Mathematica®
Progress Together

Applying research to improvement efforts

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) office hours

September 24, 2024 | 2:00 – 3:00pm ET

HMRF
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

OPRE

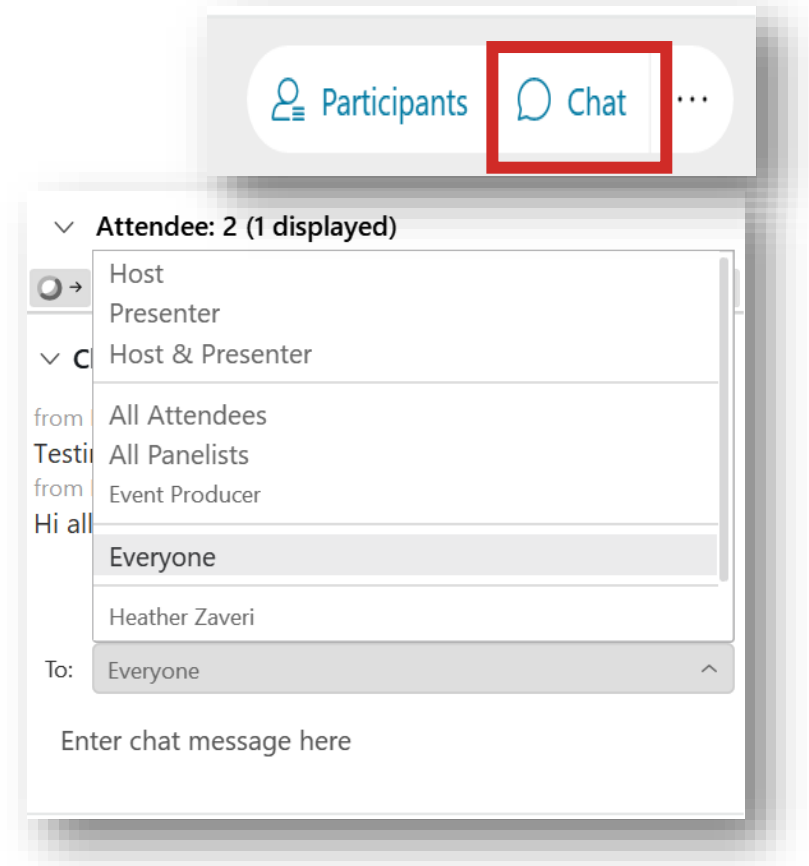
OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

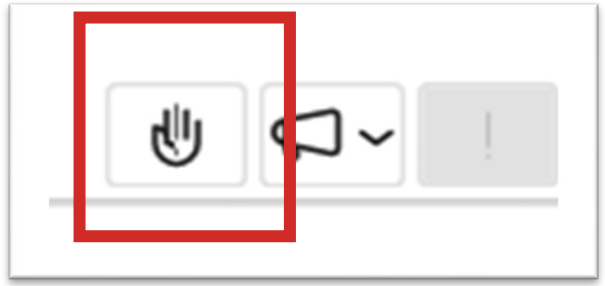
BUILD
Building Usage, Improvement, & Learning with Data in HMRF Programs

How you can participate

- You may use the chat or share verbally using the hand raise feature

- REMINDER: Never text or email client personally identifiable information (PII), including during office hours or when contacting the TA teams





Maintaining and strengthening CQI practices

- **In August, we shared how to find relevant research to inform CQI**
- **Today's focus is on adapting research to your program**

