Using Community Networking and Implementation Science Education to Improve Supports and Collaboration for Foster Care Services in Arizona

Casey Blaesing, Tessa Burt,
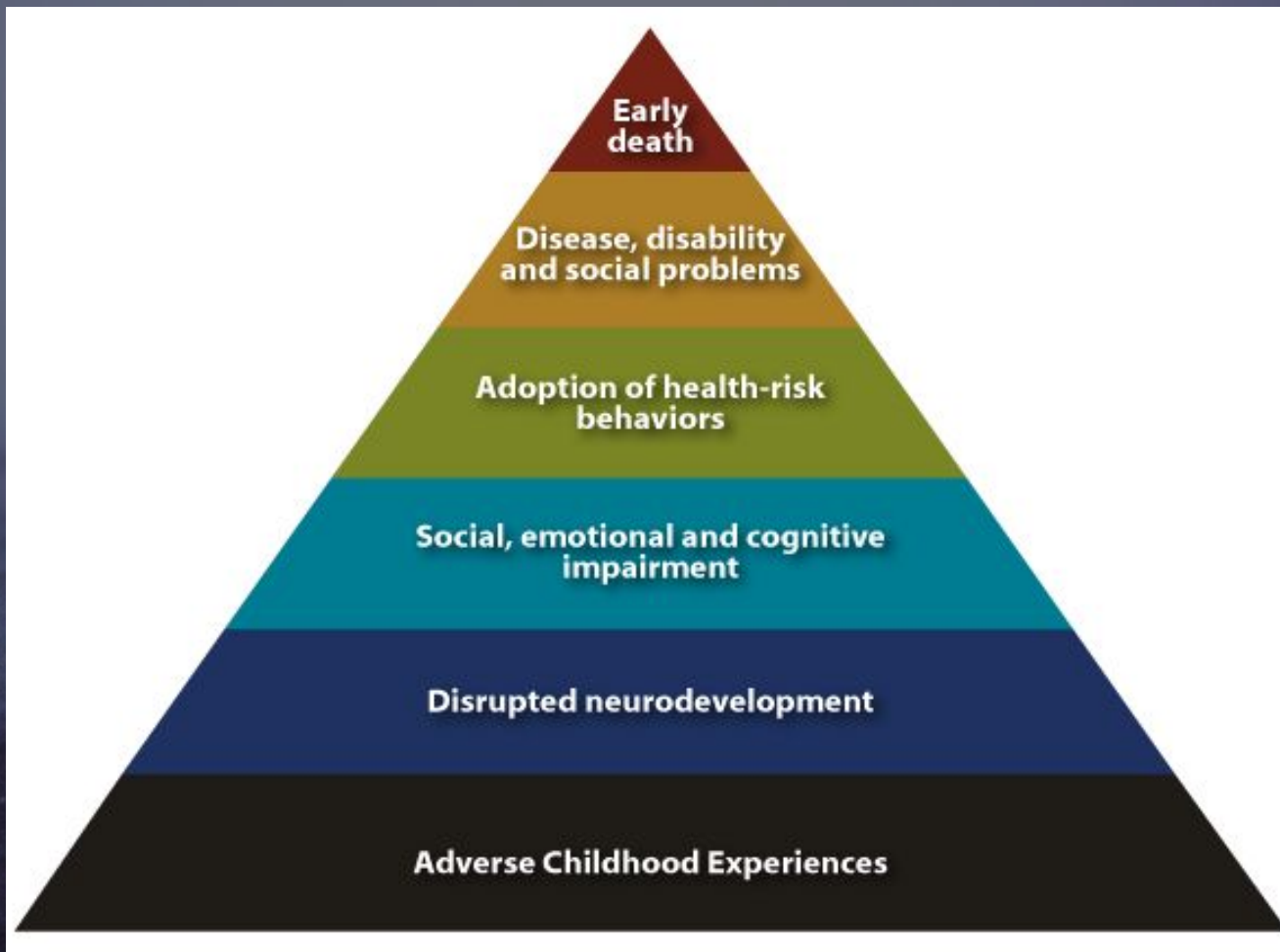Amy Armstrong-Heimsoth, Shevaun Sullivan

