# Change and Implementation in Practice

Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

## Teaming

Having effective teams in place is critical to successfully creating and sustaining change in child welfare systems. Implementation science literature emphasizes the importance of **teaming**—the process of working together as a team, including understanding how teams are formed and how they function (see Children's Bureau, 2014; Maciolek, Arena, Fisher, & Helfgott, 2014; Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012; Permanency Innovations Initiative [PII], 2016a; Walsh, Reutz, & Williams, 2015). Teaming is vital to change and implementation: it promotes the leadership, expertise, and engagement needed to support change within an agency and ensures effective implementation of the selected intervention (PII, 2016a).

This brief can help child welfare agency leaders, managers, and stakeholders build teams to guide the change and implementation process. Much of the information here may also be useful to building teams for other purposes in child welfare organizations, such as continuous quality improvement (CQI). The brief begins with background and context for effective team building, then provides more detailed step-by-step information on the process of building teams and teaming structures.

### Change and Implementation in Practice Series

Child welfare agencies continually undertake efforts to implement new programs and practices to produce better outcomes for children, youth, and families. Effectively implementing new approaches and achieving sustainable change can be challenging. The Capacity Building Center for States (the Center) has developed the **Change and Implementation in Practice** series to help agencies apply a structured approach to implementation and overcome common challenges.

Briefs in this series provide user-friendly guidance on implementation concepts to strengthen the ability of child welfare systems to implement change. These "how to" guides explain key steps in the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative's (the Collaborative's) Change and Implementation Process, a synthesis of several implementation and CQI frameworks and tools (Collaborative, 2015). The Change and Implementation Process describes overlapping phases and steps that guide organizations from problem exploration through sustainable implementation. While the briefs align with the Collaborative's process, they can be used with similar implementation frameworks.

This brief addresses the process of forming one or more teams to guide the change process. Throughout the process, the core steering team plays a key role in directing change and implementation activities. Team membership may change as the process moves from problem identification to selecting and adapting or designing an intervention and then to implementation.

The information presented in this brief on teaming draws substantially from the Development, Implementation, and Assessment (DIA) Toolkit, a product of the Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (PII-TTAP) supported by the Children's Bureau. Related DIA resources and tutorials are available through CapLEARN at https://learn.childwelfare.gov/ (registration required).

For additional resources on change and implementation, visit the series website at https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation

# What Is an Implementation Team?

An **implementation team** is the team (or set of teams) representing diverse expertise and perspectives from across the organization and its stakeholder groups that performs the work of implementing change at an organization. This work includes (Maciolek et al., 2014):

- Developing, supporting, and overseeing the implementation plan (which may include developing a multifaceted, comprehensive work plan)
- Championing the change effort and securing the necessary resources
- Addressing implementation barriers and opportunities
- Using data to monitor progress and make informed decisions to ensure the change initiative's success

Teams can be formed at several points in a change and implementation process. While the core steering team needs to come together at the beginning to guide the work and make critical decisions regarding team members and teaming structures, "subteams" or workgroups may be formed as needed throughout the change and implementation process.

# Why Are Teams Important to the Change and Implementation Process?

Achieving effective, sustainable change at a child welfare agency is less likely without a team in place to lead and organize the process of implementation. Thus, creating an implementation team is a crucial early step in implementing a change (Meyers et al., 2015; PII, 2016a). Subteams or workgroups can be formed at different stages in the process to carry out specific activities.

Effectively using teams throughout the change and implementation process offers many benefits, including (Maciolek et al., 2014):

- Helping build an agency's internal capacity to manage change
- Ensuring effective communication with agency leadership and other important stakeholders
- Guiding the implementation process in a mindful and strategic way
- Planning for the sustainability of new practices, policies, and programs
- Modeling the principles and benefits of inclusion, collaboration, teamwork, and joint decision-making
- Fostering buy-in and shared ownership for agency decisions and direction
- Building credibility for the change initiative

## Teaming Key Terms

- **Team** – a group of people working together for a common purpose
- **Intervention** – any specific practice, service, policy, strategy, program, practice model, or combination of these that is clearly defined, operationalized, and distinguishable from one or more alternatives
- **Core steering team** – the decision-making body that leads the change and implementation process
- **Executive leadership committee** – a group made up of agency leadership and other high-level personnel that creates the core steering team and has the final decision-making authority in the change and implementation process
- **External partners committee** – a group that includes representatives from community organizations and institutions, partner agencies, service providers, and other key stakeholders that may serve as consultants on the implementation team or subteams and promotes the community's participation in and acceptance of the planned intervention
- **Team charter** – a formal document that describes the work and processes of the implementation team and any subteams, as well as how the work will be completed
- **Mission statement** – a short paragraph that articulates the core purpose of the initiative for which the implementation team and any subteams are being formed

