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Implementing programs and practices in child and family services

The 'why' and 'how' of good implementation practice

Assoc Prof Robyn Mildon and Dr Jessica Hateley-Browne

CFCA Webinar

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Implementing programs and practices in child and family services

The 'why' and 'how' of good implementation practice

Assoc Prof Robyn Mildon

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This webinar will:

- show why a focus on implementation is important
- outline some key concepts in implementation science
- describe a framework that provides a map for how to plan for and use good implementation practices
- provide practical examples of these practices

What is implementation?



Implementation is...

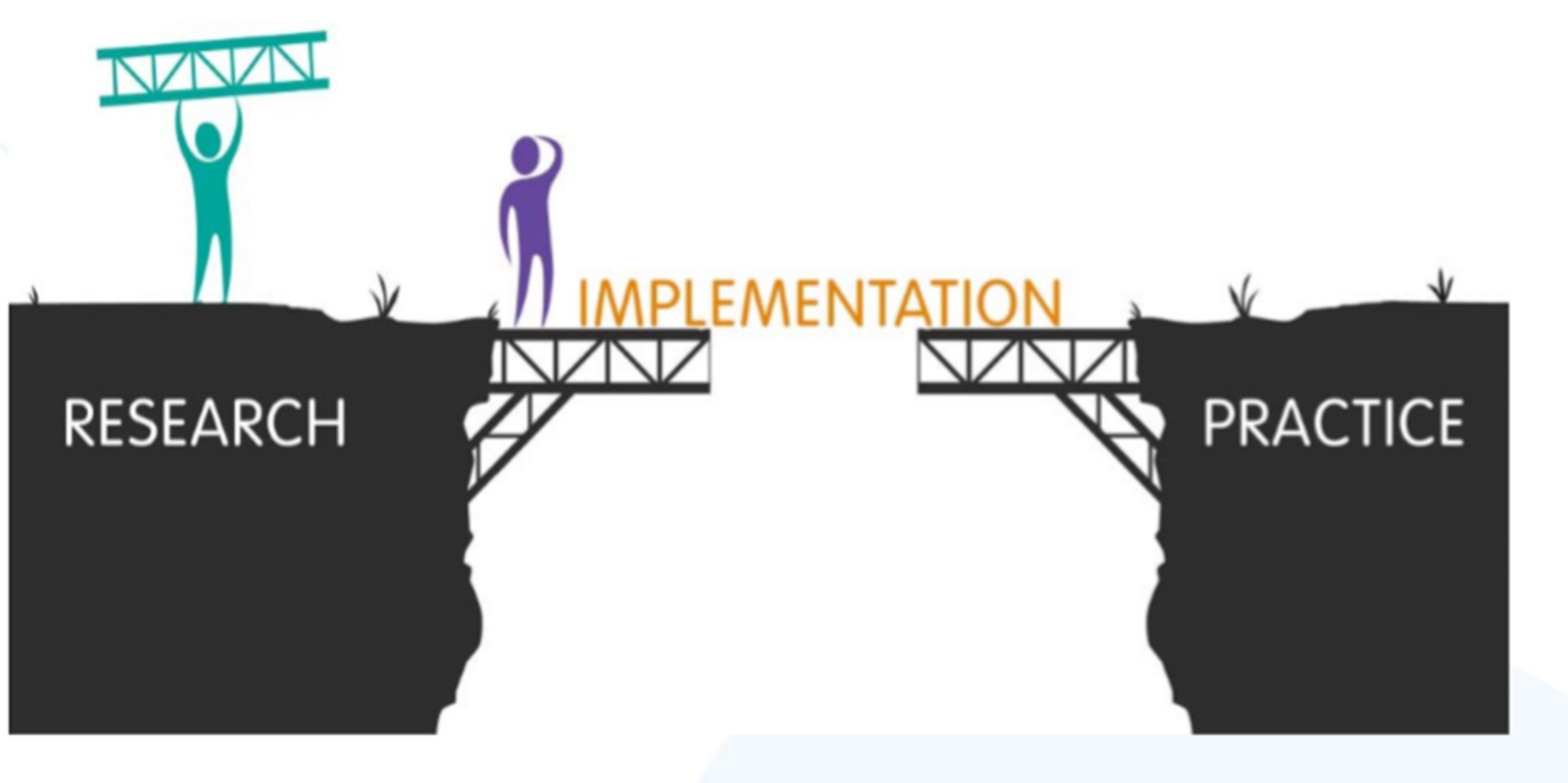
- ...the active process of integrating evidence-informed programs and practices in the real world
- ...focused on 'how' a program or practice will be adopted and embedded into a service

Why is implementation important?



