Solving Complex Implementation Problems
Abstract – 2nd Biennial Australian Implementation Conference 2014

Implementation Leadership

Leadership – understood as a solution to the problem of collective effort - "the problem of bringing people together and combining their efforts to promote success and survival" (Kaiser et al., 2008: 96) - is often treated as one of the important factors to successful implementation of effective practices. Several articles on the implementation of evidence-based practices acknowledge and emphasize the role leadership plays in implementation processes and the impact it has on them. Four major reviews on implementation literature conducted by Greenhalgh et al. (2004), Fixsen and colleagues (2005), Stith et al. (2006), and Durlak & DuPre (2008) all highlight the importance of organizational leadership and management support for successful implementation as documented in various single studies. In addition, the importance of leaders and leadership for implementation is frequently mentioned in passing within introductions or discussions of papers that focus on some other element of implementation (see, for example, Knudsen, Johnson & Roman, 2003; Isett et al., 2007; Zazzali et al., 2008; Weiner, 2009; Horwitz & Landsverk, 2010; Nakamura et al., 2011; Torrey et al., 2011).

In these publications, the need for leadership in implementation tends to be discussed as part of the organisational context of implementation. Typically discussed is an understanding of the required leadership activities and behaviours in implementation from more general leadership research, building concepts and models from these generic contexts with strong influences from public and corporate leadership research. Few researchers have examined the genuine characteristics of implementation focused leadership work and the specific qualifications a leader may need in order to facilitate the successful implementation of effective practices across different levels of implementation – the system, the organisation, the team, and the individual (Aarons, 2006a & 2006b, 2014; Briggs & McBeath, 2009). Our knowledge of implementation leadership in health and allied professions – of the skills and behaviours leaders need to develop and practice in order to successfully support the implementation of evidence-based practices – is limited.

This presentation will introduce conference attendees to first results from a rapid evidence assessment focusing on the characteristics of effective leadership in health and allied professions. In addition, a logic model will be presented aiming to describe the interplay between leadership skills and behaviours on the one hand and organisations' and systems' capacity to implement and scale up the use of evidence-based practices on the other hand.

Presentation type: Oral presentation

The presenter consents to (a) this abstract being made available on the conference website during and after the conference; (b) the presentation being recorded and made available on the conference website after the conference; and (c) a copy of the PowerPoint presentation being made available on the conference website after the conference

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