## Who Should Be Part of an Implementation Team?

Before putting together an implementation team (or set of teams), agency leadership should determine the nature of the tasks necessary for implementation and what type of skills, knowledge, and input are needed to accomplish them. The most effective teams bring together a variety of agency personnel and stakeholders with different roles, talents, perspectives, and skill sets. If feasible, teams should also involve individuals with diverse perspectives, including those representing the diverse characteristics of the communities served by the agency to better understand the challenges being addressed and identify the best solution(s). For more information, see "Identify Prospective Team Members and Teaming Structures," below.

**Exhibit 1. Implementation Team Composition**


## What Makes an Implementation Team Effective?

Effective implementation teams share some common characteristics (PII, 2016b). The following table organizes these characteristics according to five dimensions of organizational capacity. (For more on organizational capacity, see "Considerations on Organizational Capacity," below.)

**Table 1: Characteristics of Effective Implementation Teams**

| Dimension of Organizational Capacity | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| **Resources**<br>(concrete materials and assets) | • Having the right number of team members to carry out the work while keeping the team as small as possible to facilitate effective communication |
| **Infrastructure**<br>(organizational structure, policies, and protocols) | • Having an organized communication plan, a clear decision-making process, and an agreed-upon working approach |
| **Culture and climate**<br>(shared beliefs, values, and attitudes) | • Being committed to the intervention being implemented, having a common purpose, and following a well-defined set of common objectives<br>• Building relationships based on trust and sharing leadership roles among the team members, as needed |
| **Knowledge and skills**<br>(staff expertise and competencies) | • Selecting the right individuals with the skills and time to lead and carry out the work of the team |
| **Engagement and partnerships**<br>(interorganizational and intraorganizational relationships and connections) | • Creating buy-in and enthusiasm for the intervention being implemented within the community being served<br>• Seeking input from community members and other partners regarding the choice of intervention and the implementation process |

An especially important aspect of teaming is role and scope clarity. Effective teams have clarity regarding decision-making processes, both inside the team and within the agency. If it is not clear who on the team has final authority regarding important decisions, the work of the team may be delayed. In addition, if it is not clear whether the team can make decisions, the work of the team may be derailed altogether. Team leaders should clarify these issues and hold regular meetings with agency leaders to update them on the progress of the initiative, build buy-in, and clarify the breadth of the team's decision-making scope (Maciolek et al., 2014; Meyers et al., 2012).

## The Evolution of Teams in the Change and Implementation Process

Team membership may vary depending on the needs of a particular initiative. Teams might be created and then disbanded when their tasks have been completed, or they might be recombined to organize the work of a different stage of the change and implementation process. However, despite the potential fluidity of team membership or activity, the processes associated with creating and working as an implementation team remain essentially the same (PII, 2016b).

As the work of the team progresses, the structure of the team or the roles of the team members may evolve. Though there usually is a single core steering team that oversees the day-to-day work of implementation, there also may be separate subteams or workgroups. These are led by members of the core steering team in their areas of expertise. Membership might be composed of staff from across various levels of the system and focus on specific functions or aspects of implementation—for example project management, training, coaching, or evaluation (Maciolek et al., 2014; Metz, Naoom, Halle, & Bartley, 2015; PII, 2016a).

Some fluidity in the makeup of a team is expected, though it is important to distinguish between appropriate team evolution in response to changes in function and unintended team drift due to lack of role or scope clarity or lack of time to contribute to the team, for example. To minimize unintended team drift, questions related to role clarity and time availability should be addressed at the point of identifying and selecting team members. For maximum effectiveness, it is important that a core group of team members remain committed to maintaining their involvement in the process until it is completed (Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012; Maciolek et al., 2014).

# How to Build Teams to Support Implementation

The following essential functions (tasks) set teams up for success and can ensure that they function effectively throughout the change process (exhibit 2). The process of team formation may need to be revisited more than once as the change and implementation process unfolds; for example, the composition and goals of a team may evolve, or additional teams may be formed. The process described in exhibit 2 applies to the formation of the core steering team, as well as the subteams.

