Developing an Evidence-Based Survey Tool to Facilitate and Effectively Plan Technical Assistance Delivery

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BACKGROUND

In the U.S., state-level health departments oversee public health programs essential to the promotion of health and prevention of disease. In pursuit of these entrusted duties, evidence-based interventions (EBIs) are implemented to affect population health outcomes. The EBI implementation process is inherently complex, engaging different competencies at each stage of the process. These complexities underscore the need for continuous capacity building throughout the EBI implementation process. For instance, EBI implementation might necessitate content, context, and setting adaptations while managing changes in the organizational capacity. Due to natural challenges, support systems have been established to augment the capacity of practitioners. Technical assistance (TA) has been identified as critical support for EBI implementation. Although existing TA frameworks describe different phases and elements needed to achieve their intended goals, an outline for planning the TA delivery process is not comprehensively structured.

OBJECTIVE

The present work seeks to develop a survey tool to facilitate the TA delivery planning process, aiming to improve the effectiveness of TA engagements.

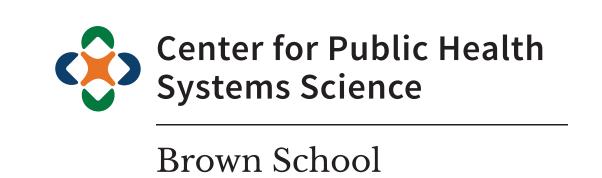
EXPECTATIONS

Implementation of this survey tool will generate important data to tailor the delivery of TA in a collaborative process between TA providers and their recipients.

Contact Information

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METHODS

Study Overview and Participants

- The development of this survey was part of the randomized-control trial study titled Plans, Actions, and Capacity to Sustain Tobacco Control (PACT), a 5-year study. In year 1, a capacity-building intervention was developed, and in year 2, it was implemented in state-level tobacco control programs (TCPs) (11 control states and 12 intervention states in the US)
- The intervention lasted 24 months, and it was comprised of a 2-day staff and stakeholders training in the intervention states at the beginning of the project and technical assistance delivery to program staff from months 1 through 24
- For the present study, the survey development, we excluded stakeholders and focused only on the TCPs staff because they are the recipients of TA

Technical Assistance Survey Development

The development of the technical assistance survey was a two-phase process using a collaborative and iterative approach between the research team and stakeholders:

Phase 1: Survey Pilot Version

Survey Components Outline

- Literature review: to identify potential technical assistance survey elements
- Guiding questions: how (TA recipients want TA to be delivered), how often (they want to receive TA), how long (for how long they want to receive TA), and what (are the preferred activities)

Face and Content Validity

- Face validity focuses on whether the items of each survey domain are sensible, appropriate, and relevant to the people who use the measure on a day-to-day basis
- Content validity examines to which extent the items comprehensively cover the components to be measured through the survey
- Experts (i.e., public health consultants, TA providers, and researchers) reviewed the content (face validity), and TCP program managers, the TA recipients, participated in the content representativeness evaluation (content validity)

Phase 2: Survey Testing and Suitability Assessment

Survey Testing

- To test the survey and assess its suitability as a useful collaborative planning tool between TA providers and TA recipients, we invited TCP staff to respond to the survey
- A hypothetical common and relatable problem that TA sessions can address was created and included into the electronic survey

Survey Suitability Assessment

- To assess the suitability of the survey as a collaborative planning tool between TA providers and recipients, we analyzed the survey responses and identify the potential results in achieving the survey's purpose
- We created a structured plan with the results to assess the suitability of the survey as a TA delivery plan

RESULTS

Phase 1

The final survey comprised 16 questions encompassing items related to frequency, availability, and duration of TA sessions; TA activities and preferred delivery method; TA elements; and potential barriers to receiving TA.

<u>Phase 2</u>:

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TA DELIVERY PLAN [Test Survey]

Program Name: [Programs]

Technical Assistance (TA) Topic: [Smokefree policy implementation]

Number of Participants: 15 Duration of TA provision: 5- 11 months

Estimate Availability for Real-Time TA Sessions: 1-2 hours/month

Total Number of Real-Time TA Sessions: Duration of TA provision x Number of Real-Time Sessions/month Estimate Availability for Self-Paced Review of TA Resources: 1-3 hours/month

TA Activities and the Top Three Preferred Delivery Methods:

Professional Development

- Real-time webinar
- Virtual meeting
- Online class

Coaching and Mentoring

- Virtual meeting
- Email
- In-person meeting

Support and Feedback

- Email and Virtual Meeting
- Phone Call and Instant Messaging
- In-person Meeting

Peer Collaborative Work Mediated by a TA Provider

- Virtual meeting
- Presentation sharing lessons learned from common programs/projects
- In-person Meeting

TA Elements to Include in TA Sessions:

- Examples that match my program's problems
- Pragmatic information and actionable steps
- Additional learning resources

Potential Barriers to Receiving TA:

- Low organizational capacity
- Competing priorities
- Not applicable

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Measure TA effectiveness: Development of tool to measure effectiveness of TA efforts
- Effectively design TA efforts: Results from tool can be used to effectively design TA

CONCLUSION

- The technical assistance survey development was part of a study that aimed to promote the sustainability of statelevel tobacco control programs (PACT Study).
- For the survey development, the research team outlined the survey based on a literature review, reviewed its content, adjusted the survey based on stakeholders' feedback, and tested the suitability of the survey as a technical assistance delivery planning tool

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