Advancing the implementation of better evidence in policy and practice

Robyn Mildon, PhD
Executive Director
Centre for Evidence and Implementation
Melbourne | Sydney | Singapore | London

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Best evidence, best outcomes

MAKING SENSE OF THE EVIDENCE

THE EVIDENCE BASE NEEDS TO EVOLVE AND GROW

DECISION MAKERS NEED ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS

CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER

EVIDENCE NEEDS TO BE PUT INTO PRACTICE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

TRIALLING, TESTING AND EVALUATING

EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE

RIGOROUS METHODS

INDEPENDENCE

UNIQUE IMPLEMENTATION EXPERTISE

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We cannot benefit from something we do not receive

Implementation science is a field that studies how changes are successfully introduced and implemented within a system.

(adapted from Eccles & Mittman, 2006)

Implementation refers to the set of activities that are necessary for an innovation to produce desired outcomes.

Implementation is the bridge between goals and outcomes, but mis-implementation is common

Finding better ways to achieve system and service improvement goals is a key priority for governments, and policy and practice translation and implementation is the bridge between goals and outcomes.
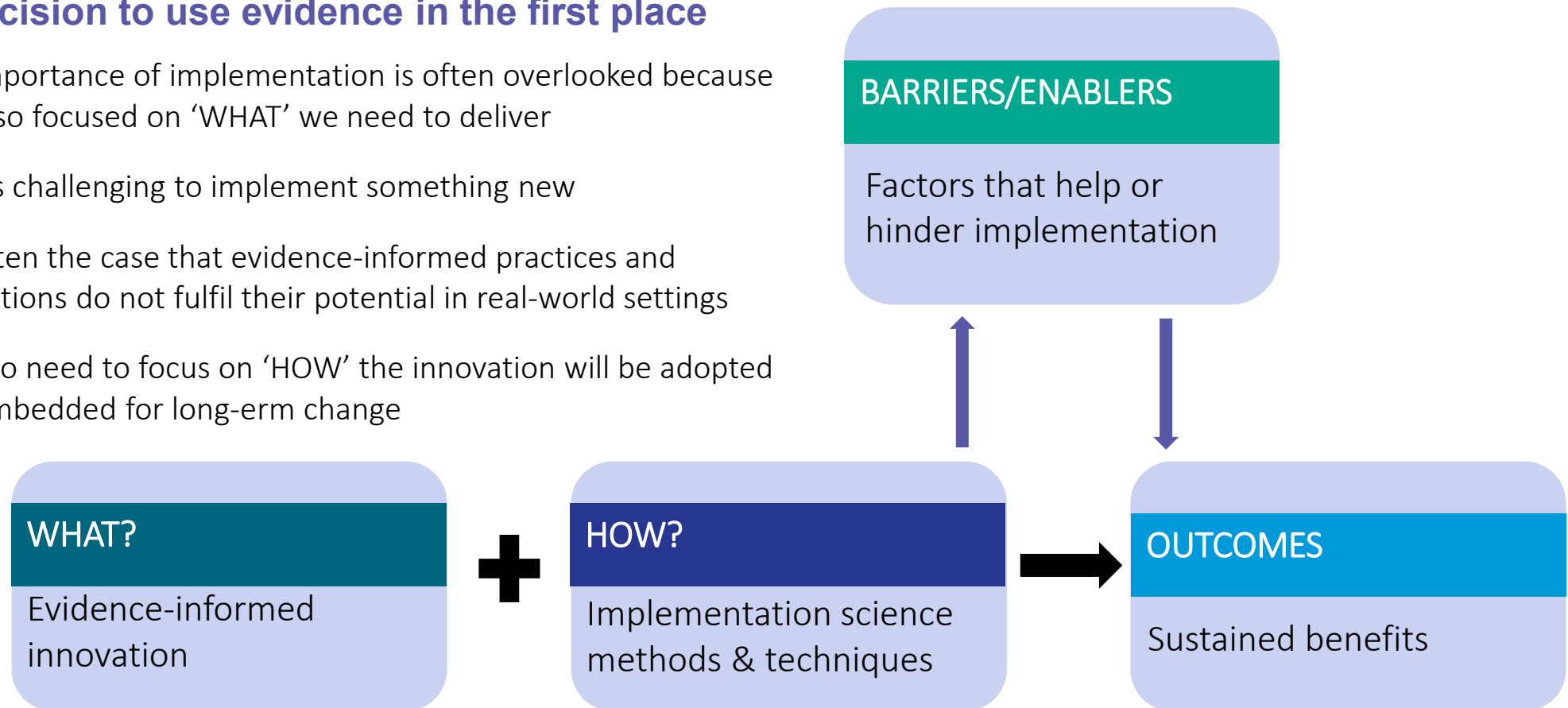
- However, mis-implementation is common
  - Some studies identify at least **30%** rates of mis-implementation
- Change is challenging:
  - absent or mismatched skills and competencies in the implementation workforce
  - inadequate planning
  - lack of essential implementation and outcome data
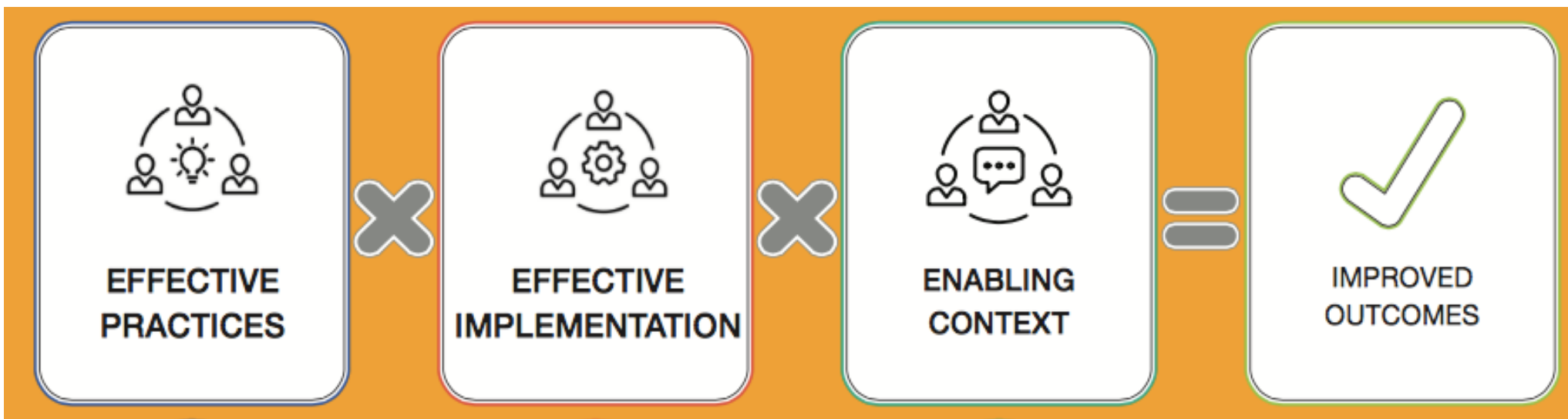 - stakeholder turnover or management challenges