Agenda

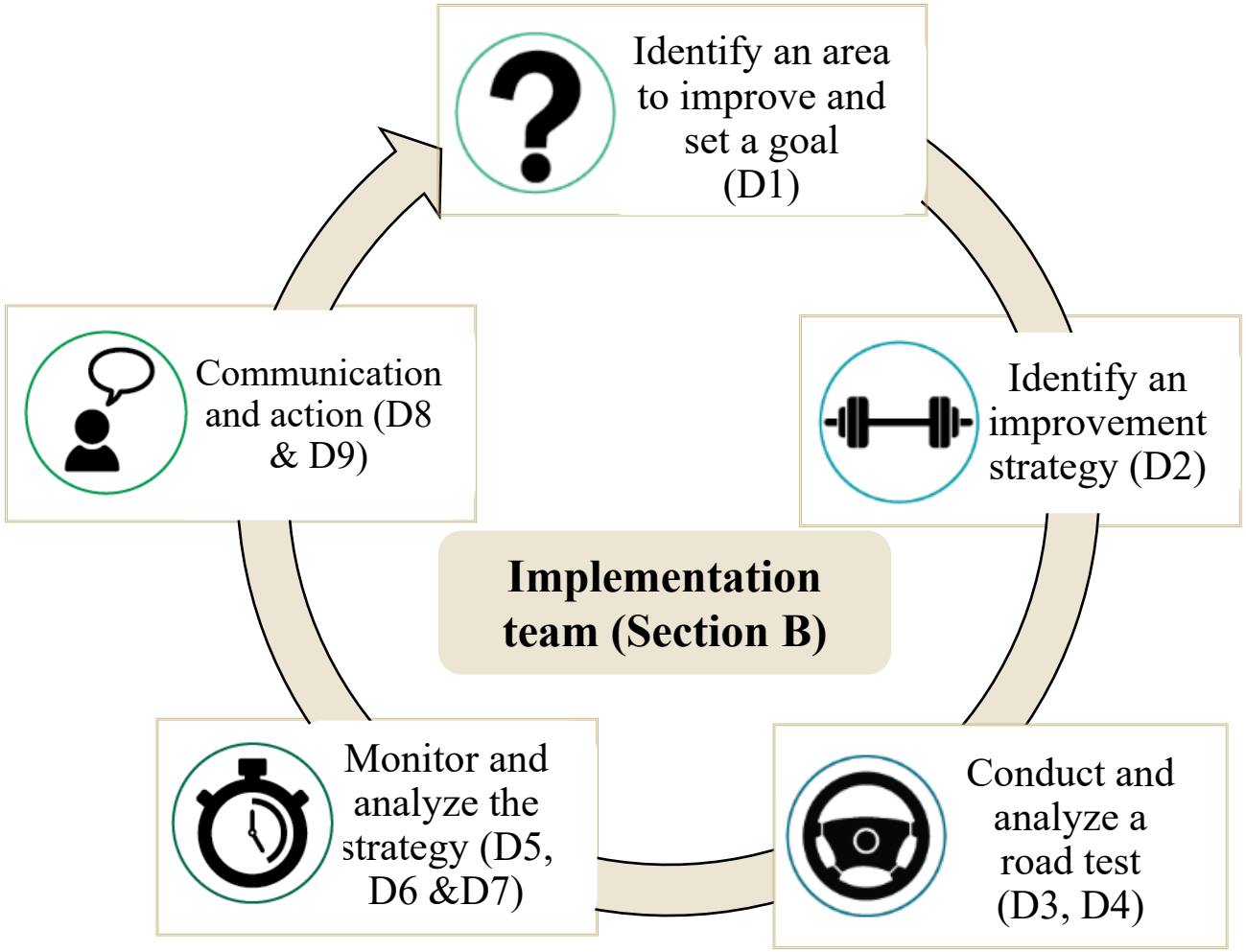
- Review: Why use research and how to be a discerning consumer of it
- Tailoring evidence-supported practices to your program
- Activity: Adapting an evidence-supported practice
- Preparing staff for change

Review: Why use research and how to be a discerning consumer of it

Why bring research into CQI?

- **Research provides an opportunity to learn more about the nature of challenges and solutions that have worked for others**
- **Avoid reinventing what is already known**
- **What to look for**
  - **Generalizability** – the extent to which the research can apply to broader contexts
  - **Relevance** – the extent to which the research focuses on a similar challenge to yours
  - **Rigor** – the extent the research is high quality
  - **Feasibility** – the extent to which an evidence-supported practice is feasible to implement

Where can research enhance CQI?



Step 1: To inform your understanding of challenges and root causes

Step 2: To generate inspiration for strategy ideas or flesh out strategy ideas to align with strong practices

Step 3: To inform supports to implement a strategy well

Tailoring evidence-supported practices to your program

Assess the strategy's fit for your program

- **Will the strategy described in the research work well for your staff and client population?**
  - Consider variations in staff expertise, technical capabilities, or client demographics between what was studied and what you have
- **Do you have existing resources to support it (funds, staffing, tech, space, time)**
- **What can be modified?**
  - Content (add or remove elements)
  - How the intervention is delivered (shorten/lengthen, reorder)
  - Implementation supports, such as training or tools (the way staff are trained or supported)

