

Yes, We Can 2 – #EIE2021

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Designing for sustainability in implementation research: A tough nut to crack

The Wicked Problem

The effectiveness of strategies to sustain improvement especially is a significant implementation research gap. The implementation research challenge is to identify when program drift and intervention decay occurs. Implementation researchers are then confronted with **when and how to implement specific sustainability strategies to improve sustainment of organizational change** given limited study resources and time.

Background

Sustainability frameworks suggest that the capacity to sustain change is influenced by multilevel constructs related to organizational attributes, environmental contextual features, and intervention characteristics. The Integrated Sustainability Framework and Consolidated Framework for Sustainability Constructs refine the classification of these sustainability constructs. However, the frameworks do not address the development and testing of specific strategies to improve the likelihood that changes will be sustained.

A recent study utilized an Implementation and Sustainment Facilitation (ISF) to improve substance use screening in Aids Service Organizations (ASOs). Despite a targeted 6-month sustainability facilitation period, only 35% of ASOs reported sustaining the use of a motivational interview brief intervention to improve substance use screening. Results mirror findings from a longitudinal sustainability analysis showing that approximately 25 to 40% of participating substance use agencies sustained changes two-years post intervention.

The field of implementation research requires further efforts to develop and evaluate, based on program drift or intervention decay, effective sustainability strategies that will improve the likelihood of organizational sustainment of change over time. **How can that best be promoted?**

Who is this for (target audience)?

This session is for implementation researchers and those representing funders interested in discussing questions related to sustainability.