Sources: Bullock & Lavis, 2019; Albers, Shlonsky, & Mildon, 2020; Allen et al., 2020

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If evidence-informed innovations are the 'what' then implementation science is the 'how'

Effective implementation of evidence is as important as the decision to use evidence in the first place

- The importance of implementation is often overlooked because we're so focused on 'WHAT' we need to deliver

- But it's challenging to implement something new

- It is often the case that evidence-informed practices and innovations do not fulfil their potential in real-world settings

- We also need to focus on 'HOW' the innovation will be adopted and embedded for long-erm change

BARRIERS/ENABLERS

Factors that help or hinder implementation

WHAT?

Evidence-informed innovation

+

HOW?

Implementation science methods & techniques

OUTCOMES

Sustained benefits

Shlonsky & Mildon (2014)

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES × **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION** × **ENABLING CONTEXT** = **IMPROVED OUTCOMES**

From Metz, Bartley & Maltry (2017), National Implementation Research Network

Why does implementation fail?

Lack of clarity in the aim or the innovation

• What are you trying to achieve?

• What changes do you want to make that will result in improvement?

• What is the evidence to support changes to practice or service?

Lack of understanding of the context

Evidence uptake depends on contexts and systems to work.

The goal is to maximize the fit between the innovation, the practice setting, and the broader system.
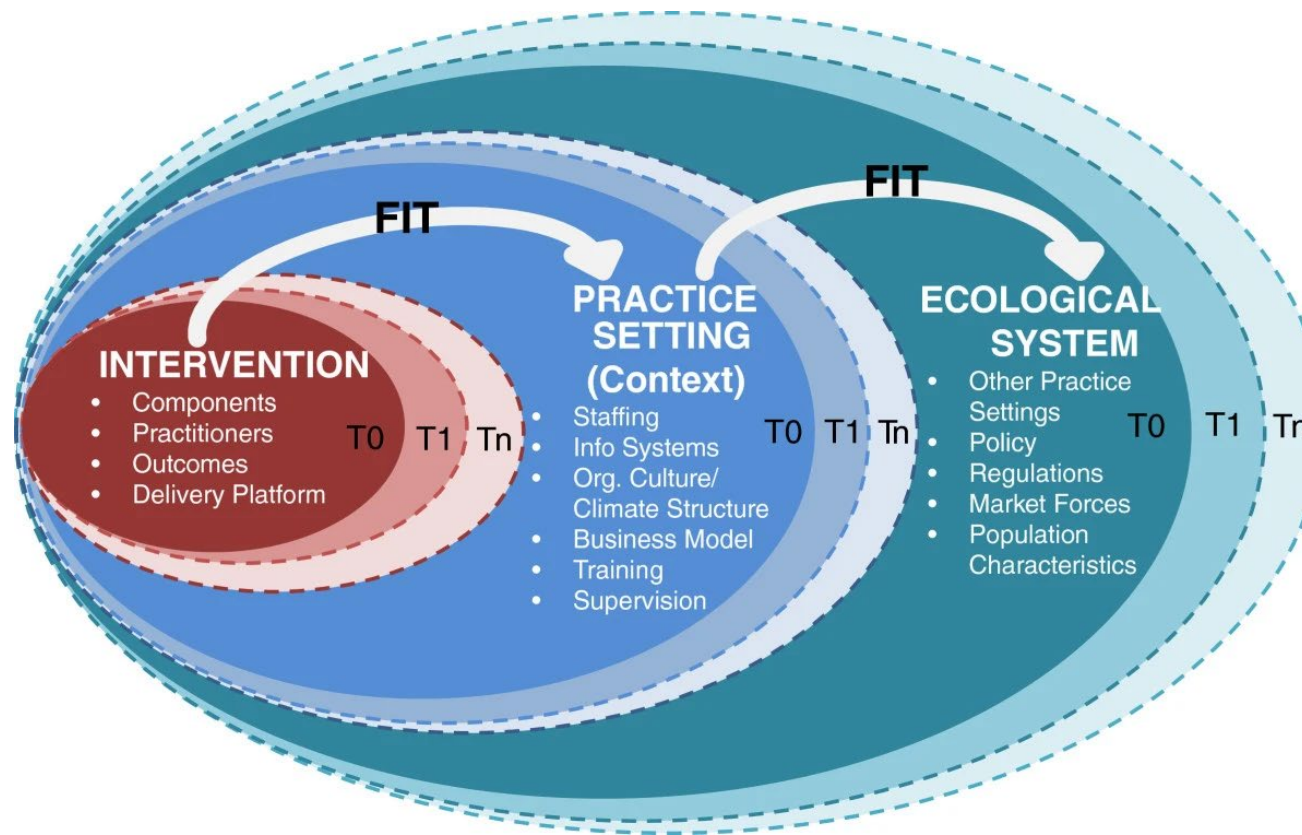
The Dynamic Sustainability Framework:
Chambers, Glasgow, Stange (2013). Different points in time represented by T0, T1, Tn.

