presentation.

#### *Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion*

Enabling implementers - be they practitioners, administrators, consultants, government officials or others - to use implementation science concepts actively and flexibly in their organisational practice faces challenges related to a very limited and traditional spectrum of opportunities for professional development. Practice and problem based learning approaches are required to enable the uptake of implementation in organisational practice.



## Presentation 2: Skills and Competencies needed by Global Implementation Specialists (Allison Metz & Katie Burke)

### *Background*

Supporting effective implementation of evidence requires building both the science and practice of implementation. Implementation researchers identify strategies that support the use of evidence. These strategies are often packaged as frameworks, not easily used by implementation practitioners. Identifying skills and competencies for implementation practitioners can help build an agile workforce.

### *Project aim*

This project aims to:

- 1) identify skills and competencies for implementation practitioners related to co-creation, ongoing improvement, and sustaining change
- 2) conduct usability testing on skills and competencies with three cohorts of global intermediary non- governmental organizations providing implementation support on a range of interventions across a number of settings, at scale
- 3) identify selection, training and coaching guidelines for implementation practitioners
- 4) develop methods to test effectiveness of the use of skills and competencies in achieving implementation outcomes.

### *Project methods*

The project will select 3 to 5 organizations for each cohort. Usability testing goals will be tested in these areas: content validation of skills and competency (dosage, context of implementation support, relevance, clarity, feasibility and accuracy), workforce development (recruit, orient, train, coach staff), and implementation support effectiveness (evidence-informed program and policy outcomes). 3 to 5 individuals from each organization will participate (up to 15 participants per cycle). Implementation practitioner skills and competencies will be revised in between each testing cycle.

### *Project results*

Usability testing of the skills and competencies will address the following research questions: 1) Do the skills and competencies accurately represent how intermediaries provide implementation support? How frequently do intermediaries report using specific skills and competencies, and in what context? Are the skills and competencies relevant, clear and feasible to use? 2) Do the competencies increase the field's capacity to recruit, train, and coach implementation practitioners and to improve their practice? 3) Does the use of the competencies result in improved practice and policy outcomes?

### *Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion:*

The shortage of individuals trained in the science and practice of implementation has been cited as a reason for our failure to optimize the use of evidence to improve population outcomes. In response to this competency gap, more is being written about the specific competencies needed to facilitate implementation and broker knowledge. Identifying and testing the use of skills and competencies is an important step in understanding the relationship between implementation and outcomes.



## Presentation 3: Mapping translational activities of clinician-scientists in hospital departments of Region Zealand (Louise Dixi Strand)

### *Background*

Translational pathways between scientific research, clinical care and health outcomes are uncertain and complex. Studies have pointed to the crucial role of clinician-scientists as hybrid professionals with expertise in both clinical practice and scientific research, potentially facilitating the paths and adaptations of knowledge across somewhat separate institutional logics.

### *Project aim*

The paper presents empirical insights into translational pathways and the role of clinician-scientists in different hospital departments in Region Zealand. The study is explorative and guided by three research questions: 1) How are differences between scientific research and clinical practice viewed and dealt with in daily work practice of clinician-scientists? 2) What characterizes translational activities among clinician-scientists? 3) What factors enable or hinder clinician-scientists from participating in or facilitating translational activities?

### *Project methods*

Data collection, semi structured interviews with clinician-scientist (n=30), will take place January-March 2018. Interviewees will be sampled from a completed research evaluation of all departments in Region Zealand, where departments engaged in research and translational activities have been mapped. Interviews will take place in person or through skype and will be recorded and transcribed. An explorative, thematic analysis will be carried out using NVivo. Field notes from meeting participation and analysis of relevant organizational documents will supplement the analysis.

### *Project results*

Expected results include a) an overview and typology of the interviewees own understandings and examples of translational activities in their respective departments, b) an analysis of the profile and boundary spanning role of a clinician-scientist, c) an analysis of factors, that according to interviewees, enable or hinder translational pathways in their daily work, d) analysis of exemplary situations where possible tensions and differences between science and clinic are successfully negotiated and translational pathways are mediated.

### *Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion*

In conclusion, the paper will discuss variations between hospital departments and their different forms of research engagements; university clinics, basic science in relation to applied science projects, industry sponsored research, research collaborations with other public health sectors etc. Lastly, theoretical and methodological perspectives for understanding the uncertainty and complexity of translational pathways will be discussed.