

**A SUSTAINABLE PREPARE SYSTEM IN YOUR SCHOOL:
BEGINNING WITH A FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS**

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November 2018

What is implementation science?

*"Implementation Science is the study of factors that influence full and effective use of innovations in practice. The goal is not to answer factual questions about what is, but rather to determine what is required."
(NIRN, 2015)*

*"Factors related to successful transportation of EBIs into school settings"
(Hicks-Hoste, 2015)*

*"The systematic uptake of evidence-based practices"
(Hicks-Hoste, 2015)*

Why consider implementation science?

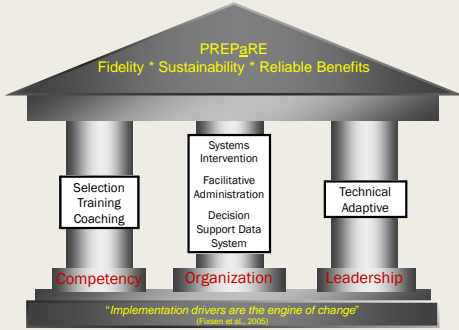
- ✓ Evidence-based interventions are necessary but not sufficient. We cannot expect an EBI to be effective when necessary drivers are not in place.
- ✓ Good ideas are difficult to implement without the proper foundational resources and supports.

An every-day example: An award-winning chocolate cake recipe!



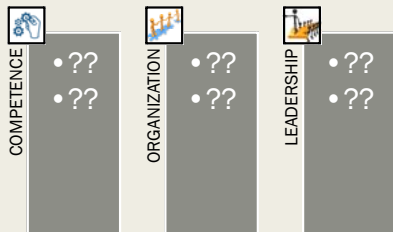
- **Implementation Drivers:**
 - Ability to locate and pay for the quality ingredients required
 - Available measuring cups and other baking utensils
 - Available oven
 - General baking skills (training, coaching)

PREP_aRE Implementation Drivers



SOURCE: National Implementation Research Network (<https://nimr.fpg.unc.edu/>)

What are some key implementation drivers all schools should prioritize for PREP_aRE?



PREPaRE – EXAMPLE COMPETENCY DRIVERS

- A diverse/varied group of school-based staff members are available to form safety and crisis teams (with school safety and crisis response expectations in job descriptions).
- Administration supports full PREPaRE training for all school leaders, safety team members, and crisis team members.
- School-based mental health professionals must be at the table for both safety and crisis teams (not just crisis response).
- A schedule of periodic safety team and crisis team meetings is added to team member calendars each year, for planning and preparedness skill building (e.g., develop written documents, evaluated needs and vulnerabilities, complete table-top exercises). At least 3x annually is encouraged.
- Training provided for new school safety and crisis response practices as they become available (e.g., advanced modules and skills).
- Coaching is available, either internally or through external consultants. Periodic communication with coaches is intended to sharpen skills and support accountability to best practice.
- New school safety strategies and techniques are discussed carefully before adopting. Fear-based decision making is explicitly noted as a possibility, with attempts to avoid made. Training provided for adopted new strategies.
- Access to school-based mental health staff and a range of mental health services arranged in an MTSS format is present in the school and throughout the district.