Not including stakeholders in the planning

People with an interest in the outcomes of your project
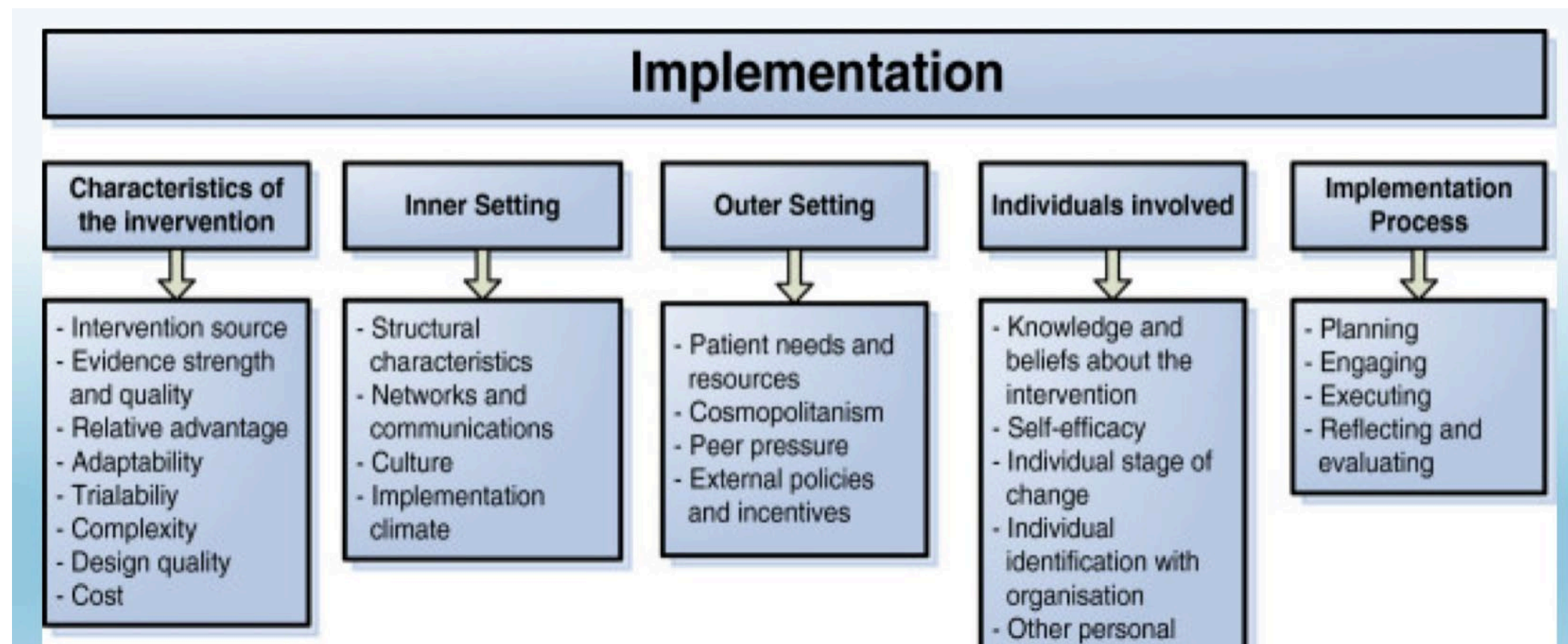
Have something to benefit or lose from the work