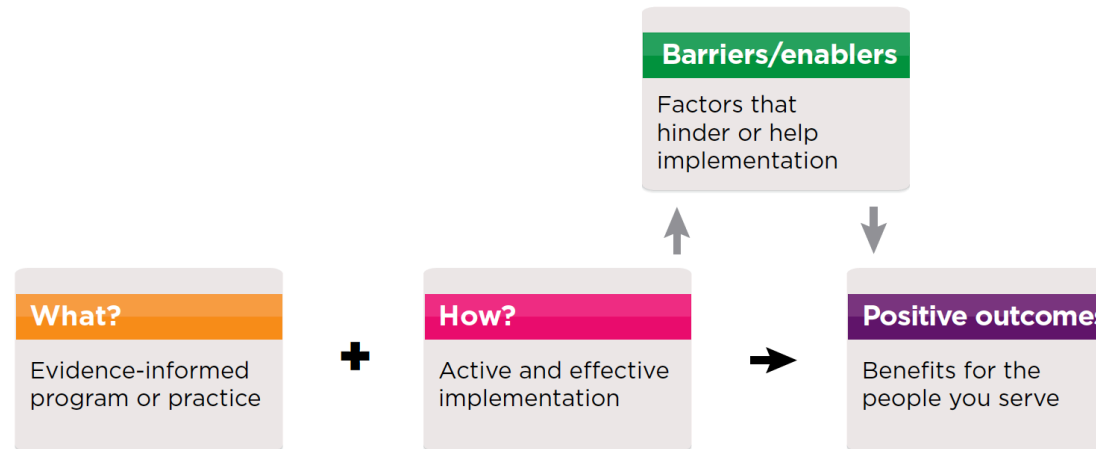
There is an evidence-practice gap

- Widespread sustained implementation has been difficult to achieve across human services
- A gap between what we know works and what's being done in practice
 - Unrealised potential
- Common pitfalls:
 - only focusing on the 'what' and ignoring the 'how'
 - failing to consider influencing factors (enablers and barriers) that impact ability to initiate and sustain new initiatives



Implementation matters for outcomes

- An effective program or practice is necessary for good child and family outcomes
 - but, not sufficient on their own
- Children and families cannot benefit from something they don't receive

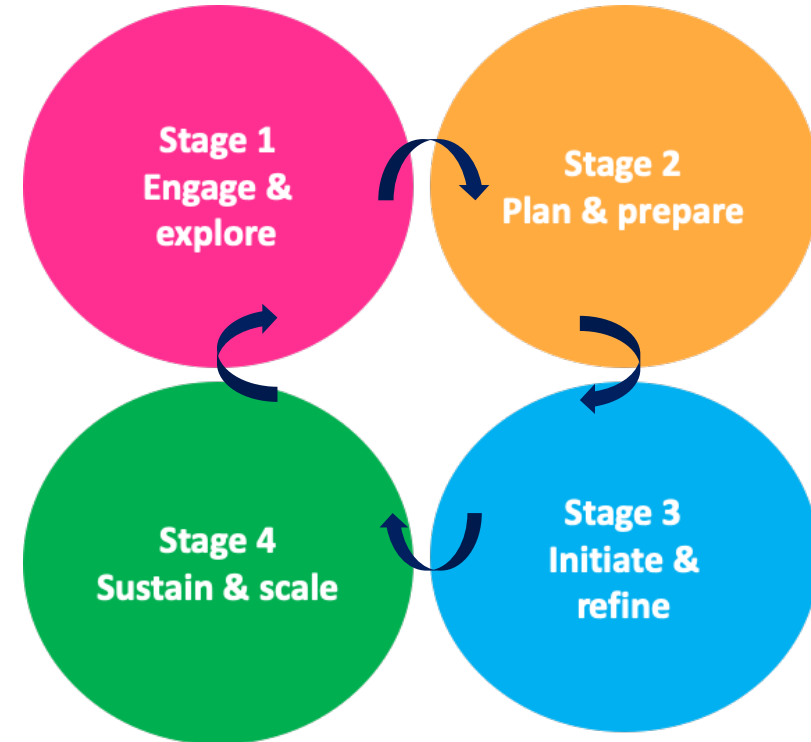


What are the key concepts of implementation?



