Executive Summary

**Problem Statement:** Research findings are implemented into social services practices too slowly and inconsistently. A large gap between research and practice can result in mental health agencies’ interventions lagging the research by over 20 years (Ingegerd & Schwenkwald, 2013; Fixsen et al., 2005; Fixsen et al., 2009).

**Impacts:**
- Case study example: Poorer outcomes for clients and community
- Increased costs to taxpayers – incarceration much more expensive compared with more cost-effective community solutions

**Strategies:**
- Evidence-Based Policymaking is used to:
  - Reduce wasteful spending
  - Expand innovative programs
  - Strengthen accountability

**Practice Implications:** Intermediaries are increasingly relied upon by providers and policy makers to help navigate the complex, shifting terrain of multilevel systems change (Goel, et al., 2011).

**Policy Implications:** Governments are increasingly using implementation science to inform policy and budget decisions.

**Improved outcomes**
- Better outcomes for clients and community
- Better use of taxpayer dollars

**Research Question**

**Research actions can agencies to adopt evidence-based practices for treating juvenile offenders and other clients in a more timely and effective manner?**

**Methods**

A case study of Nebraska youth over-incarceration was examined within an overall context of juvenile justice reform in Nebraska, and led to the research question.

A literature review was conducted using PSYCINFO, ProQuest, Premium Social Sciences, and Academic Search Complete with the following keywords: research to practice gap, translational research, implementation, purveyor, evidence-based practice, dissemination.

**Results**

New research findings are ready to be implemented - how to accomplish this better and faster

Core Implementation Components

**Better Outcomes:**
- Effectively-implemented programs had 2 to 3 times greater mean effect sizes compared with programs not as effectively implemented, according to 5 meta-analyses covering nearly 500 studies (Even, J. A., 2013).

**Better Use of Taxpayer Dollars:**
- Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted cost-benefit analyses of the Functional Family Therapy program, and found, for each dollar spent: $10.69 in benefits (saved + net costs) when delivered with fidelity to the program model.
- $4.18 of extra cost to taxpayers when not delivered with fidelity (Even, J. A., 2013).

**Higher Return on Investment (ROI):**
- EPISCenter helped secure an estimated $24 million from Evidence-Based Programs in Pennsylvania for FY 2013/14 ($21 million for two projects).

**Implementation Drivers Analysis**
- Help support and maintain high-fidelity (true to research) implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs.
- Recommend ways to strengthen and sustain evidence-based models in preventive services.

**References**

Complete references are on an exiguity page here.

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**Conclusions**

- Evidence-based programs can fully reach community members only if they are implemented with fidelity.
- Agency practitioners operate within complex environments, making policy changes challenging to execute and maintain.
- Policy changes are well supported when practitioners use structured, robust methods of implementation science.
- Implementation centers and other intermediaries have demonstrated success in connecting research to practice through implementation science, and offer valuable solutions to achieve positive community outcomes in cost-effective ways.
- State and local governments, and funders, can execute their responsibility to administer taxpayer and donor funds wisely by requiring agencies to select and implement evidence-based treatments using proven methods that leverage implementation science.

**A Case Study of Effective Implementation: The New York City Experience**

In 2011, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) implemented the largest, most diverse continuum of evidence-based and evidence-informed preventive programs in any child welfare jurisdiction in the U.S., and leveraged an implementation science framework as an integral part of the initiative.

ACS is responsible for child protection, child welfare, juvenile justice, and early childhood care and education services in New York City, through a network of more than 75 contract agencies and approximately 7,000 employees.

Preliminary results reflect ACS implementation of preventative Evidence Based Methods are positively impacting families:
- More families are being served each year per paid contracted slot, due to EBM's shorter length of service
- High-risk families’ outcomes are improved compared with ACS traditional models
- Higher case goals achievement for closed cases
- Improved collaboration between the ACS Division of Child Protection and its contracted providers
- Decrease in the number of indicated investigations

Source: Sitzo, Gerson, & Mike, 2017.