Are involved or will be affected by the project

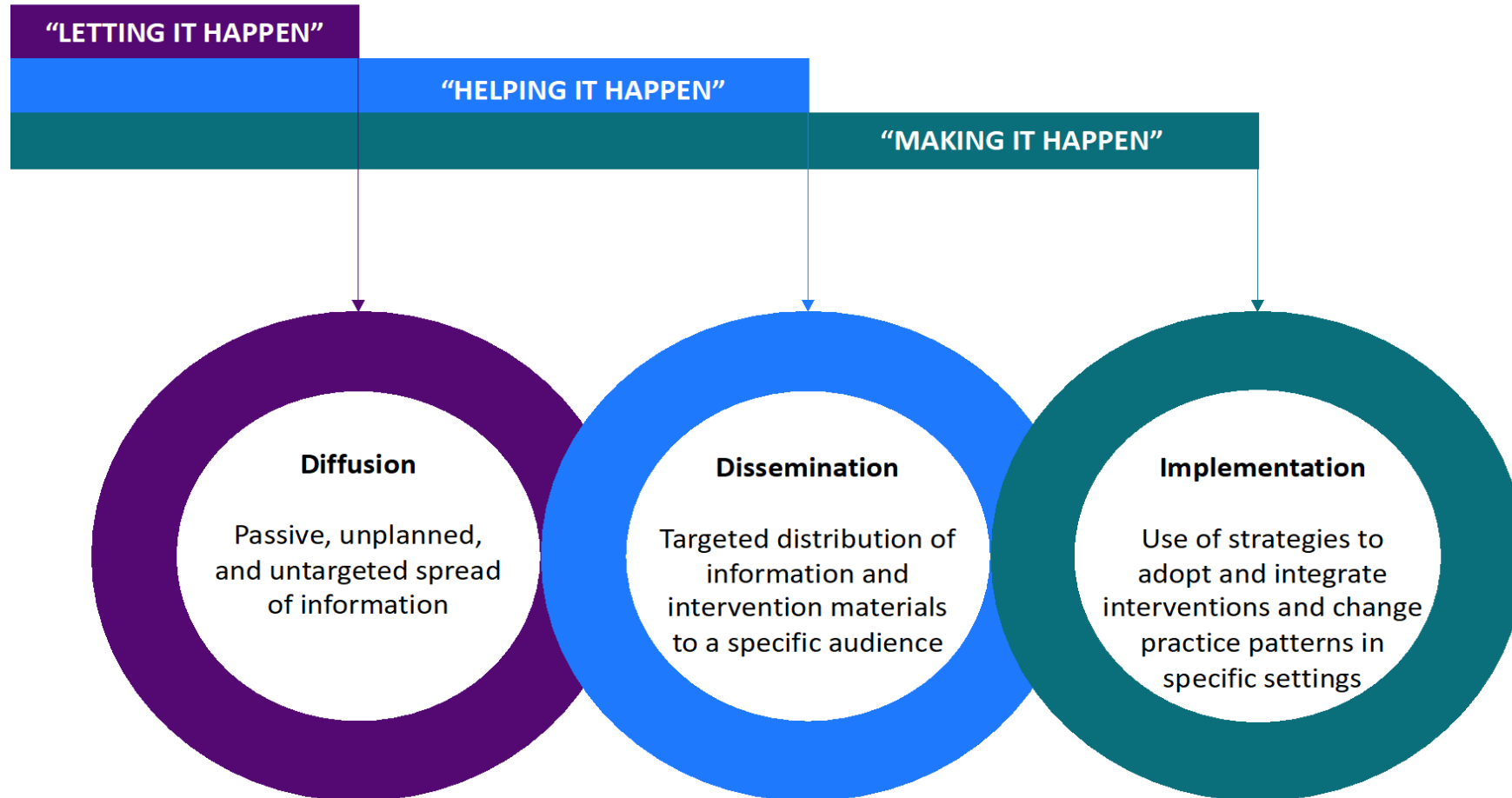## Poor planning – "Pay now or pay later"

Implementation plans should be well designed, very clear and guided by a theory of change

Barriers and facilitators to implementation of evidence in practice and policy: Consolidated Implementation Research Framework

(Damschroder et al 2009)

Evidence from implementation science tells us that active implementation support is crucial

"LETTING IT HAPPEN"

"HELPING IT HAPPEN"

"MAKING IT HAPPEN"