Implementation stages

- Implementation happens in stages
- It is a process that unfolds, not a single event
- Different implementation activities are relevant in different stages
- 50% of implementation activity happens before you hit 'go'
- Process isn't always linear



Implementation enablers and barriers

- **Implementation enablers** increase the likelihood a program or practice will be successfully implemented
- **Implementation barriers** make the implementation process more challenging
- It's normal to experience barriers
- Your implementation will be successful if you can identify and overcome barriers early in the process
- You should continually monitor the enablers and barriers, as different influencing factors will emerge during different stages of implementation

Implementation strategies

- Techniques that improve the adoption, planning, initiation and sustainability of a program or practice (Powell et al., 2019)
- They are the 'how to' components of the implementation process and are used to overcome barriers.
- So how do you decide which implementation strategies to use?
 - Existing evidence
 - Prescribed by program developer/purveyor
 - Based on identified barriers

Implementation leadership

- Implementation leadership is the level of support leaders provide to implementation efforts.
- Leadership can come from:
 - people with formal organisational authority e.g. executive leaders, middle management and team leaders
 - champions with informal influence
- The benefits of having implementation leaders and champions are undisputed and should not be underestimated

Indicators of high-quality implementation

- To see how well your implementation process is going, you need to monitor your 'implementation outcomes'
- Implementation outcomes are the effects of using your implementation strategies
- They are indicators of the quality of implementation

A useful implementation framework

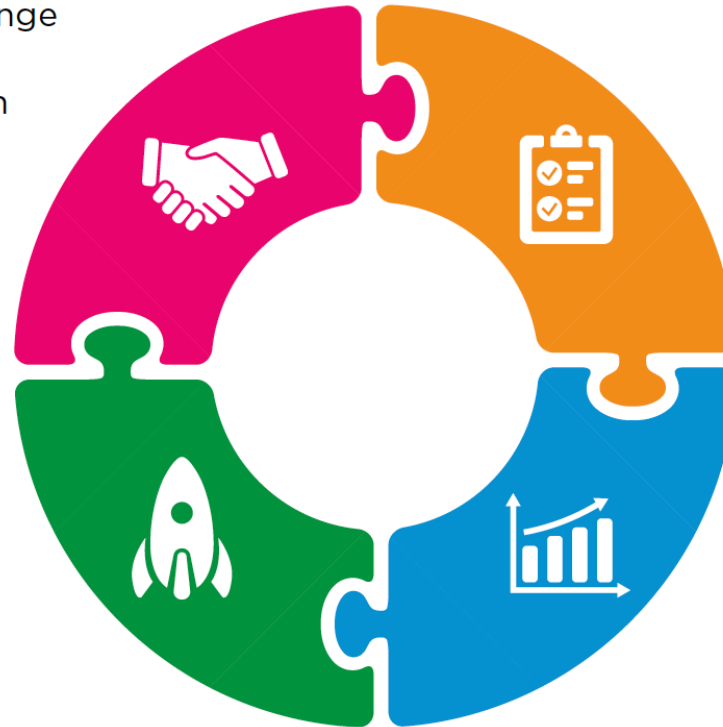


Stage 1: Engage and explore

- Define what needs to change and for whom
- Select and adopt program or practice
- Set up an implementation team
- Assess readiness; consider barriers and enablers

Stage 4: Sustain and scale

- Sustain the program or practice, embedding as 'business as usual'
- Scale-up the program or practice



Stage 2: Plan and prepare

- Choose implementation strategies
- Develop an implementation plan
- Decide how to monitor implementation quality
- Build readiness to use program or practice

Stage 3: Initiate and refine

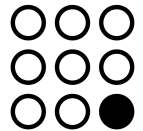
- Start using the program or practice
- Continuously monitor and improve

Stage 1: Engage & explore



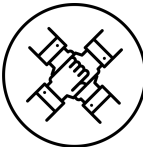
Define what needs to change and for whom

- Is there a need or gap in your service? Who is affected by this need or gap?
- Identify what these gaps are, then decide what outcomes you'd like from a new program or practice



Select and adopt a program or practice

- Look for existing evidence-informed programs and practices that could fill your gap
- Try using a menu or repository



