Implementation Essentials and Evaluation in Mental Health Promotion

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• Importance of programme implementation in advancing research, policy and practice in mental health promotion
• Principles of programme implementation
• Practical and research challenges
• Case study of implementing and evaluating the JOBS programme in Ireland (Reynolds et al., 2004; Barry et al., 2007)
Programme Implementation

• “How well a proposed programme or intervention is put into practice” (Durlak, 1998)
• Information on specific programme components, how they are delivered, and details of the context in which the programme is conducted
• Programme integrity or adherence/fidelity (Dane & Schneider, 1998)
Expanding the Evidence Base

- Research to date has largely focused on evaluating programme outcomes.
- Paucity of data on the quality of programme implementation necessary for positive outcomes to be produced.
- Higher quality implementation leads to more positive outcomes (Durlak, 1998; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Mihalic et al., 2002).
- Expand the mental health promotion evidence base—evidence to guide the effective dissemination of interventions across diverse cultural and economic settings.
Why Implementation Matters

• Determining how or why a programme works
  – documenting actual programme delivery
  – assessing variability across change agents and settings
• Interpreting programme outcomes - distinguish between ineffective programmes and effective programmes that are poorly implemented
• Providing feedback for quality improvement
• Advance knowledge on best practice for effective programme adoption and replication
Assessing Programme Implementation

• Assessing both the quantity and quality of implementation
  – how much of the programme was delivered
  – how well each part was conducted
• Conditions necessary for successful implementation in the local context
• Generic processes that underpin effective programme planning and delivery
Implementation Principles

• The content and structure of the intervention
  – theory and evidence base
  – identify core components of the programme
  – quality of programme materials
  – quality and structure of technical support
• The process of planning, implementation and training systems
• Implementation support system
  - facilitatory and inhibitory factors in the local setting or context

(Barry & Jenkins, 2007; Barry, Domitrovich and Lara, 2005)
Implementing Mental Health Promotion
Margaret Barry & Rachel Jenkins
Planning Process

• Assess local characteristics and resources
• Suitability of programme model
• Participation of key stakeholders in decision-making
• Identify and communicate programme objectives and principles to key players
• Training and support systems
• Plan for sustainability
Delivery Phase

- Readiness to implement the programme
- Organisational structures and policies
- Mobilisation of support
- Ecological fit of the programme
- Cultural sensitivity
- Balancing programme fidelity with the needs of the local site
- Extent of participation
- Collaboration
- Implementation monitoring system
Challenges of Evaluating Programme Implementation

• Implementing programmes in complex multi-level systems such as schools and communities
  – multifaceted interventions
  – broad goals with overlapping strategies
  – capture synergistic impacts and outcomes

• Case study on implementing the JOBS programme in Ireland (Barry et al., 2007)
  – adopting an international evidence-based programme designed to promote re-employment and improve mental health among unemployed people (Caplan et al., 1997; Vinokur et al., 2000)
Implementing the JOBS programme in Ireland

- Replicated in the US, Russia, Sweden, China, Korea, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands
- Pilot implementation in Ireland as part of a cross-border Rural Mental Health Project (1999-2004) funded by the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme (Peace 2)
- Process and outcome evaluation up to 12 months post-intervention with long-term unemployed people
  - improved reemployment outcomes (48% vs 17%)
  - improved self-efficacy (at 4 months) and inoculation against setbacks (at 4 and 12 months)
Implementing the JOBS programme in Ireland (Barry et al., 2007): key elements of implementation

• Clearly articulated theory and evidence base
  – suite of outcome and process measures
• Support from the programme developers
• Funding
• Training and support of local trainers
• Features of the programme
  - active learning, self-efficacy
• Lengthy planning and consultation process
• Networking and championing of the project by key members of the Planning Group
• Co-operation among agencies
• Evaluation of the process and outcomes - participants, trainers and researcher observation
Evaluation of Programme Implementation

- Comprehensive process evaluation system
- Assess the dynamics of the programme in action
- The programme as planned and the programme as delivered
- Collect qualitative data on the barriers and facilitating factors encountered in programme delivery
- Using multiple methods to gather information from multiple sources
Process of Enabling Positive Mental Health

- Principles of programme delivery
  - delivering programmes in an empowering, collaborative and participatory manner
- Systematic study of planning and implementation
  - use of multiple methods and rigorous data
- Detecting intermediate level changes leading to ultimate outcomes
- Assessing positive mental health outcomes
Recommendations

• Adopting a best practice programme does not in itself guarantee success
• Provide adequate resources for good quality planning and implementation - staff skills, training, supervision, organisational support
• Invest in process as well as outcome evaluation
• Document and relate variability in implementation to programme outcomes
• Develop practice and policy guidelines for effective implementation