UCEDD Resource Center

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UCEDD Leadership: Pay it Forward

2014 TA Institute – Facilitated Session Notes
Friday, March 21, 2014: 9:45 – 11:00AM

Scaling Up Evidence-Based Models: Systems Change

- W. Oscar Fleming, Investigator, National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Discussion 1

After a brief presentation by Oscar and introductions by each in the room, Oscar asked our group to break into pairs and discuss the following questions. In part, this discussion was an exercise in making sure we are all using the same language and have the same understanding of the terms:

- What does it mean to 'scale up' or to bring something to scale?
- What infrastructure is needed to scale up?
- What do we mean when we say 'scale'? How big or small are we thinking?

Report out

The groups that reported out provided the following examples of scaling up:

- On-line curriculum throughout system
- Autism support projects within public schools
- Obesity prevention projects from hospitals to other community organizations
- Implementation science from one portion of a center through all portions – overcoming the issue of silos within a center.

Q: A participant introduced the question of fidelity and how to define success. Oscar discussed a model that requires that you look first at your essential functions and use those key elements to help you to define success and to create benchmarks for progress. Through this process, you define what really matters in your program.

We also discussed the importance of considering how you are going to approach obstacles to true fidelity – how to help people and programs to adapt to this systems change.

NIRN Quote: "Full implementation of usable evidence-based prevention programs take, on average, 2-4 years. Scaling fully implemented programs take additional time."

Discussion 2

Oscar provided another brief presentation of his slides and talking points followed by another set of questions for participants in 'pairs' to discuss:

- Discuss experiences you have had with taking research to scale
- What supported and what impeded your success?
- What needs to be in place to ensure success?
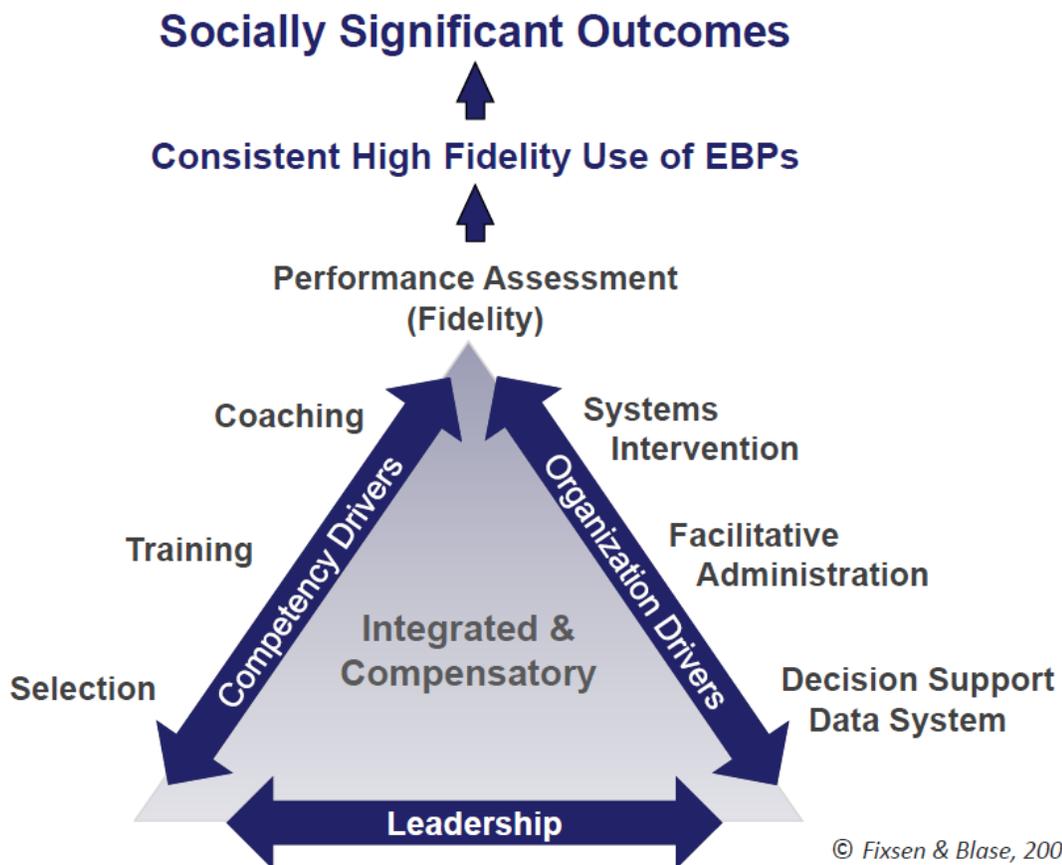
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Before small groups could convene, participants began discussing the following topics/questions:

1. What is the definition of 'scale worthy"?

   Should you attempt to scale up if you know your target is low on funds (i.e. public schools)?

   How heavily should you consider financial costs and considerations?

   What about systems that have supportive and enthusiastic leadership, do you start with these groups when scaling up? If so, doesn't this create additional disparities?

2. How do you take policy to scale?

One person reported back on the set of questions that Oscar provided. This participant said that the factor that supported his success was consistent and supportive leadership and a strategy to diversify his partners to adjust to challenges along the way (in his case he had to bring in lawyers for a lawsuit).

We did not have the time we needed to fully discuss any of the issues that were raised. This was a very lively, very participatory session and I was told it was the "best session I have been to" from a UCEDD Director.