Set up an implementation team

- A team of champions
- Responsible for driving the implementation



Consider likely enablers and barriers, assess readiness

- Identify early enablers and barriers (this process should be ongoing)
- Focus on the ways in which your organisation is ready and unready to implement

READINESS THINKING TOOL ®

$$R = MC^2$$

Readiness

Motivation
Program or practice-specific Capacity
General Capacity

Motivation	Degree to which we want the program or practice to happen	Challenge	Strength	Unsure
Relative advantage	This program or practice seems better than what we are currently doing.			
Compatibility	This program or practice fits with how we do things.			
Simplicity	This program or practice seems simple to use.			
Ability to pilot	Degree to which this program or practice can be tested and experimented with.			
Observability	Ability to see that this program or practice is leading to outcomes.			
Priority	Importance of this program or practice compared to other things we do.			
Program or practice-specific Capacity	What is needed to make this particular program or practice happen?			
Program or practice-specific knowledge & skills	Sufficient abilities to do the program or practice.			
Champion	A well-connected person who supports and models this program or practice.			
Supportive climate	Necessary supports, processes, and resources to enable this program or practice.			
Inter-organisational relationships	Relationships between organisations that support this program or practice.			
Intra-organisational relationships	Relationships within organisation that support this program or practice.			
General Capacity	Our overall functioning			
Culture	Norms and values of how we do things here.			
Climate	The feeling of being part of this organisation.			
Innovativeness	Openness to change in general.			
Resource utilisation	Ability to acquire and allocate resources including time, money, effort, and technology.			
Leadership	Effectiveness of our leaders.			
Internal operations	Effectiveness at communication and teamwork.			
Staff capacities	Having enough of the right people to get things done.			
Process capacities	Ability to plan, implement, and evaluate.			

Stage 2: Plan & prepare



Choose implementation strategies

- Decide which implementation strategies are best to drive the implementation process at each stage

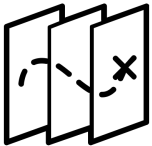
Implementation strategy	Explanation
Access new funding	Access new or existing money to help implement the program or practice.
Change physical structure and equipment	Adapt physical structures and/or equipment (e.g. changing the layout of a room or adding equipment) to best accommodate the program or practice.
Conduct local consensus discussions	Talk with stakeholders to determine if the chosen problem is important to them and whether they think the new program or practice is appropriate.
Conduct ongoing training	Plan for and conduct ongoing training in the program or practice.
Develop and use tools and processes to monitor implementation quality	Develop tools and processes to monitor implementation quality and use them to create your continuous quality improvement cycle.
Identify and prepare champions	Identify and prepare people who'll dedicate themselves to driving an implementation.
Inform local opinion leaders	Identify local opinion leaders or other influential people and inform them about the program or practice in the hope they will encourage others to adopt it.
Mandate change	Ask your leadership team to publicly declare that the new program or practice is a priority and they're determined to implement it.
Provide follow-on technical support	Provide practitioners with ongoing coaching or clinical supervision to help them apply new skills and knowledge in practice.
Promote adaptability	Identify how a program or practice can be tailored to meet local needs. Clarify which elements to maintain to preserve fidelity.
Use an implementation advisor	Seek guidance and support from an implementation expert.

Stage 2: Plan & prepare



Choose implementation strategies

- Decide which implementation strategies are best to drive the implementation process at each stage



Develop an implementation plan

- Develop an implementation plan that identifies how to put your implementation strategies into action
- Include what needs to be done; when and where it needs to happen; how it is to happen; and who is responsible



Decide how to monitor implementation quality

- Identify the best indicators of implementation quality
- Plan how you will measure and monitor these during the implementation process

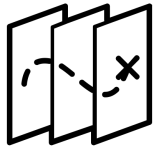
Implementation outcome	Definition	How to measure
Acceptability	The perception among stakeholders that a program or practice is agreeable, palatable or satisfactory	Qualitative interviews Quantitative survey tool such as the Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM)
Feasibility	The extent to which the program or practice can be successfully used or carried out within your setting	Qualitative interviews Quantitative survey tool such as the Feasibility of Intervention Measure (FIM)
Appropriateness	The perceived fit, relevance or compatibility of a program or practice	Qualitative interviews Quantitative survey tool such as the Intervention Appropriateness Measure (IAM)
Fidelity	The extent to which a program or practice is being delivered as intended	Self-report practice checklists for practitioners Client interviews or questionnaires
Reach	The degree to which a program or practice is integrated into an agency or service provider setting, including the degree it effectively reached the target population.	Administrative data