**Exhibit 2. Essential Functions in Building Teams to Support the Change Process**

| Identify Team Purpose | Identify Team Members and Teaming Structure | Develop Team Charter | Develop Team Communication Plan and External Communication Strategy | Guide the Change Process | Analyze Results and Repeat as Necessary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agency leadership identifies a need for an implementation team to lead a change and implementation process. | A varied set of team members is identified and a teaming structure is created to meet initial needs. (The teaming structure will necessarily evolve as the change process progresses.) | A team charter is developed that clarifies the team's purpose and scope, roles and responsibilites, and communication processes. | A two-way communication plan is developed that clearly states the processes by which teams communicate, and how often. An external communication strategy is developed to communicate with external stakeholders. | The team works together, forming subteams as necessary to accomplish the objectives of the change process. | The team evaluates outcomes, repeating the team-building process as necessary to move the process of change and implementation forward. |

## 1. Identify the Team's Purpose

The starting point for building an effective team is identifying the team's purpose: Why is the team necessary right now? Typically, teams are formed in response to the initial identification of a problem and/or the agency's decision to address the problem through improvement planning. Clarifying team purpose requires the development of mission goals and objectives if they have not already been established. This is a crucial and necessary first step (PII, 2016c).

A **team mission statement** is a short paragraph—a few sentences at most—that describes the team's primary purpose. It answers the question, "What is the need that the formation of the team is addressing?" Having a clear statement will help align all team members and stakeholders regarding the nature of the need and the reason behind the formation of the team from the beginning (PII, 2016c).

### Questions to Consider

- What is/are the problem(s) the team will be addressing?
- What is the goal or outcome the team(s) needs to achieve?
- How will the team(s) be aligned within the agency's organizational structure?
- Will single or multiple teams be necessary at the initial stage of the process?

The mission statement should clarify leadership's expectations on team goals and outcomes and the team's position within the agency's organizational structure (PII, 2016c).

## 2. Identify Prospective Team Members and Create a Teaming Structure

Before forming a team, it is important to think broadly about the roles of various team members, as this will help identify the correct team members for various roles and will clarify expectations (PII, 2016c).

Exhibit 3 illustrates three key roles of implementation team members and provides examples of each role. Each team and subteam should include representatives from all three role groups for maximum effectiveness. Thinking of team members in terms of their roles also encourages collaboration and flexibility between subteams, since certain individuals can serve in a particular role on multiple subteams simultaneously.

Team size also is an important consideration when forming a team, since both large and small teams have advantages. The team should be large enough to include a variety of skill sets and perspectives but should remain small enough to engage in productive and meaningful discussions and collaborate to do the work required (Maciolek et al., 2014). There is no "right" number of team members, since the size of the team will depend on the needed expertise and roles, number of stakeholders, and scope of the implementation effort. The core steering team typically will have approximately five to seven members who have appropriate decision-making authority and oversight of the major functions of the subteams (PII, 2016a).

### Questions to Consider

- What roles and expertise are required?
- What role will each team member play?
- How will roles and responsibilities be defined and documented?
- Who has the right skills, experience, and time availability?
- Who is empowered to make decisions and influence others?
- Who are the stakeholders that need to be represented on the team(s)?
- What kind of team structure is necessary to get the change and implementation process started?

**Exhibit 3. The "3 Cs" of Implementation Team Roles**

| Collaborators: | Cooperators: | Coordinators: |
|---|---|---|
| These team members are indispensable to the process and have decision-making authority related to the work of change and implementation (e.g., core steering team leads, subteam leads). | These team members provide input as stakeholders but may not have a final say in work or decisions (e.g., subteam participants, community members, core steering team members in a consultant role such as the general counsel). | These team members ensure that the work and events do not duplicate or overlap with each other or similar efforts and provide organizational support. They also are crucial in facilitating communication linkages (e.g., the project manager, subteam leads, system partners). |

## Identifying Staff Team Members

Large-scale organizational change requires input from individuals from across all levels of an organization and in a variety of positions. This promotes staff engagement and buy-in, allows the team to benefit from their knowledge and expertise, and increases the likelihood of implementation fidelity. Participation of individuals outside the agency (e.g., families, partners and service providers, court and legal representatives, etc.), perhaps as consultants or advisors to the change process, also is important for community responsiveness and to facilitate community buy-in for the intervention.