Diffusion

Passive, unplanned, and untargeted spread of information

Dissemination

Targeted distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific audience

Implementation

Use of strategies to adopt and integrate interventions and change practice patterns in specific settings
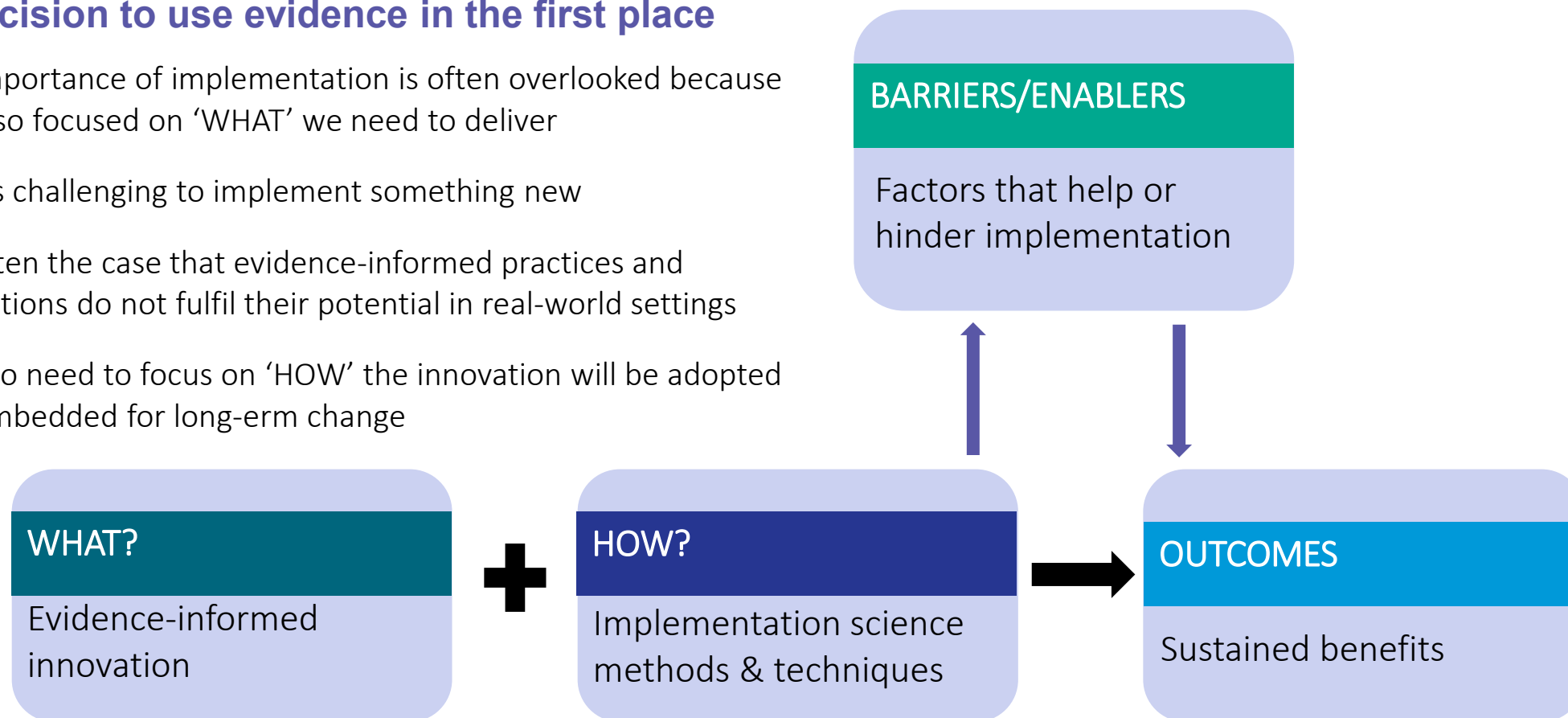
Adapted from Greenhalgh et al. (2004)

If evidence-informed innovations are the 'what' then implementation science is the 'how'
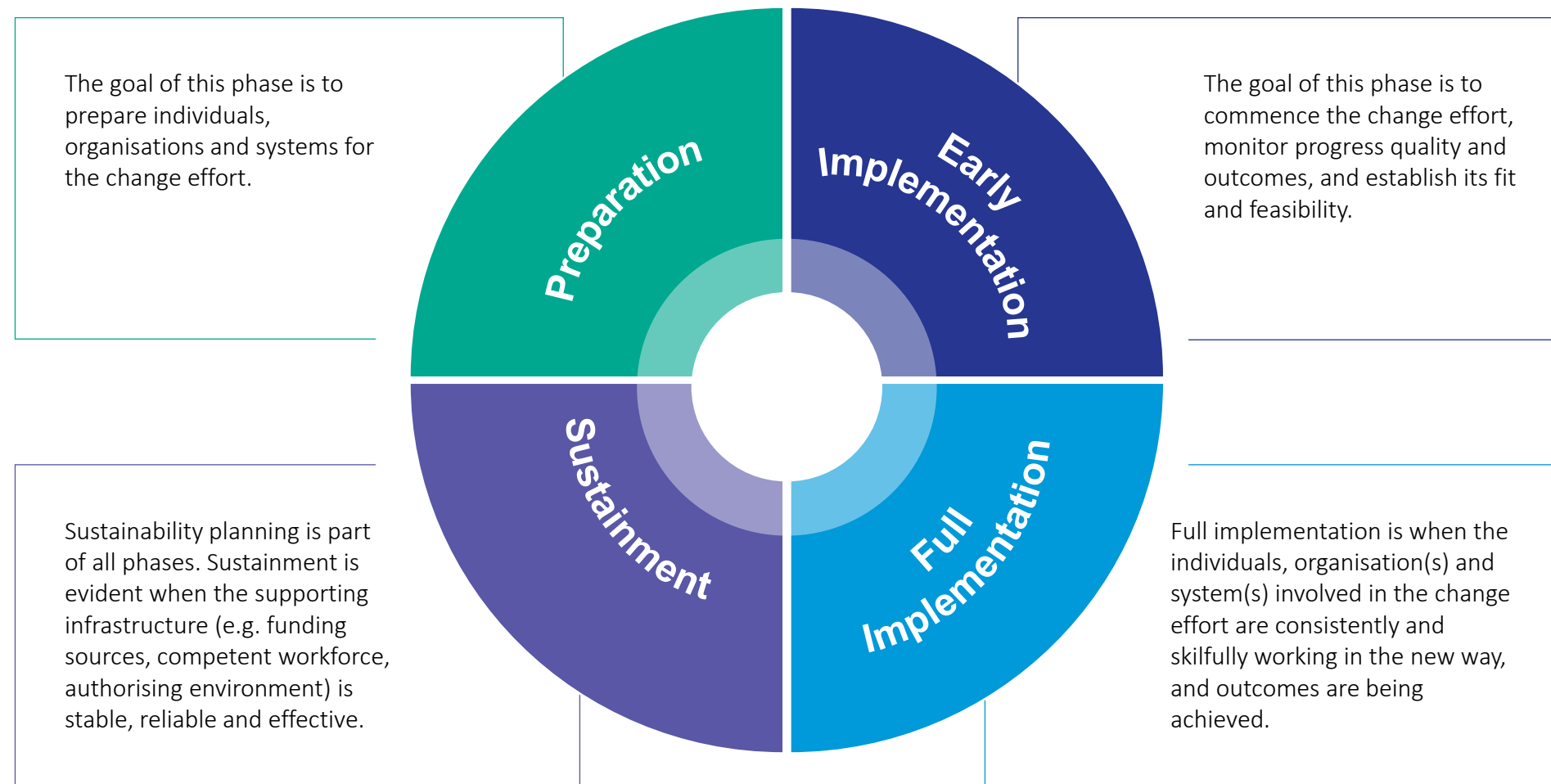
Effective implementation of evidence is as important as the decision to use evidence in the first place