Stage 2: Plan & prepare



Choose implementation strategies

- Decide which implementation strategies are best to drive the implementation process at each stage



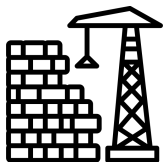
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Build readiness to implement

- Ensure your organisation will be ready to start using the program or practice.
- Use implementation strategies such as training, acquiring resources and adapting existing practices to make sure you're ready to 'hit go'

Stage 3: Initiate & refine



Start using the program or practice

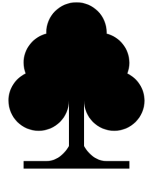
- The first practitioners start using the program or practice.



Continuously monitor and improve

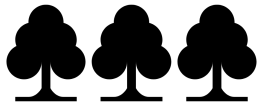
- Use continuous quality improvement cycles to monitor the quality of the implementation. Use this information to guide improvements or adaptations to your implementation.

Stage 4: Sustain & scale



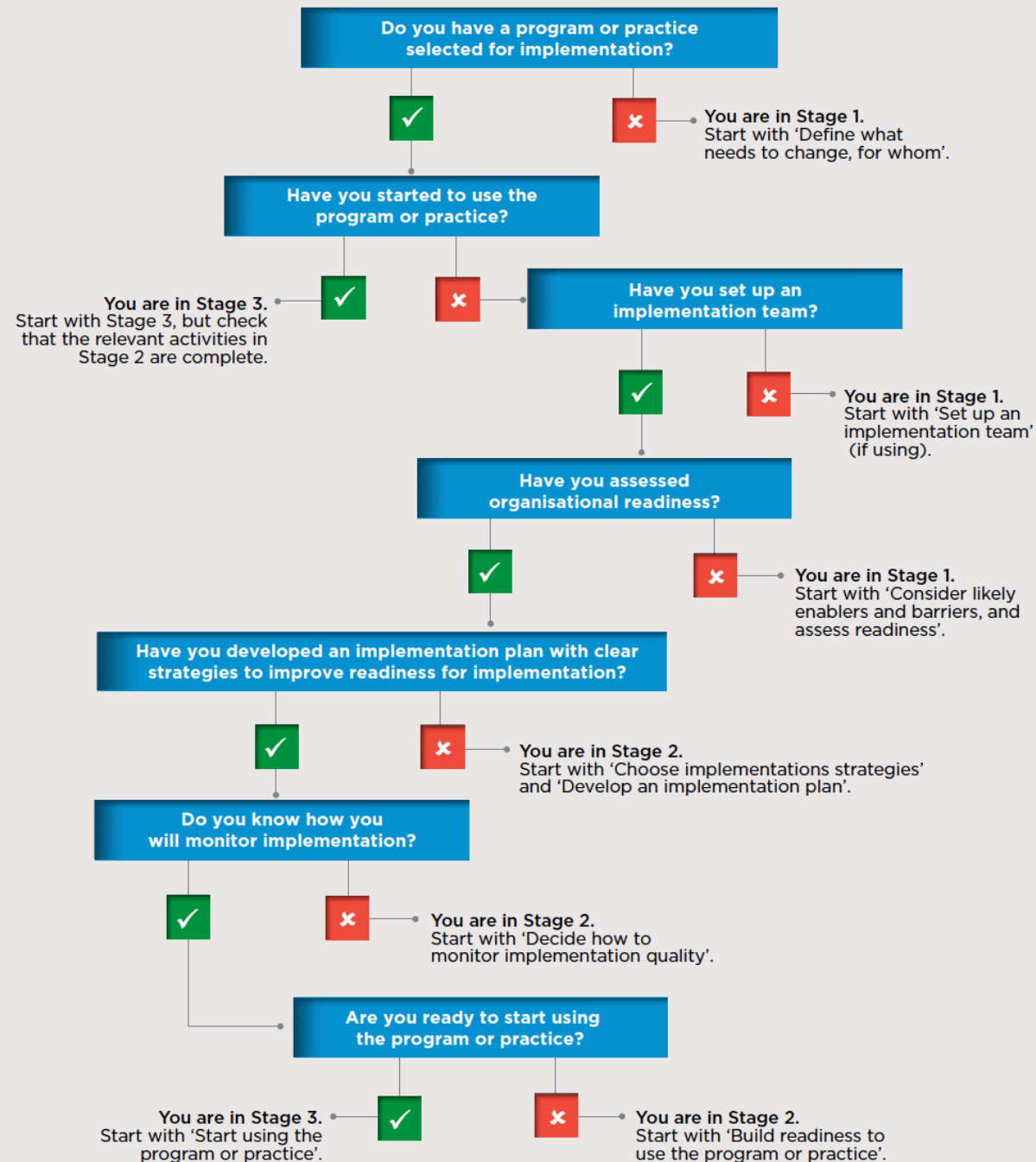
Sustain the program or practice, embedding as 'business as usual'