Having team members with varied knowledge and skills encourages the team to consider multiple ideas and approaches, examine the implications of these ideas and approaches from various perspectives, and anticipate a range of outcomes or impacts. Team members with experience in formal quality assurance and CQI processes, federal monitoring reviews and national accreditation processes (e.g., Child and Family Services Review [CFSR]), and strategic, programmatic, and fiscal planning (e.g., Child and Family Services Plans) may be especially helpful in facilitating the change and implementation process. Including team members with these skills on the core steering team and subteams as appropriate is important.

When identifying potential team members, it is essential to consider availability and capacity to take on the tasks of serving on the team. Most implementation team members keep their regular positions within the agency while serving on the team and are expected to continue their regular organizational activities after the change is implemented (Maciolek et al., 2014).

## Identifying Community Team Members

Whenever possible, individuals and leaders from the communities served by the agency should be invited to join the team or one of the subteams as needed. Team members who understand community strengths and challenges and who have shared history, culture, or lived experience with child welfare involved families can be incredible assets to the team and promote stronger community-agency relations. At times their involvement may be in a consulting or temporary capacity (e.g., to help in problem identification or plan for implementation). Community team members can help ensure that the team has a fuller picture of the problem(s) being addressed and can facilitate the selection of culturally responsive interventions.

Team leaders should consider the approaches that would be most useful for engaging these team members, preparing them to participate, and enabling them to derive the most benefit from their involvement. For example, agencies may conduct community outreach to identify team members with a variety of perspectives, make resources available to support their full participation in team processes (e.g., language interpreters), and provide coaching to support dialogue around potentially challenging topics.

### Team Capacities

Ideally, teams need members with experience and capacities in the following areas to have the best chance of successfully implementing an intervention (PII, 2016a, p. 4, 6):

- Expertise in problem identification, including problem exploration, theory of change development, and the ability to research and identify possible interventions
- Knowledge of data collection and analysis (e.g., data or CQI leads, university partners, researchers), who should be brought on early in the change and implementation process
- Experience with implementation practices to collect, monitor, assess, and use data to maintain fidelity and continue to adjust as needed to improve outcomes
- Knowledge of or experience with creating and managing organizational and systems change
- Influence, credible relationships, and communications with organization and system stakeholders
- Knowledge or expertise with the intervention being implemented
- Decision-making authority within the organization or system to ensure continued alignment of the organization and system to sustain the intervention

#### Possible Implementation Team Members

The agency should consider including individuals from the following stakeholder groups on the implementation team:

- Internal partners (e.g., mid-level managers, supervisors, caseworkers, CFSR staff, CQI staff, researchers, evaluators, staff with communication experience, Human Resources staff)
- Representatives from various levels and jurisdictions of the child welfare system (e.g., state, county, and private agency)
- Representatives from tribes, courts, and related state agencies
- External and community partners (e.g., mental health/substance abuse/juvenile justice/developmental disabilities services, domestic violence coalitions, school systems, and representatives from racial, ethnic, and/or cultural community groups)
- Formal and informal community leaders and/or representatives
- Family members (e.g., resource parents, families of origin, kinship caregivers, and youth)
- University partners
- Agency leadership

### Team Leadership

The core steering team provides overall leadership for the team by:

- Creating subteams as necessary and ensuring communication among them
- Ensuring that the solution is defined, operationalized, and implemented
- Establishing implementation supports
- Confirming measures for monitoring and evaluating the initiative
- Planning for sustaining the change

A critical member of every implementation team is the team leader, who heads the core steering team and serves as a liaison between agency leadership, external stakeholders, and the core steering team. The team leader needs certain skills and abilities (shown in exhibit 4) to be able to lead his or her team effectively (PII, 2016a, p. 6).

In addition, having a project manager to track progress and complete administrative tasks (e.g., scheduling meetings, providing meeting agendas, sending meeting notes, creating project schedules, etc.) contributes to the success of the change and implementation process. If the team does not have a separate project manager, the team leader or another designated team member may take on this role.

**Exhibit 4: Qualities of a Successful Implementation Team Leader**

- Understands the stages of implementation and the leadership actions necessary to support the work of each stage of implementation
- Communicates with internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis about the initiative's milestones and successes to build and maintain relationships
- Promotes team functioning by establishing role clarity, facilitating work that requires interdependency among team members, and encouraging the stability of team membership
- Provides transparency regarding the implementation team's decisions and the decision-making process
- Focuses on team member learning, which is critical to sustaining implementation efforts
- Conducts productive meetings
- Manages timelines to ensure that the project is meeting identified outcomes and timeframes
- Resolves conflict effectively

Source: PII, 2016a.