Figure out what to adapt

/ Identify the components of the strategy

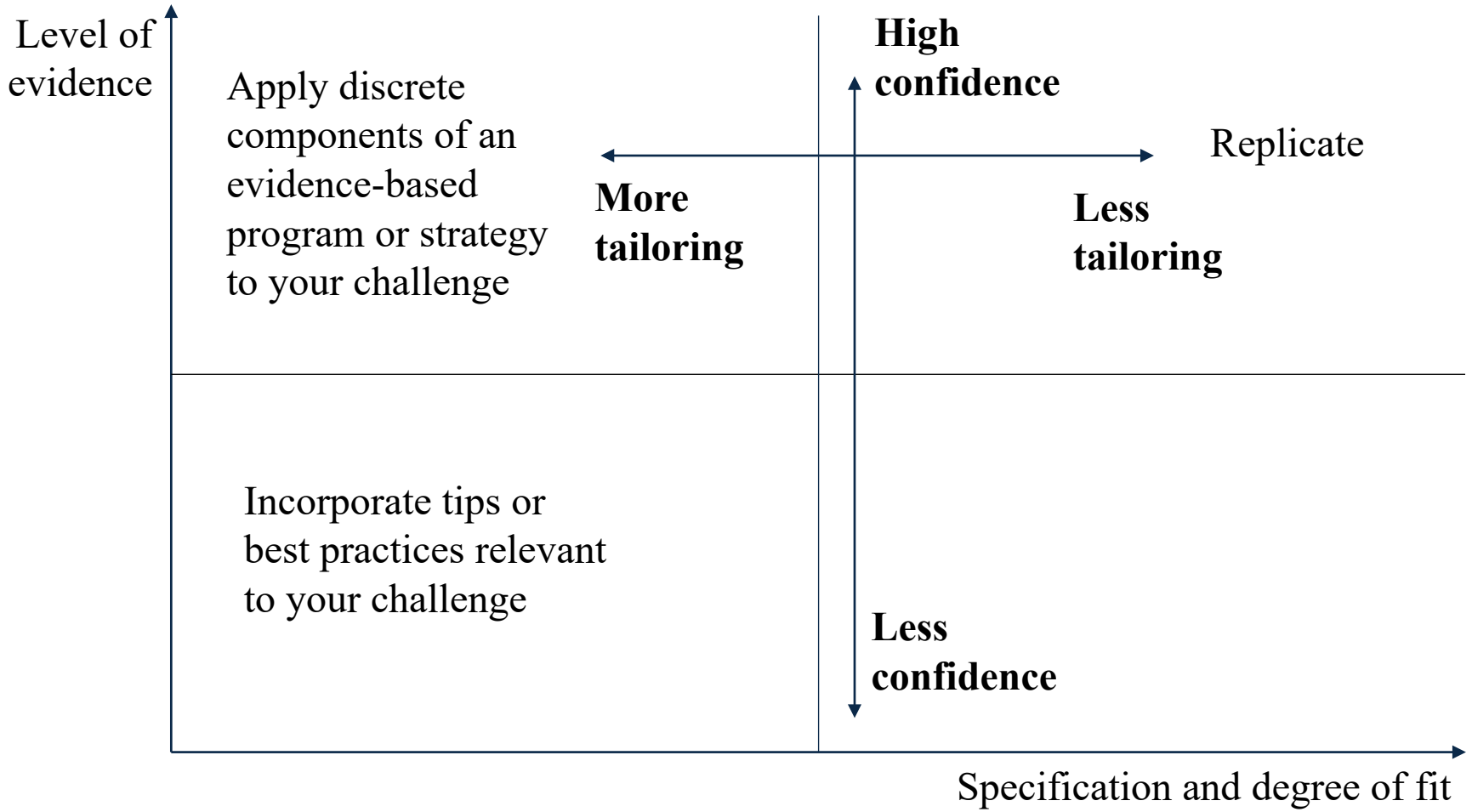
- Document the 4Ps—people (staff), practices, principles, products (tools/training)
- Consider what is OK to adapt. What are the parts of the strategy that appear to support its success? These are core components and are more important to maintain.

/ Engage staff

- This is an opportunity to get staff and/or participant feedback
- What needs to happen to make this strategy work?

