

Change and Implementation at a Glance



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation



As child welfare agencies face decisions about how to address their needs, choosing the right solution is crucial to improving outcomes. While there is often pressure to rush to a decision, taking time to research options and think critically about fit and feasibility can prevent wasted resources in the long run.

An intervention is a “specific practice, service, policy, strategy, program, practice model or combination that is clearly defined, operationalized, and distinguishable from alternatives” (Framework Workgroup, 2014, p. 5).

Key Takeaways

- ◆ To select an appropriate intervention, agency teams should consider:
 - Alignment with their theory of change
 - Evidence of effectiveness
 - Degree to which the intervention is defined and usable/transferable
 - Appropriateness for the target population (considering culture, age, setting, etc.)
 - Fit with the system and agency context
 - Feasibility of implementation given existing or potential agency capacity
- ◆ The availability of “off the shelf” interventions already proven effective in a similar situation and serving similar populations is often limited.
- ◆ An agency may need to make changes to an intervention to align with the target population and agency context. When adapting an evidence-supported intervention, agencies should make every effort to preserve the integrity of the core components.
- ◆ If no well-defined interventions meet agency needs and circumstances, teams may need to design a customized solution.

What It Takes to Get It Done

1. The Selection Process

- Research possible interventions.
 - Search directories.
 - Conduct a literature review.
 - Contact program developers, experts, and peers.
- Assess evidence, fit, and feasibility of possible interventions.
- Determine whether interventions are well defined (usable/transferable).
- Decide to replicate or adapt an existing intervention or design a new one.

2. Ensuring a Well-Defined Intervention

- Define the intervention broadly.
- Develop a proposal for decision-makers.
 - Explain desired outcomes, proposed intervention, rationale for selection, and capacity considerations.
 - Lay out plans for replication, adaptation, or new design, as needed.
- Further define and operationalize the intervention, if needed.
 - Design new or more fully developed core components and develop operationalized definitions.
 - Adapt or create practice profiles that describe everyday practice.

A well-defined intervention enables consistent implementation and monitoring and meets four criteria (Van Dyke & Metz, 2014):

Clear description

Identified core components
("essential ingredients")

Operational definitions
(specific actions/behaviors)

Practical performance
assessment

Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation Milestones

- ◆ Identification of possible intervention options and assessment of fit and feasibility
- ◆ Selection of an intervention that will address the root cause(s) of the identified problem
- ◆ Development of a proposal for replication, adaptation, or design of an intervention
- ◆ Clear definition of the intervention's core components, related activities, and staff behaviors
- ◆ Vetting of the intervention, including core components, with key stakeholders

Completion of these milestones indicates that agencies can move on to assess readiness for the intervention and begin implementation planning and capacity building.

Need more information on intervention selection and design/adaptation?

Detailed resources are available on the **Change and Implementation in Practice** website at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-selection-design-adaptation/>



Indepth **brief** offers step-by-step guidance. Learn more on how to decide what to implement and how to clearly define a selected intervention.

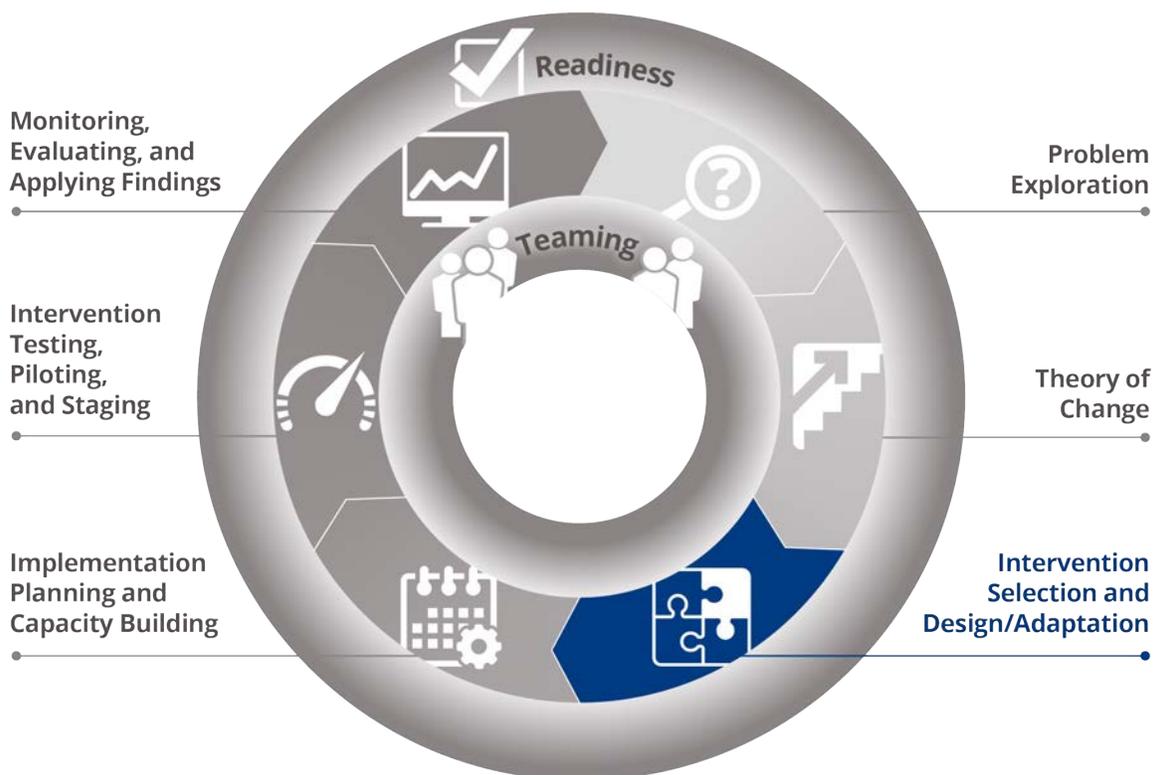


Short **videos** and a workbook reinforce key concepts. Use for training and to start thinking about application in your agency.



Recorded **webinars** feature real world examples. Hear lessons learned and tips from experts and peers.

Key Change and Implementation Topics



References

Framework Workgroup. (2014). *A framework to design, test, spread, and sustain effective practice in child welfare*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Van Dyke, M., & Metz, A. (2014). *Usable intervention criteria*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network.



For resources on other **Change and Implementation** topics, visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/>