## Teaming Structure

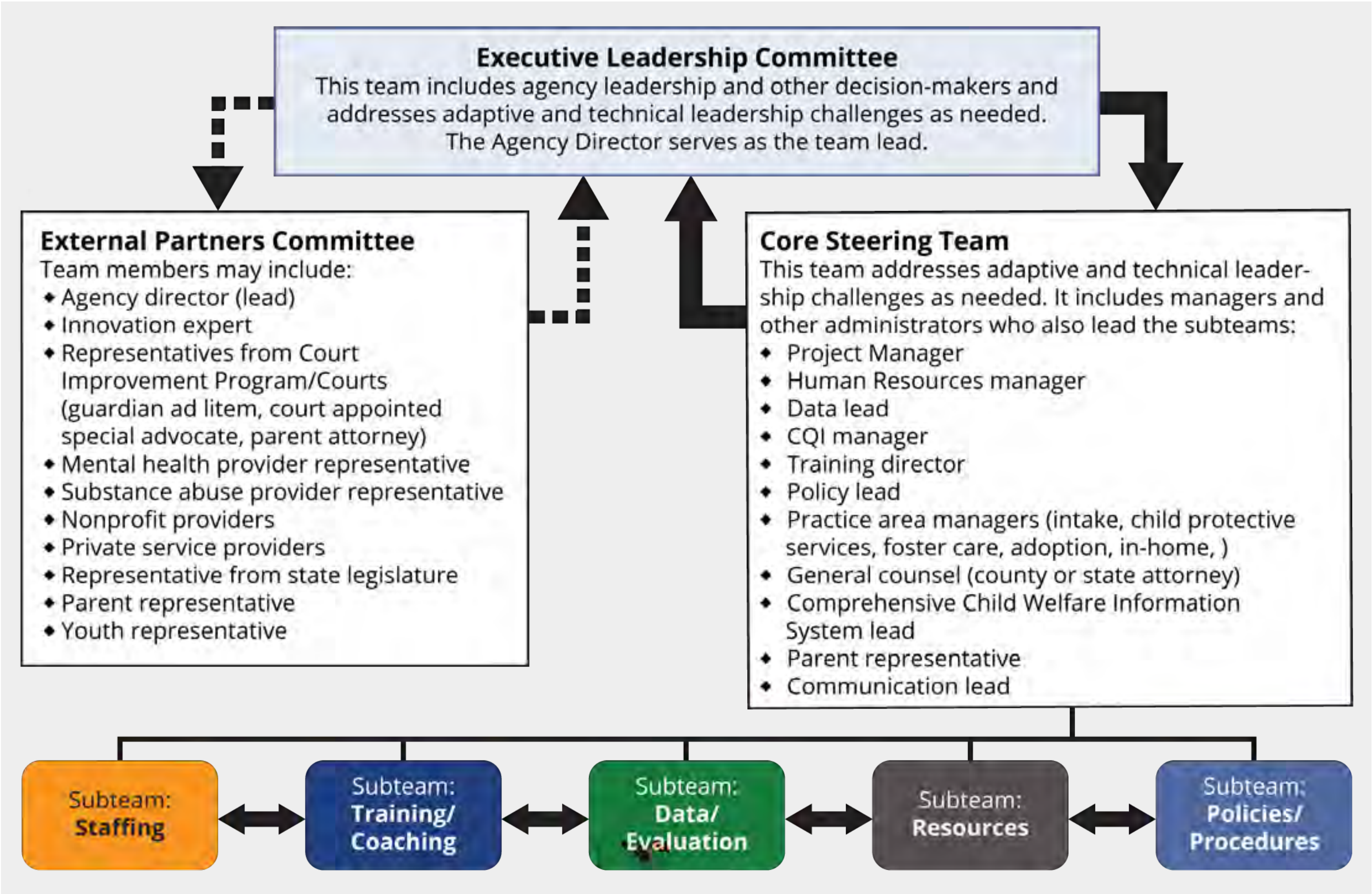
When multiple teams are needed to facilitate the change and implementation process, a clear teaming structure should be created by the core steering team (see exhibit 5). It is important to note that there is no single "correct" way to create a teaming structure. In fact, the most effective teaming processes and structures leverage an agency's culture and build from its existing structures and processes to facilitate the process of change and implementation.