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

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Foster Youth Disparities

- **Two-thirds** of all children in foster placements have mental or behavioral health concerns and **up to 60%** have developmental disorders.[2]
- Foster youth are **five times** more likely to receive a drug dependence diagnosis.[2]
- Former foster youth are **twice** as likely as U.S. war veterans to experience PTSD in adulthood.[3]
- **67%** of those involved in child welfare system had experienced 4+ traumatic events.[4]
  - **93%** have been exposed to a recurring traumatic event.[4]

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"The burden of truth is get to know this kid, wrap or create this collaboration around this kid and then we all work together to move towards the finish line, whatever that looks like."

– Agency 2

Purpose

- Epigenetics – the effect the environment has on gene expression[5]

- Community resilience – "the empowerment of communities to come together, share responsibility for alleviating crisis, improve services, and build healthy environments"[6(p.326)]

Prior Research

Participants: 16 youth ages 18–20

Methods: semi-structured interviews, support mapping & resiliency measurements

Purpose: gather experiences of transition from foster care

Comparison groups: (A) initial transition supports (B) didn't receive/delayed receiving transition supports

Results: unknown service providers & service availability

Conclusion: agencies were providing similar services and there were gaps in service delivery

Implementation Science in Behavioral Health Services

"The study of the methods and strategies to promote the uptake of interventions that have proven effective into routine practice, with the aim of improving population health"[7](para 1)

- Lack supportive evidence & insufficient implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs)
- Limited funding & budget cuts ↣ EBP's[8]
- Lack of specialized training & knowledge to effectively implement & sustain EBPs
- Deficient understanding of implementation science

Implementation Science

Provides:

- Information on program outcomes[8]
- Interpretation of what influences those outcomes[8]
- Feedback for continuous quality improvement[8]
- Information on specific adaptations
- Data on **why** a program is successful or fails[8]
- An increase in funding opportunities

Project Development

Program measurement ↠

BUT... no program measurement tools established & inaccurate measurement

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Our Goal

To enhance the environment by improving programs and increasing resources that are available

Research Questions

1. Was the implementation science education beneficial?
2. After receiving implementation science education, are agency members confident in their ability to use implementation science?
3. Can agencies continue to use implementation science principles without external support? What else would they need to be sustainable?

Demographics of Participants

Agency	Length of Time at Agency	Position/Role	Education level	# of People Supervised	Phase of implementation program was in
1	11+	Director	Associate degree	15+ individuals	Installation
2	0-1 years	Program Manager	Bachelor's Degree	0-4 individuals	Installation
3	5-7 years	CEO	Associate degree	10-14 individuals	Full implementation
4	5-7 years	CEO	Master's degree	10-14 individuals	Full implementation

Project Design & Methods

01 1st MEETING

- Meet & Greet
- Pre-Survey
- Implementation Science Education
- Group Discussion

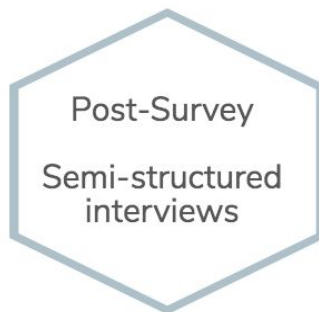## 02 ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT
Homework

Put implementation science into action

FOSTER AZ

NOTMYKID

OCJ KIDS

ONWARD HOPE

03 2ND MEETING

- Networking
- Partner discussions
- Focus Group

04 FINAL PHASE

Post-Survey

Semi-structured interviews

Homework

Name _____   Agency _____

1. What is the protocol / guidelines of your program? In other words, explain the steps for running your program successfully. *(Explain as if a stranger is going to come in and run your program. What directions will you tell them so that they understand what they need to do.)*

2. What is the "dosage" of your program? I.e. How often does a participant need to attend? How long are sessions? How long is the overall program? *(Example: 1 hour long session per week for 12 weeks)*

3. Who's running the program?

Return on October 22nd at second Community Meeting. Be prepared to share with everyone.