Improve and retain your staff's competency levels. Ensure your program or practice is embedded into 'business as usual'.



Scale-up the program or practice

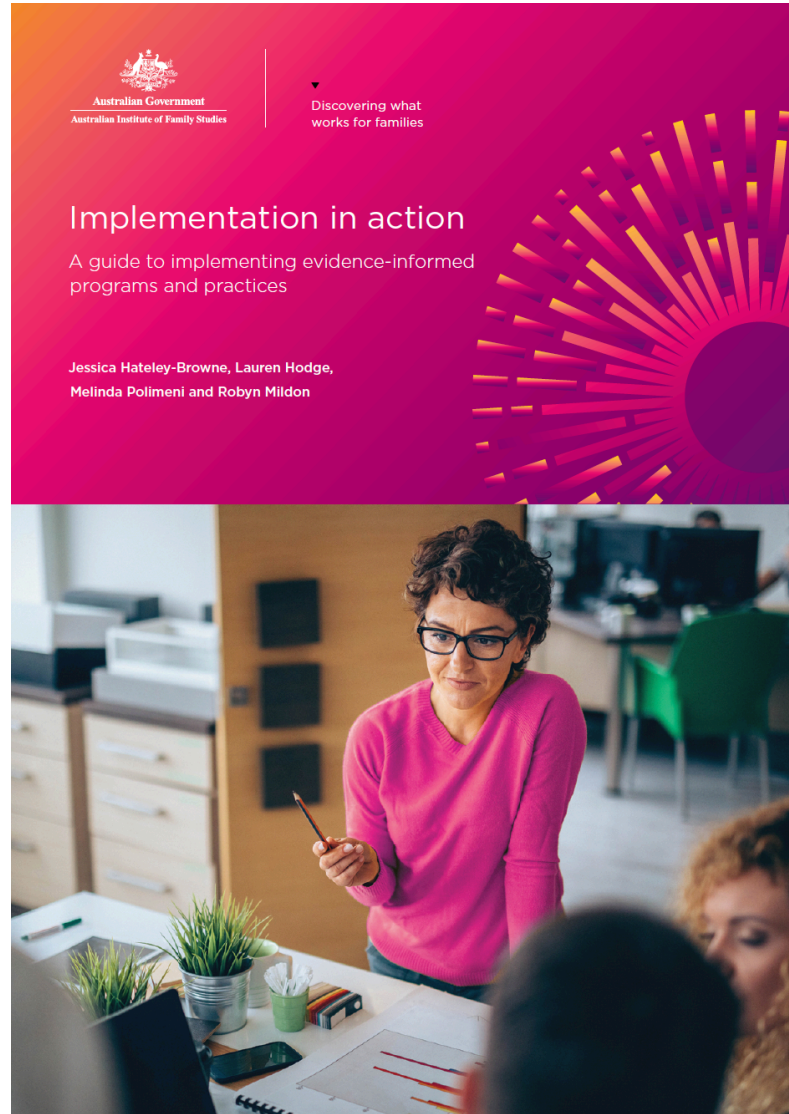
If the first implementation attempts are stable, introduce the program or practice to new teams, sites or contexts. This begins a new implementation process.



A note of encouragement

- Using good implementation practices can seem like a lot of work – and it's true!
- However, this investment pays dividends later → sustainable and effective service delivery
“pay now or pay later”
- Actively using this guide will help you turn knowledge of the concepts into practical skills.
- By using this approach step by step, you'll build your confidence and capacity to lead implementation efforts

For more implementation guidance



References and further reading

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For further information contact:

Assoc Prof Robyn Mildon

Executive Director

robyn.mildon@ceiglobal.org

www.ceiglobal.org

Dr Jessica Hateley-Browne

Senior Advisor

jessica.hateleybrowne@ceiglobal.org

www.ceiglobal.org



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