PREPaRE – EXAMPLE ORGANIZATION DRIVERS

- A school-wide data-collection system or plan is in place. System is communicated with stakeholders and the community, where appropriate.
- A school safety and crisis response data storage and documentation system is determined and implemented.
- The "probable vs. possible" idea is an expected decision-making lens for crisis prevention and preparedness actions plan.
- Data collected through vulnerability/needs assessments are used to prioritize school safety needs, make decisions about resource allocation, and to reduce implementation barriers.
- Teams develop fidelity measures for all five mission areas (i.e., prevention to recovery), based on school-specific needs (may not be the same for every school).
- Team leaders engage with and nurture multiple school safety and crisis response "champions" and "opinion leaders" outside the organization (e.g., NASP).
- A positive school climate and "growth mindset" is prioritized in the school environment. Psychological safety emphasized clearly as a vital and necessary crisis prevention strategy, not simply as "extra" or "fluff".
- Varied school safety and crisis response resources are collected on an on-going basis and organized into electronic folders by topic/issue, with the goal of having materials "at the ready" when needed. Hard copies also available should the ability to access electronic folders/sources be not possible in the midst of a crisis response.
- Policy development related to memorials, technology/social media use, care-for-the caregiver, and monitoring and/or removing team members involved in crisis response activities is a priority.
- The school and/or district has developed and updates on an ongoing basis a mental health landing page at its website (and/or on a social media platform) that serve as a clearinghouse of information about a district's safety and crisis plans, policies, and procedures; helpful handouts related to general mental health can be provided and accessed, as needed.
- Teams schedule time to formally evaluate crisis response efforts (e.g., the final "E" in PREPaRE) and then develop written action steps to improve future prevention and response efforts. Adaptations to the long-range school safety and crisis response plan are made, as needed.

PREPaRE – EXAMPLE LEADERSHIP DRIVERS

- Building and district administrators attend both PREPaRE workshops. Top-down support is provided, including developing job descriptions for safety/crisis team members that states participation expectations.
- Leaders willing to embrace idea of assessing for school safety blind spots. A willingness to prioritize necessary improvements is made. Leaders understand that implementing PREPaRE offers not only a best practice model for student/staff well-being, but also helps guard against litigation.
- Following an annual vulnerability assessment, a five-year strategic plan is developed or revisited and adjusted, as needed, when already in place.
- Team leaders carefully craft messages to the school community when systems change is necessary (e.g., change in policy, new practices are needed, etc.).
- Leaders actively address barriers, attempting to build bridges between and gain support from key players in the process.
- Team leaders communicate optimism and hope through regular communication and celebration of school safety and crisis response successes.
- Periodically, administrators and/or team members communicate plans, policies, and procedures to entire staff. Entire staff oriented to new strategies as needed (e.g., what to do if media contacts you, triage variable reminders, etc.)
- School and team leaders seek input periodically from the broader school community.
- A social media manager is named and school safety information provided via available platforms. Careful monitoring of school-driven social media is prioritized.
- An ethic of self-care is embraced and expected as a part of the safety and crisis response planning process before, during, and after the delivery of crisis response activities.

Activity Options

- Consider the example PREPaRE implementation drivers already presented. When thinking about your school, identify 2 to 3 driver strengths and 2 to 3 areas for growth (or "barriers") in each category. Brainstorm additional drivers that may be specific to your school/setting, that may not be included in the lists provided.
- See the Sample Long-Range Plan. With your knowledge of PREPaRE in mind, what are 1 or 2 school safety or crisis response needs that might go in your plan? Consider including specific aspects of PREPaRE (the "what") and/or implementation drivers (the "how").
- See the Sample School Safety & Crisis Response fidelity checklist. Begin to identify a few "must haves" to include in your fidelity checklist.
- Review the coaching questions checklist. Identify one or two people how could potentially serve this role for your school.

Implementation Science Resources

- Hicks-Hoste, T. B. (2015). Facilitators and barriers to the implementation of mental health evidence-based interventions, *NASP Communique*, 44 (1), 4-7.
- Shaw, S. R., Prevez, L. V., Shah, S. (2014). Evidence-based interventions: Necessary but not sufficient for a profession of scientist practitioners, *NASP Communique*, 43 (1), 1 & 18-19.

APPENDIX A

Summarizing the issues: Brief implementation videos

Video #1



<https://nirn.fgic.unc.edu/resources/video-1-0-research-practice-and-implementation-science>

Video #2



<https://nirn.fgic.unc.edu/resources/video-1-1-overview-scaling-and-active-implementation>

Video #3



<https://nirn.fgic.unc.edu/resources/video-1-6-implementation-drivers>

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