4. <u>Identify</u> components of program and <u>brainstorm</u> ways to measure them.

Modifiable Components / Guidelines	Non-Modifiable Components / Guidelines

5. Come to the next session with thoughts about the following questions:
   a. How will you tell someone is benefitting from your program? How will you know your program is effective?

   b. How will you disseminate or share your program to the community?

   c. What makes your program different than others being offered by your agency and/or other agencies?

Return on October 22nd at second Community Meeting. Be prepared to share with everyone.

Homework
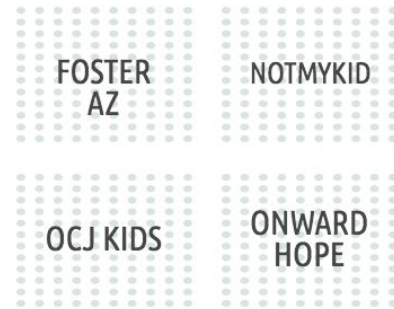
Project Design & Methods (cont.)

01 1st MEETING

- Meet & Greet
- Pre-Survey
- Implementation Science Education
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02 ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT
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Put implementation science into action

FOSTER AZ	NOTMYKID
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03 2ND MEETING

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04 FINAL PHASE

Post-Survey

Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative Results

1. Was the implementation science education beneficial?

- **Appreciation**
- **Individualization & new perspective**
  - **Ownership**
- University-community partnership
- Networking
- **Dialogue**
- Community

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"We all want to do a good job at helping
and making an impact and really using
our resources wisely… I think that the
information that was given… really
allowed us to feel empowered with
understanding a little bit more on how we
can track things to be better stewards of
the resources."

–Agency 3

2. After receiving implementation science education, are agency members confident in their ability to use implementation science?

Concerns:
- Staffing
- Training protocols
- Increase in responsibility
- Sustainability measurement tools
- Correct use of I.S.
- Change, adherence, & generalizability
- Time

Positives:
- Improved service delivery
- Receptive
- Increased motivation & confidence
- Impact

3A. Can agencies continue to use implementation science principles without external support?

- Maintaining fidelity
- Flexibility
- Funding
- Leadership buy-in
- Staffing

- Adherence
- Lack of initiative
- Time
- Lack of training
- Lack of resources

3B. What else would they need to be sustainable?

- **Fit - population + program**
- **Program tracking systems**
- Desire to develop & change
- Willingness to learn
- Openness to new perspectives