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Implementation frameworks

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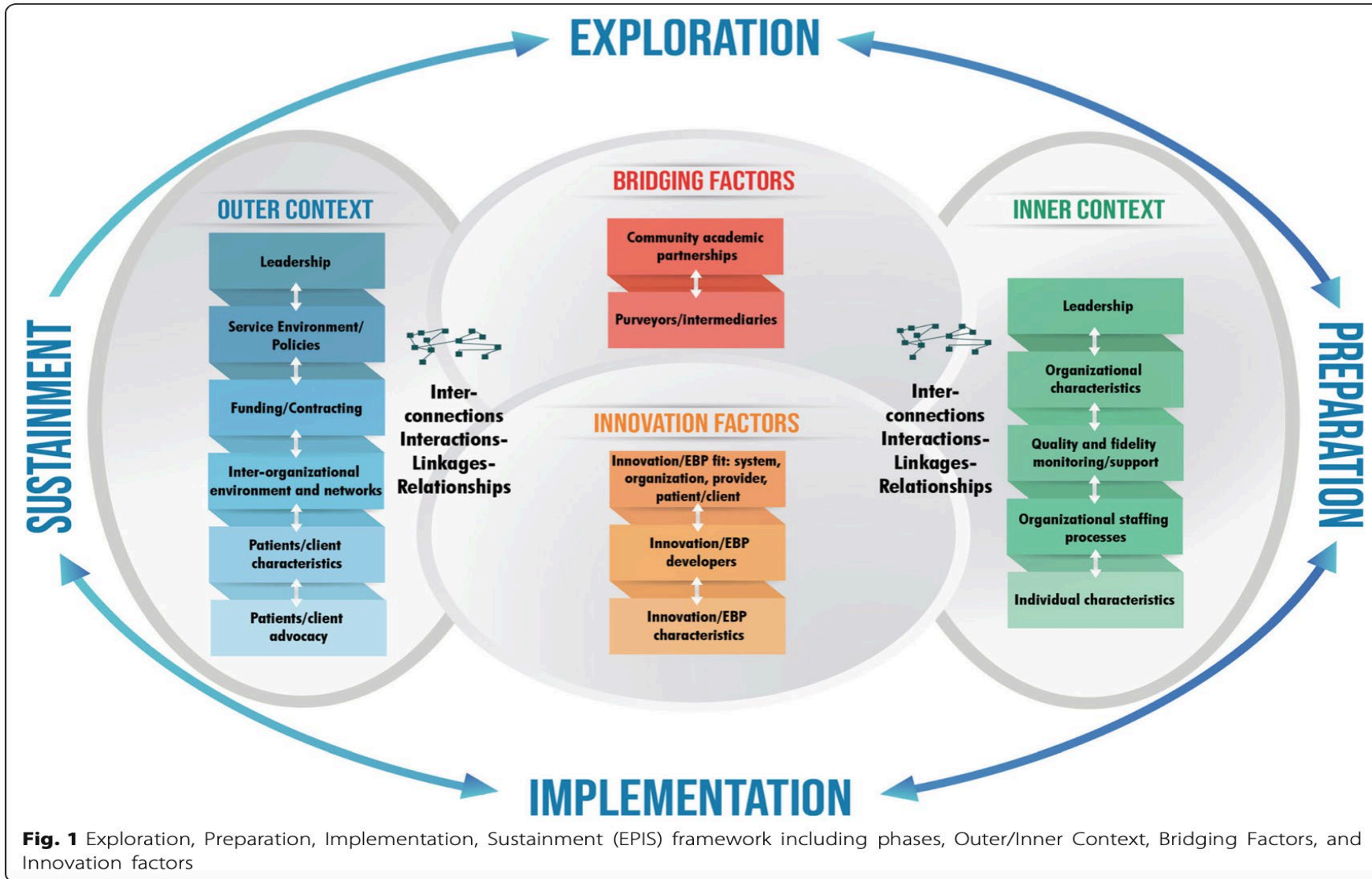# This phased implementation framework serves as a practical tool for planning, undertaking and evaluating change efforts and provides a shared language for stakeholders

The goal of this phase is to prepare individuals, organisations and systems for the change effort.

The goal of this phase is to commence the change effort, monitor progress quality and outcomes, and establish its fit and feasibility.

Sustainability planning is part of all phases. Sustainment is evident when the supporting infrastructure (e.g. funding sources, competent workforce, authorising environment) is stable, reliable and effective.

Full implementation is when the individuals, organisation(s) and system(s) involved in the change effort are consistently and skilfully working in the new way, and outcomes are being achieved.