The following activities are one example of how an agency might build a teaming structure.

- Executive leadership committee forms a core steering team to plan and guide the process.
- Executive leadership committee invites stakeholders to join the external partners committee to provide input on the planned intervention and advocate for the change within the community.
- Core steering team leader identifies additional team members, as needed, to lead the subteams and invites them to join the core steering team.
- Core steering team leader holds one or two initial meetings to ensure all team members are on the same page regarding (Maciolek et al., 2014): (1) purpose and expectations; (2) goals of the change initiative and its relevance to the agency's mission; (3) frameworks, strategies, and tools to be used by the team; and (4) the problem or need to be addressed (if known).
- Core steering team develops the team charter and communication plan to clarify the teaming structure and processes for the team's work.
- Core steering team identifies (1) the subteams that are necessary for the initial work of the team; (2) the core steering team members who will lead the subteams; and (3) additional team members as needed to participate in the work of each subteam. Each subteam is led by a member of the core steering team.

Once assembled, each subteam should work through the teaming steps shown in exhibit 2. Concurrently, the external partners committee can begin meeting to discuss how best to advocate for the intervention and partner with the community to support the changes being made. It is essential for all subteams to hold initial meetings to ensure understanding among team members about the change and implementation process so that all team members develop a common vision for the work to be done. Without a common vision and alignment, the team will have difficulty down the line functioning effectively as a team or working toward a common set of goals (Maciolek et al., 2014).

**Exhibit 5: Sample Teaming Structure**




## 3. Develop the Team Charter

The **team charter** is a formal document created by the core steering team early in the change and implementation process that provides the foundation for the implementation team's work. It can also be useful for orienting new team members as part of a larger onboarding process or when subteams are formed.

Each subteam will need its own charter. The subteam charter should be informed by the core language of the larger team charter while focusing on the specific goals of the subteam.

A team charter serves the purpose of (PII, 2016b):

- Focusing the team
- Documenting the team's purpose
- Defining the scope and timeframe of the initiative
- Clarifying members' roles, authority, and responsibilities
- Defining operating rules
- Establishing communication methods and reporting structures
- Facilitating stakeholder buy-in by including key members in the decision-making process and obtaining their agreement throughout the process

### Questions to Consider

- How will the team make decisions?
- What norms or values has the team decided to follow throughout the project?
- How will the team's composition be assessed in the future to ensure that it contains the necessary skills/partners? How often will this occur?
- How will team expectations be documented?
- Do all team members understand the need and outcomes sought?

Team charters are not static documents. Rather, they should be reviewed and revised periodically to reflect the realties and evolution of both the change process and the team itself (Maciolek et al., 2014). The elements of a team charter are described below.

### Elements of a Team Charter

An implementation team or subteam charter should include the following elements:

- Mission of the initiative
- Goals and objectives for the work of team
- Scope, boundaries, and timeframe for completing the work
- Expected deliverables
- Decision-making authority
- Decision-making policy
- The role of agency leadership relative both to the team and to the agency as a whole
- Brief description of communication strategies and frequency, both within the team and among other related teams
- Roles and responsibilities
- Determination of how conflict will be managed

The DIA Toolkit Team Charter Tool, which can be found at https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Team_Charter_Tool.pdf, can help you plan and create a team charter.

Adapted from PII, 2016b.

To facilitate team engagement, the team charter should also include proactive strategies to maintain attendance and productivity despite the other obligations of team members, such as:

- Offering the possibility for virtual participation where possible
- Stating explicitly that individual team members are responsible for reviewing the minutes and any materials from meetings they couldn't attend and offering feedback
- Soliciting feedback regularly from team members
- Setting clear deadlines
- Scheduling meetings as far in advance as possible

## 4. Develop a Team Communication Plan and External Communication Strategy

Developing comprehensive communication plans and strategies is critical for any successful team. To be effective, team members need to have regular opportunities to share their ideas, thoughts, and opinions and weigh in on vital decisions. An open communication plan helps build trust among team members, without which the work of change and implementation would be much more difficult, if not impossible (Maciolek et al., 2014). For these reasons, the formation of a communication subteam or committee is a crucial part of an effective implementation team.