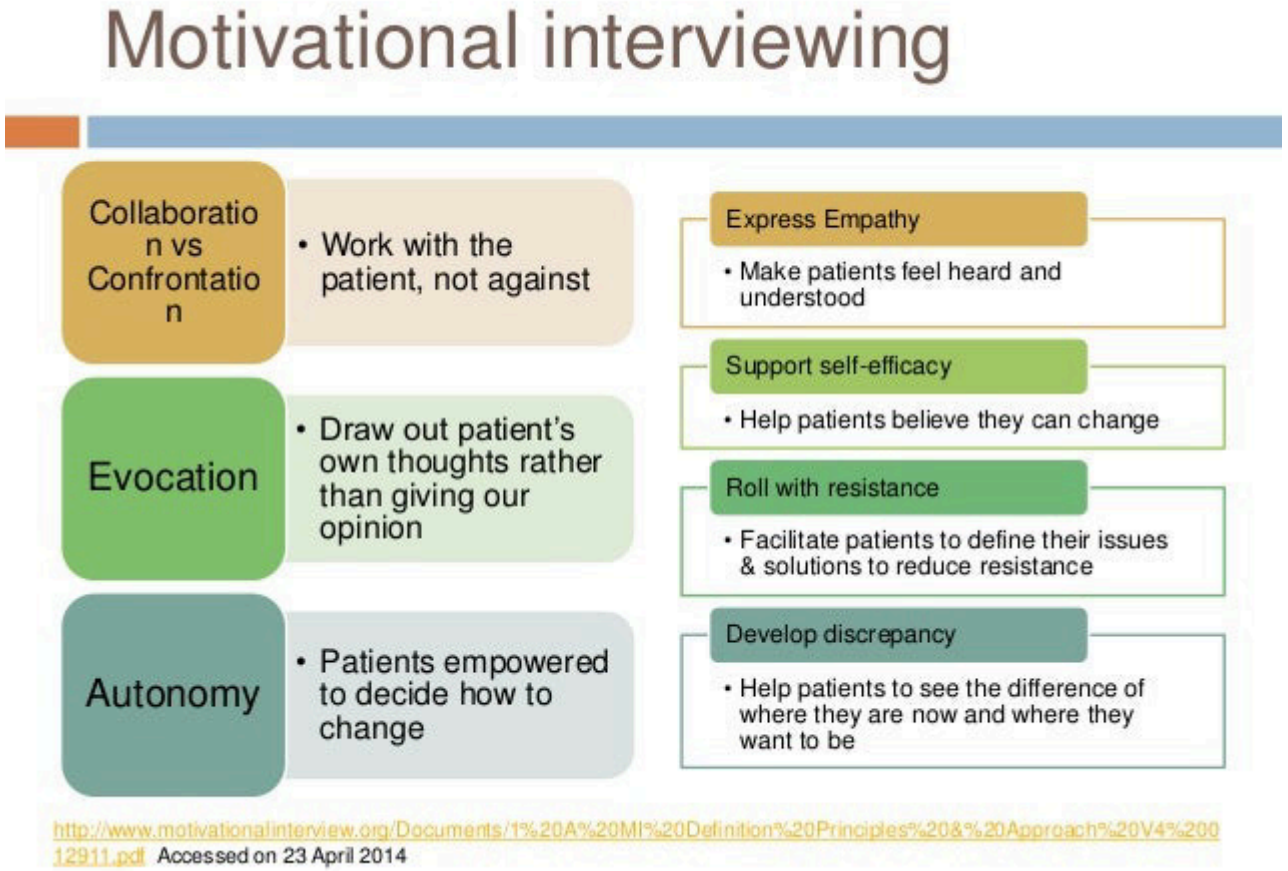
/ Adjust protocols, tools, processes to fit your program

Know your starting point–How much evidence and specificity is behind the strategy? How much tailoring is needed?



Tailoring a strategy: Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- **Challenge:** Attendance at first workshop
- **Strategy:** MI, a well-defined intervention
- **Next steps:** Determine how MI can be used to encourage your clients to attend; create a detailed plan for adapting and road testing