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Sources: Adapted from Metz & Bartley, (2012); Metz et al., (2015); Meyers et al., (2012).; Moullin et al., (2020)

Quality Implementation Framework

Source: http://www.implementingthrive.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/QIF-Feb-2017.jpg

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Fig. 1 Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment (EPIS) framework including phases, Outer/Inner Context, Bridging Factors, and Innovation factors

Aarons GA, Hurlburt M, Horwitz SM. Advancing a conceptual model of evidence-based practice implementation in public service sectors. Adm Policy Ment Hlth. 2011;38:4–23.

Implementation strategies

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Implementation Strategies

Strategy clusters (Waltz *et al.*, 2015)

- Engage consumers

- Use evaluative & iterative strategies

- Change infrastructure

- Develop stakeholder relationships

- Utilise financial strategies

- Support clinicians

- Provide interactive assistance

- Train and educate stakeholders

'Methods or techniques used to enhance the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of a clinical program or practice.'

(Proctor, Powell & McMillen, 2013, p. 2)

Implementation leadership capacity

Fostering evidence-informed leadership behaviours

- Effective implementation leadership is a cornerstone of successful change efforts

- Evidence shows:

  - there are four general leadership behaviours important for enabling change, and that these behaviours can be strengthened through training and practice

  - that facilitation is a key ingredient for successful implementation leadership – and this skill comes with its own set of five competencies
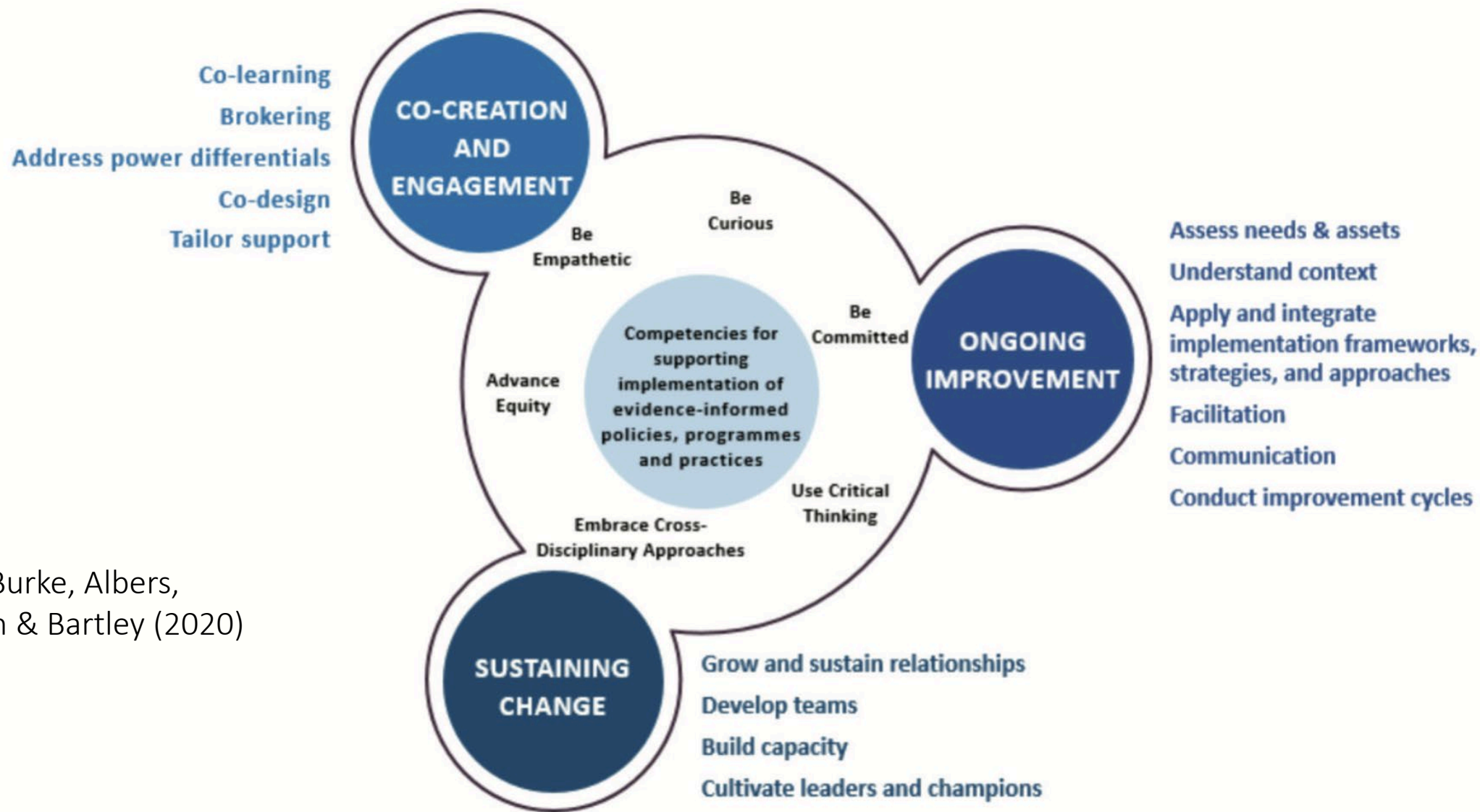
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Sources: Aarons, Ehrhart, & Farahnak, (2014); Aarons, Ehrhart, Moullin, Torres, & Green, (2017); Best et al., (2012); Hunter et al. (2020)