### Team Communication Plan

Implementation teams should develop a team communication plan that:

- Ensures the flow of information to leadership, among the subteams, and across the agency, as appropriate
- Clarifies internal and external communication protocols and identifies the person responsible for maintaining them
- Provides relevant information to all stakeholders (external and internal) so they have an opportunity to offer feedback, a critical step to the success of the team and its work

### Questions to Consider

- How will the team communicate?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that all necessary information is sent at the right times to the right people?
- What stakeholders need to be included? When do they need to be included?
- How frequently will information be provided to the team? To the external stakeholders?
- How will feedback be gathered for bidirectional communication?
- How will the team be positioned within the agency's decision-making structure to facilitate communication and decisions?

- Uses several communication mechanisms, including meetings (in person and virtual), presentations, emails, and written documents (e.g., memos)

Regular communication among team members may be conducted informally at regular in-person or virtual meetings or by email. To facilitate regular information sharing, each subteam should be led by a member of the core steering team to ensure communication with both leadership and among the subteams (see exhibit 5 for a sample team structure). This helps ensure that all implementation team members have access to the most current information regarding the work of the subteams, any policy changes, or other relevant information.

Communication among teams working on the project can be both formal and informal, depending on the type of information being shared (e.g., task completion or day-to-day work vs. project milestone updates, guidelines, or policy changes).

### External Communication Strategy

An external communication strategy should be created as part of the team communication plan to communicate with external stakeholders who do not participate in the daily work of the team, such as members of the external partners committee. These external stakeholders may serve in a consulting capacity and can act as crucial advocates of a change initiative within the larger child and family services system and the community. At the start of the change and implementation process, the communication subteam or committee can set up an external communication strategy that clearly lays out (PII, 2016a):

- The roles that external stakeholders will play during the change and implementation process
- What information will be shared (e.g., progress of the initiative, milestones achieved, etc.)
- The frequency of the communications

Communication with external stakeholders usually is more formal and may consist of presentations, written reports, memos, and in-person meetings.

### The Five W's of an Effective Team Communication Plan and External Communication Strategy

These five W's will help you clarify the important points of a team communication plan and external communication strategy.

**WHO?**

- With which other teams and stakeholders will the team need to communicate?
- Who on the team has the primary responsibility to ensure clear and effective communication with those outside the team?
- Who on the team has the primary responsibility to ensure clear and effective communication among team members?
- Who on the team will have the responsibility to collect the necessary information to be shared with the team?

**WHAT?**

- What information needs to be shared, and with whom?
- What information feedback loops already exist that the team can use? What feedback loops need to be created?
- What resources will the team need to stay informed (e.g., electronic shared workspace, email systems, etc.)?

**WHERE?**

- Where can team participants obtain the information they need for their work?

**WHEN?**

- How often should information (such as team progress reports, etc.) be shared, and with whom?

**WHY?**

- Why should information be shared with those external to the team? What are the criteria for deciding which information should NOT be shared externally?
- Why has a particular method of communication been chosen to communicate with a particular group?

The DIA Toolkit Teaming Structure Assessment Tool, which can be found at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol1_teaming.pdf can help you plan and evaluate a team communication strategy.

Adapted from PII, 2016d.

## 5. Work Together to Guide the Implementation Process

After the core steering team has developed a team charter and communication plan, it can begin on the work of the initiative as specified in the charter. The first step often is the creation of a detailed, comprehensive, and multifaceted work plan based on the team charter that organizes the work necessary to complete the change and implementation process.

Although team needs and structures may vary, some key functions it may perform during the change and implementation process include:

- Assessing readiness and ensuring the necessary organizational capacities are in place to successfully plan, implement, and sustain an intervention
- Working to better understand the problems or challenges the agency faces and how to use data to "dig deeper" into the root causes
- Developing a theory of change to determine the most effective ways to get from the root cause(s) of the problem to the desired outcomes
- Researching, selecting, and adapting or designing interventions that meet an agency's needs
- Planning and laying a foundation for successful and sustainable implementation and evaluation
- Piloting or staging the intervention so the agency can learn and adjust as needed before implementing on a larger scale
- Collecting and using data to monitor progress, inform improvements, evaluate outcomes, and expand or modify programs

### Questions to Consider

- What is the team working to change?
- What does the team need to do to get to the change being sought?
- What essential functions need to be performed?
- Who will accomplish them?
- What resources are necessary to perform each essential function and achieve the identified deliverables/outcome?
- When are the deliverables/outcomes expected?
- Is the appropriate leadership team involved to make important decisions?
- Is there a method in place for reviewing the appropriate data?