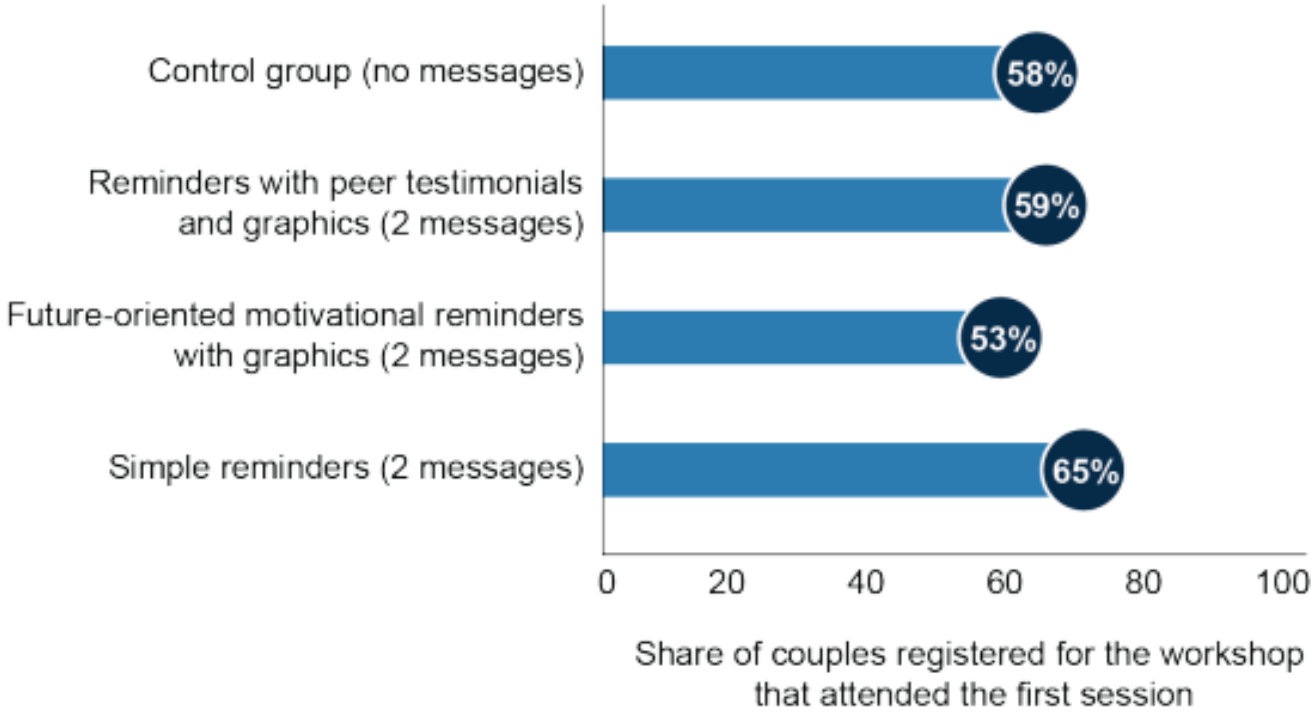


Tailoring the MI strategy to your program

- **Adaptations:** Based on applicant characteristics survey responses and focus groups with clients, we believe that most of our participants attend primarily to improve parenting skills. Because we know their motivation, we will include that in scripts that case managers use when engaging with clients.
- **Questions for road testing:**
  - Did we implement MI with fidelity?
  - Did we focus on the right motivation?
  - Did our participants find the discussions with their case managers motivational?
- **Overall question:** Did the MI support better attendance?

Tailoring a strategy: Text messages

- **Challenge:** Attendance at first workshop
- **Idea:** Research from a federal study showed that simple text messages helped encourage attendance at the first session
- **Next steps:** Work with staff to draft simple, relevant text messages to send to clients just before their first workshop



Tailoring the text strategy to your program

- **Adaptations:** We don't have cell phone information for everyone, so we will use simple email reminders.
- **Questions for road testing:**
  - Did we send reminders to all participants?
  - Did participants see the reminders?
  - Did the simple messages motivate our participants to attend?
- **Overall question:** Did the reminder strategy support better attendance?

Tailoring a strategy: Prerecording sessions

- **Example:** Participants face barriers to enrollment
- **Idea:** Develop prerecorded sessions that participants can view through a web browser
- **Next steps:** Specify which parts of curriculum are most suited for prerecording; work with facilitators to rehearse and record; post; track web views

Step 1
Map specific challenges to approaches

Step 2
Explore the strategies listed under the approach to determine fit and feasibility

Step 3
Refine the strategy and develop an implementation plan that details how the program will use and test the strategy

Remove barriers to enrollment and participation

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Strategy	Example	Population served: Adults	Population served: Youths	Implementation area: Recruitment	Implementation area: Retention	Implementation area: Content engagement
Have facilitators provide missed or supplemental content outside of class	Develop a plan for facilitators to deliver missed content in one-on-one sessions	✓	✓		✓	
Offer case management outside of normal business hours	Hire staff that can work flexible hours or can flex their schedules	✓			✓	✓
Offer multiple, concurrent groups as drop-ins to make up missed content	Develop a workshop schedule that features multiple workshops per week at various times	✓	✓		✓	
Offer online makeup sessions	Develop prerecorded sessions that participants can view through a web browser	✓	✓		✓	
Offer online scheduling for intake and enrollment appointments	Develop an online system participants can use to self-schedule and begin enrollment paperwork	✓		✓		
Offer online services to increase program appeal	Develop a virtual version of your primary workshop	✓	✓	✓		
Offer programming at times that align with participant schedules	Develop a workshop schedule that features multiple workshops per week at various times	✓	✓	✓		

(continued)