- Goals
- Dissemination
- **Organization**
- Reflection
- Follow-up
- Concrete references
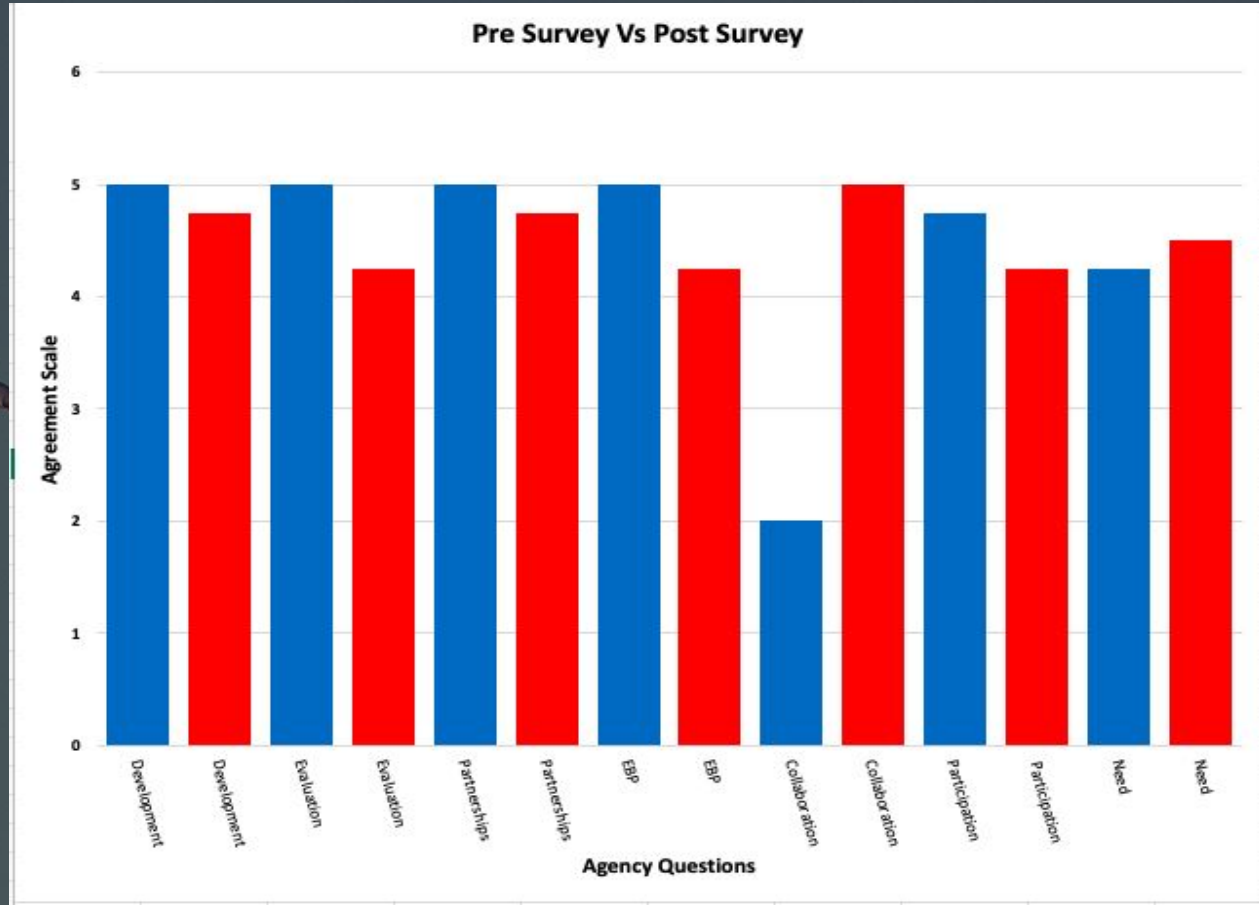- **Access to resources**
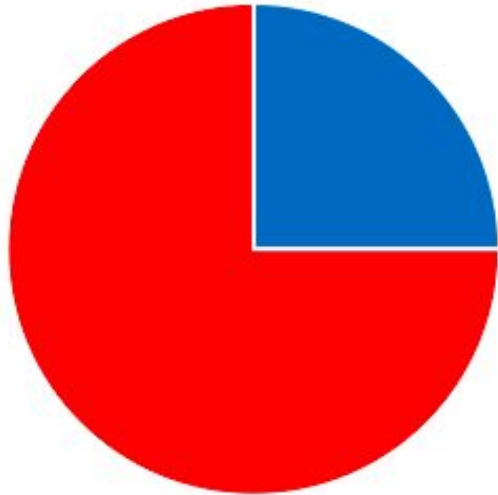- Trial and error