All teams and subteams that are part of the change and implementation process should be actively and consistently involved in the work of implementing a change. As one source notes, teams "are not advisory groups or committees that provide periodic input" (PII, 2016a, p. 5).

The success of the team's work depends significantly on the degree to which the team leader, and the organizational culture more generally, encourages a climate of constructive and open collaboration. This does not happen automatically—in fact, team leaders should "anticipate that new ways of working will create discomfort and resistance" (Maciolek et al., 2014, p. 4). The team leader should move quickly to address any culture and climate, organizational, or other barriers to change and should ensure that appropriate infrastructure and resources are in place for the team to do its work. The team leader should also ensure that enough time is allotted for group work and discussion.

As the work of the team evolves, it may be necessary to split up the tasks and assign them to additional subteams as determined by the core steering team. Exhibit 5 above illustrates one possible implementation team structure, though there are many possible variations.

## 6. Debrief, Evaluate, and Identify Next Steps

It is important to note that teams can be formed or changed at several phases of the change implementation process. The essential functions (tasks) involved in creating a team can—and should—be repeated as many times as necessary with any new team established during the process.

When the work of any of the teams is completed, that team should meet to debrief. Team members should assess whether the team's work has been completed and whether the deliverables or outcomes have been achieved, as well as evaluate the process of working together and identify next steps in the process.

### Questions to Consider

- Has the work of the implementation team been completed?
- Have the deliverables/outcomes been met?
- Are the deliverables/outcomes meeting expectations?
- Does the team need to regroup to complete or sustain the implementation of the intervention or change?
- Does team composition need to change for this process?

### Possible Closing Steps for Implementation Teams

- Assess whether the team has any additional work related to sustaining the intervention that has been implemented.
- If there is additional work, evaluate whether the current team members have the capacity and necessary skills for that part of the project, or whether new team members must be identified. If new members are needed, go back to essential function 2 and work your way through the process once more.
- Discuss how the organization will ensure that the intervention continues to be used with fidelity, what resources, policies, and procedures are necessary for this to occur, and how this will be evaluated (types of data, etc.).

Adapted from PII, 2016a.

## Considerations on Organizational Capacity

Throughout each phase in the change and implementation process, it is useful to keep in mind **five dimensions of organizational capacity:** resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership. (For more information visit https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/organizational-capacity-guide/.)

Some organizational capacity considerations for building an implementation team include:

- **Resources:** Does the agency have sufficient resources in place to create and sustain an implementation team and its work (e.g., meeting facilities, adequate staffing time, technology, and informational resources)?
- **Infrastructure:** Do organizational policies, protocols, and processes support the work of implementation team building and the change and implementation process?
- **Culture and climate:** Does the agency's culture support openness to change and useful innovation? Does the agency's leadership support the change initiative?
- **Knowledge and skills:** Does the agency have staff with the range of skills necessary for the work of implementation?
- **Engagement and partnerships:** Who are the community partners and stakeholders who should be involved in the work of change and implementation?

### Getting Help

Determining how to form different teams throughout change and implementation can be complex. Teams may need specialized knowledge and skills to perform different tasks. In addition, coordinated communication channels are needed within and across teams and across the agency or system.  There are options for setting your change process up for success, including establishing an effective teaming structure:

- Reach out within your agency to build on successes for forming teams, for example in the CQI system.
- Explore opportunities for assistance from the Center for States (find contact information here: https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/map/).

## Conclusion

Effective teaming is crucial to the success of each step of an agency change initiative—from problem exploration, through planning and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, to planning for intervention sustainability. Taking the time to create a strong and diverse implementation team, develop a team charter that everyone has agreed upon, and establish a comprehensive bidirectional communication plan will provide an excellent foundation for the overall work of the change and implementation process.

### Key Milestones for Moving Forward in the Change and Implementation Process:

- Core steering team, external partners committee, and subteams have been established to guide the change and implementation process.
- Team purpose and roles have been determined and decision-making protocols established.
- A team charter and team communication plan have been created.

# Related Resources and Tools

### Tools and Facilitation Resources

- DIA Toolkit, Team Charter Tool.
  Available at https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Team_Charter_Tool.pdf
- DIA Toolkit, Teaming Structure Assessment Tool.
  Available at https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/node/add/worksheet-0
- DIA Toolkit, Teaming and Communication Linkages. Available through CapLEARN; registration required.

Access other **Change and Implementation in Practice** briefs and related resources at:
https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation

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