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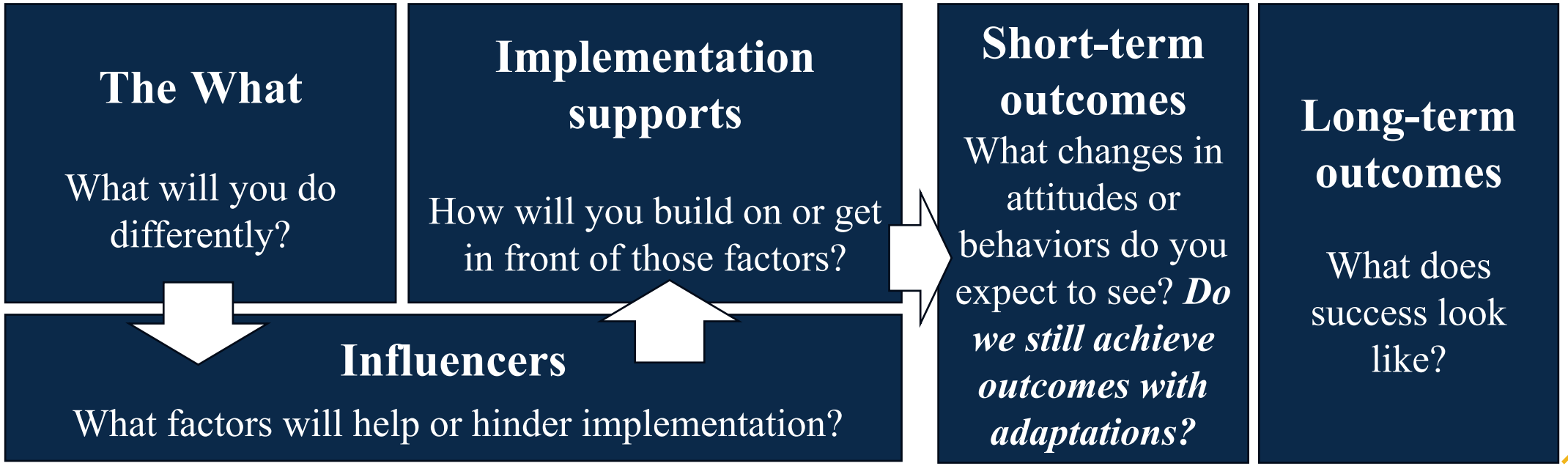
Back to How To Guide

Develop an implementation plan

- **For any strategy, no matter the fit and level of evidence, the next step is to develop an implementation plan**
- **Document your plan and flag adaptations as questions to explore**
- **Remember the roadmap for improvement is a key tool for specifying your initial implementation plan**



Create learning questions about your implementation plan, then road test

- **Ask about the 4ps**
  - Do you have the right staff?
  - Are trainings and tools adequate?
- **Ask questions about adaptations**
- **Long-term question: Are we able to achieve desired outcomes?**
- **Conduct and analyze a road test**

Monitor improvement and document adaptations

- **Monitor the strategy as you would for any CQI effort**
- **Be sure to document adaptations and an assessment of how they worked**

Original strategy	Adaptation	Result and plan
Simple text messages encourage attendance at the first workshop.	We don't have consistent cell phone information, so we will try email reminders.	Participants saw the reminders and said they were helpful. Keep adaptation.

Activity: Adapting an evidence-supported practice

Activity: Our hypothetical program

- **Current practice**
  - After participants complete the core workshop focused on healthy relationships, they participate in a once-a-week, month-long workshop focused on building job skills (updating resume, interviewing, job searching)
- **Challenge: Job supports component in our RF program is well attended but does not appear to support increased employment**

Activity: Using Pathways to Work

/ Evidence-supported Riverside LFA intervention

/ Document components of the Riverside LFA model

- Practice: Three-week job club focuses primarily on securing job interviews along with soft skills development
- Principle: Move participants into jobs as quickly as possible, without worrying too much about job quality at first
- Products/tools: Make payments directly to childcare providers to address childcare barriers
- Staff: Full-time job developers to support participants in finding jobs

Share with us

- **You're thinking about drawing from the Riverside model to create a more effective jobs component**
- **Think about how you would bring this to your program. What would you replicate, adapt, or drop? Why?**

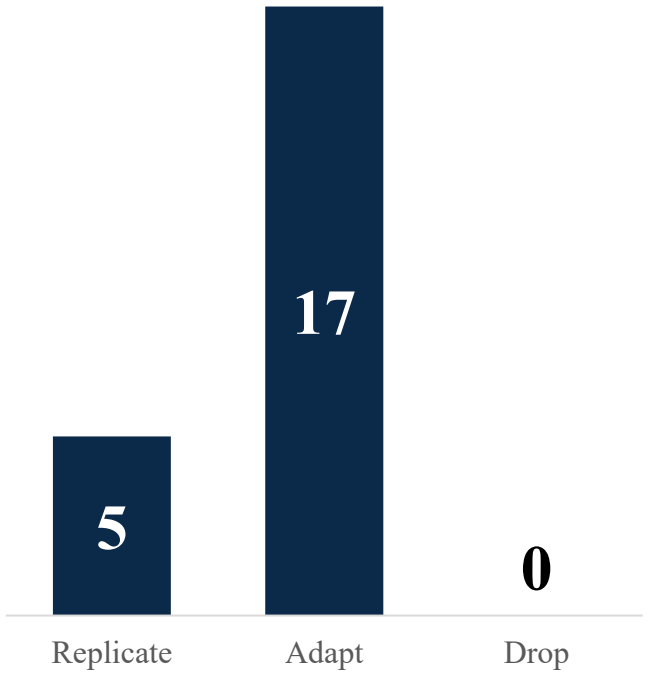
To participate in the poll:

- Respond using the widget that opens on your right-hand panel
- Or click the link in the chat

Using your phone?

- Go to Slido.com and type code 3653679
- Or scan the QR code on the left

Practice: Three-week job club focuses primarily on securing job interviews along with soft skills development



It will give the participants a closer look at the skills and help display those skills on a professional level on their resume.

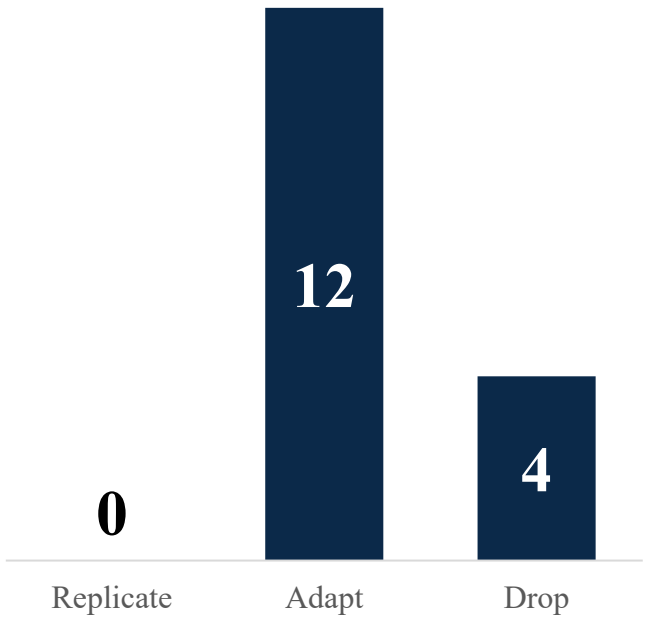
A program should not stay stagnant

Promising because doesn't seem to use a lot of extra resources. Would need to be assessed for adaptation based on client needs. For example, is a three-week frequency viable?

Their are skills to be learned about the job search process. It is just as important as applying for the job and showing fathers skills of the job search process is a must. as its a beginning step in the process

Makes logical sense, especially in supporting fathers with overcoming barriers

Principle: Move participants into jobs as quickly as possible, without worrying too much about job quality at first



The first choice of employment is not always the best fit.

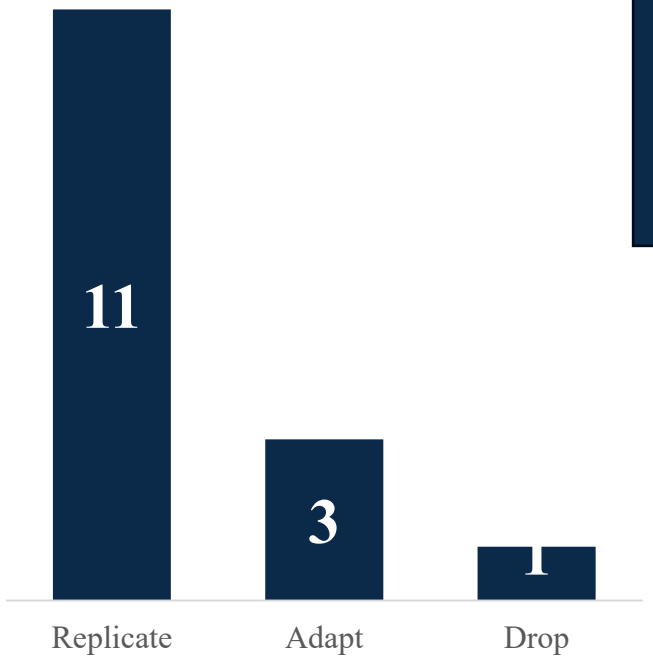
It seemed fine but thought accepting first offer no matter the job should be a case by case thing

Good idea in theory so that fathers are able to at least bring in income. Their getting the first job available comes with inherent risk. Opportunity could turn out being wrong job

I would want high retention amongst the participants when choosing their jobs. Encouraging them to take the first job offered isn't always the best choice.