Four general leadership behaviours that are measurable and trainable

Implementation Leadership Scale (Aarons et al., 2014)				
0=Not at all	1=Slight extent	2=Moderate extent	3=Great extent	4=Very great extent
PROACTIVE	1. [Leader] has developed a plan to facilitate implementation of [change]			
	2. [Leader] has removed obstacles to the implementation of [change]			
	3. [Leader] has established clear standards for the implementation of [change]			
KNOWLEDGEABLE	4. [Leader] is knowledgeable about [change]			
	5. [Leader] is able to answer my questions about [change]			
	6. [Leader] knows what they are talking about when it comes to [change]			
SUPPORTIVE	7. [Leader] recognises and appreciates employee efforts towards successful implementation of [change]			
	8. [Leader] supports employee efforts to learn more about [change]			
	9. [Leader] supports employee efforts to use [change]			
PERSEVERANT	10. [Leader] perseveres through the ups and downs of implementing [change]			
	11. [Leader] carries on through the challenges of implementing [change]			
	12. [Leader] reacts to critical issues regarding the implementation of [change] by openly and effectively addressing the problem(s)			

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Implementation support practitioners

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Figure 2: Principles and core competencies of implementation support practitioners

Co-learning
Brokering
Address power differentials
Co-design
Tailor support

CO-CREATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Be Curious
Be Empathetic

Competencies for supporting implementation of evidence-informed policies, programmes and practices

Be Committed

Advance Equity

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

Assess needs & assets
Understand context
Apply and integrate implementation frameworks, strategies, and approaches
Facilitation
Communication
Conduct improvement cycles

Use Critical Thinking

Embrace Cross-Disciplinary Approaches

Metz, Burke, Albers, Louison & Bartley (2020)

SUSTAINING CHANGE

Grow and sustain relationships
Develop teams
Build capacity
Cultivate leaders and champions

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Implementation science in action

- Implementation occurs in phases and stages

- Requires an assessment of needs prior to the selection of an innovation to implement

- Depends on the readiness of individuals and organizations

- Necessitates considering how an innovation may need to be adapted

- Implies to build capacities among all stakeholders involved – internal as well as external

- Entails developing an infrastructure to support the implementation – e.g., in the form of proper planning, team building, or system alignment

- Demands continuous monitoring of and support to practice, which should be embedded within continuous feedback mechanisms
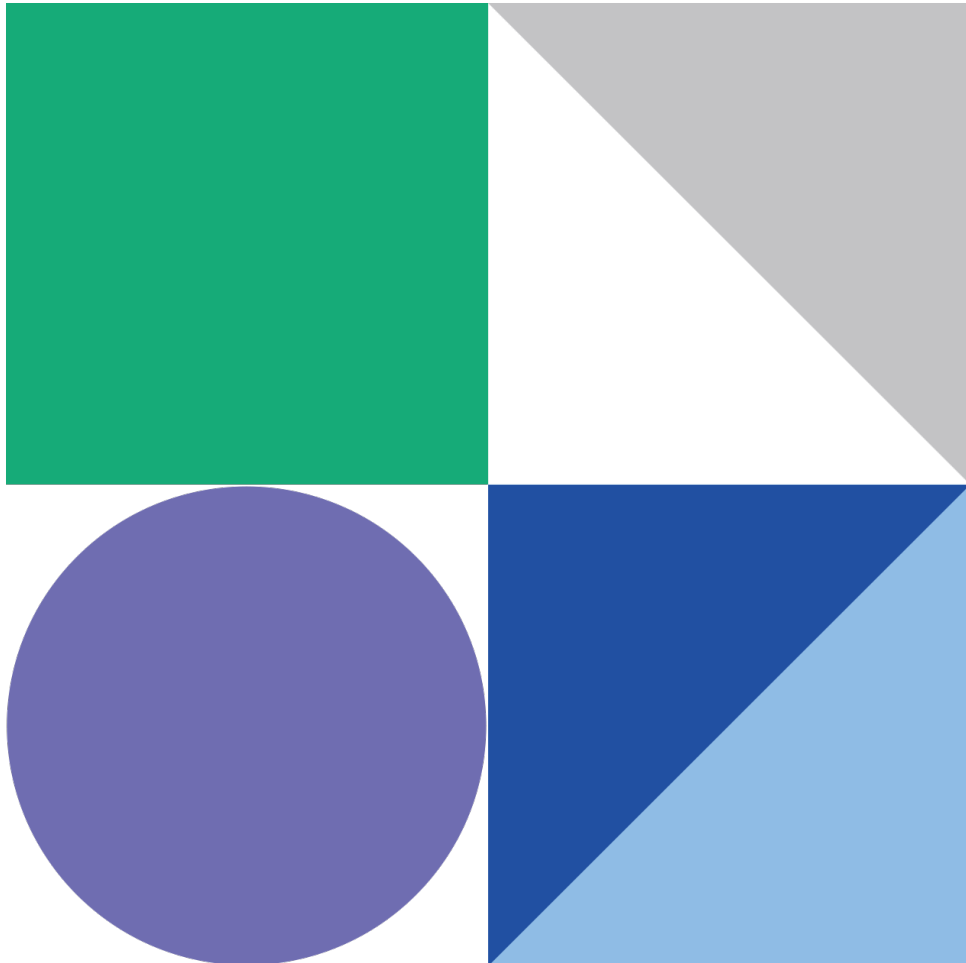
Albers, Shlonsky & Mildon (2020)

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Thank you for your time

➤ **robyn.mildon@ceiglobal.org**

🐦 **@robynmildon**

➤ **www.ceiglobal.org**

🐦 **@CEI_org**

in **LinkedIn**

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