Quantitative Data

Pre Survey vs. Post-Survey

Pre-Survey ▮

Post-Survey ▮

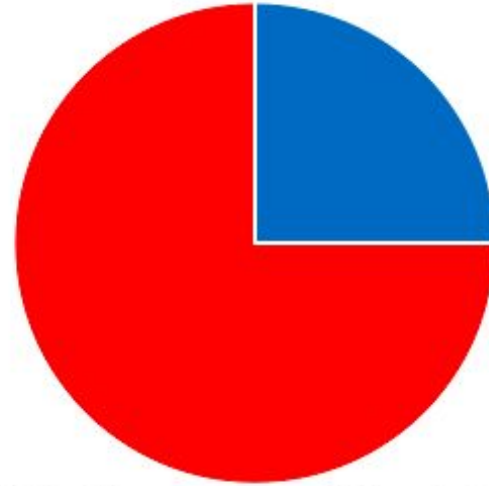**Pre Survey Vs Post Survey**

Agreement Scale

Agency Questions

(Development, Development, Evaluation, Evaluation, Partnerships, Partnerships, EBP, EBP, Collaboration, Collaboration, Participation, Participation, Need, Need)

Confidence Levels

Limitations

- Small sample size (n=4)
- Participants in different stages of program implementation
- Strong relationship between participants and research investigators
- Timing of semi-structured interviews

Strengths

- Homework

- Member checking

- The population!!!

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"So, we have to totally shift our thinking when working with this population of kids so that we can see them become resilient, see them be successful."

–Agency 1

Implications

- Improved supports provided to foster youth ↠ enhance the environment ↠ improved epigenetic outcomes
- Decrease ACE scores by developing an integrated service delivery system[6]
  - Correlation between ACE scores & substance use[19]

↑ community capacity = ↓ health/safety problems= ↓ ACE scores

Next Steps...

-Implement program measurement tool

-Training sessions with entire organization

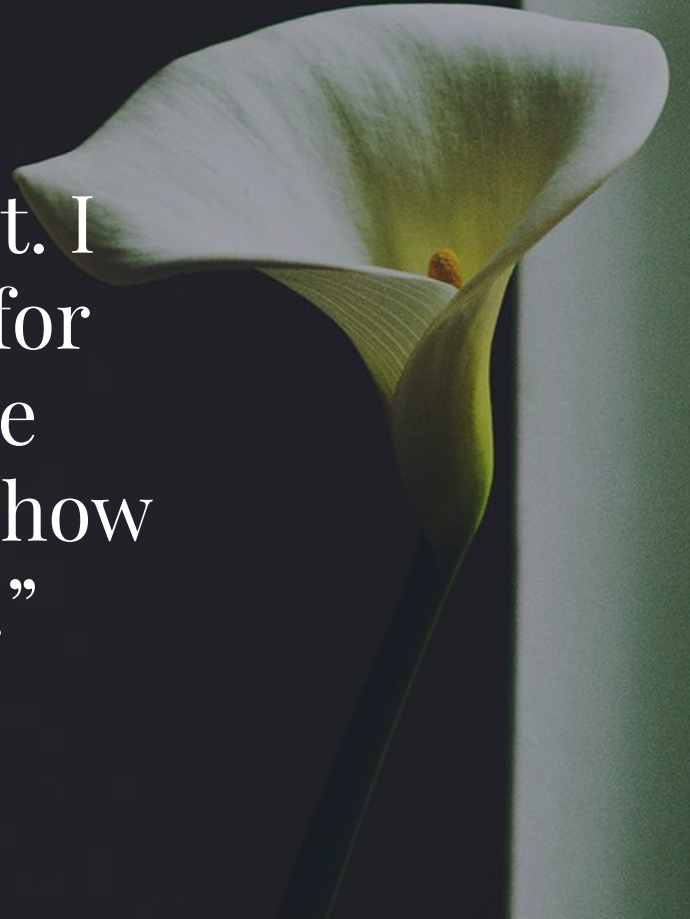-Advocating for policy change

-Coalition amongst agencies

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"We are truly appreciative of it. I think it would be really great for you guys to come back and see what we've implemented and how things look different in a year."

–Agency 4

Questions?

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