This doesn't take into account participant desires/needs/individual situation/goals, etc. Not trauma informed and it seems more focused on program goals.

Products/tools: Make payments directly to childcare providers to address childcare barriers



Beneficial for the participant, in regard to it being a barrier for the participant to complete the program.

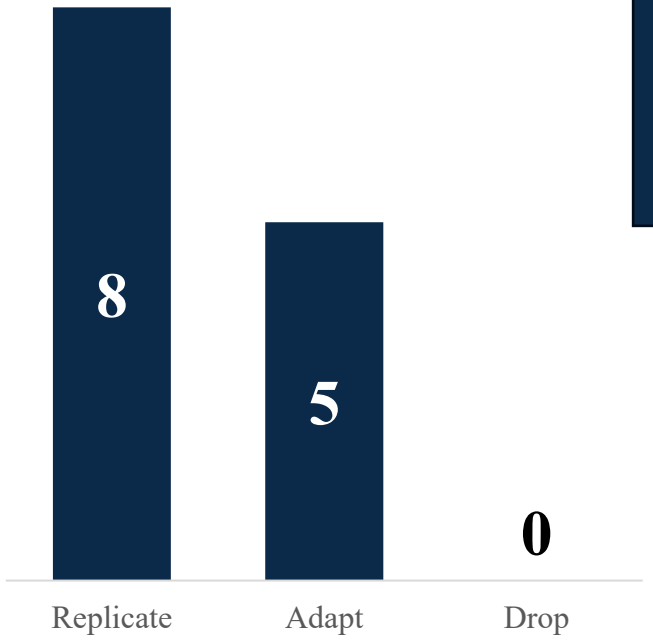
Program constraints on resources may make this not a viable option due to high costs incurred with child care.

By sending directly will 100% eliminate childcare needs. This will allow fathers to place effort in another area of improvement.

Paying childcare directly creates efficient spending. While eliminating participant barriers

Payments directly to providers doesn't take into account the full spectrum of childcare needs, i.e. unconventional work hours or work week, paying friends and family for childcare etc. Could this be adapted to be more flexible based on individual needs?.

Products/tools: Make payments directly to childcare providers to address childcare barriers



Job developer is helpful in focusing on the participants needs

We're a grantee with full time job developers, and we're able to serve participants faster and better overall than having to refer them to external places like temp. agencies and workforce centers

If the program is in a high cost of living area, this might be very resource heavy and not viable. An adaptation could be to partner with local social work programs (or something similar) to have interns fill that role.

a full time staff member can develop partnership with employers

Often employment is created by networks both individually and organizationally. Having a job developer who can focus on cultivating organizational networks for participants can secure employment that some participants may not be able to on their own.

Testing our adaptations

- **Staff: Full-time job developers to help participants find jobs**
  - *If replicating*: Are job developers and case managers able to coordinate successfully to address client needs?
  - *If adapting (to use case managers for* role): Do case managers have the time and connections to handle this responsibility?
- **Principle: Move participants into jobs as quickly as possible, without worrying too much about job quality at first**
  - *If replicating*: How much time does it take for fathers to find and accept the first job opportunity? Are fathers satisfied with the first job opportunity they accepted?
  - *If adapting (to offer fathers a 3-week window to be selective, then encouraging them to take first job offer, if needed):* Was 3 weeks enough time to allow fathers to search for a job they wanted? Are fathers satisfied with the job opportunity they accepted?

Preparing staff for change

Why it's important to prepare staff for change

- **Building buy-in with staff is always important but especially so when the idea comes from an external source**
- **When ideas come from within, they tend to be more tailored to the program context; staff may be more skeptical about ideas from external sources**
- **If staff feel they've had a chance to shape strategies, they may be more receptive**

Be proactive

- **Set a foundation. Make it a regular part of CQI meetings to look at and discuss relevant research**
- **Engage staff early**
- **Communicate the challenge and share a rationale**
  - Make sure staff understand why your challenge is the prioritized challenge
  - If bringing in research, be clear about why you think it will address the prioritized challenge
- **Anticipate challenges. Remember to identify potential barriers in advance and be proactive in solutions**
- **Share success stories**

Announcements

- **Join us for the next CQI office hours!**
  - The next office hours will be on October 22, 2024
  - A calendar invite will be shared soon
- **The next nFORM office hours will be on October 8, 2024**
- **Check out OPRE's resource site for a variety of reports and briefs related to HMRF and other grant programs**
  - Resource library
- **For CQI-related questions, reach out to the CQI helpdesk**
  - HMRFCQI@mathematica-mpr.com

Thank you!