

Transformation Zone Evaluation Update

March 31, 2015

In Year 2 of the Transformation Zone evaluation, evaluators will attend many county and state level meetings, in person and remotely with groups and individuals. We will regularly communicate with state level partners (NIRN, NCPC, ABLe, and Grants Management) to provide developmental feedback related to implementation of evidence-based strategies and systems change processes at state and county levels. Finally, we will share findings — themes about what we have heard and observed — quarterly with TZ county and state participants via a newsletter, of which this is the first.

This winter, members of the Transformation Zone (TZ) Evaluation Team attended 14 meetings – in person and by phone – to learn how implementation and systems change approaches are working in the TZ counties. Our observations and listening identified several themes: 1) efforts related to technical assistance (TA) and work of the TZ coaches, 2) communication and practice-policy feedback loops, and 3) sustainability issues related to learning to use data and learning from transitions. In this update, you will find observations from meetings for each of these areas, and questions to consider as the TZ processes move forward.

Technical Assistance

Evaluation team observations:

With all counties in initial implementation of TZ strategies, TA efforts have been focused on learning about data collection and analysis, using evidence-based practices (EBPs) as a trigger for change and capacity building. Counties are working to integrate what they are learning about implementation science and systems change with their specific needs.

Our questions for consideration:

Might counties benefit from TA related to negotiating with purveyors and service providers related to evaluating and adapting evidence-informed practice models?

What skills might county teams need to identify and receive future training and TA related to their specific needs?

How might counties integrate the different assessment sources (e.g., County Capacity Assessments and Systems Scans) to identify needs related to implementation and system change processes?



Coaching

Evaluation team observations:

Coaches support the learning of county implementation and leadership teams regarding implementation science and systems change. They coordinate data collection, management, and analysis for the implementation and leadership teams. Their efforts are currently central to sustaining feedback loops, implementation, and systems change processes in the counties.

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Our questions for consideration:

How might coaches continue to share their learning with county teams?

To support sustainability beyond the scope of the TZ, how might county teams share responsibility of communication implementation, and systems change activities?

We welcome opportunities and invitations to listen and observe how processes are emerging. Contact us at TZeval@unc.edu with questions and feedback.

Communication: Feedback Loops and Messaging

Evaluation team observations:

As counties have engaged in initial implementation of strategies, they are communicating with purveyor representatives and TZ support (NIRN, NCPC, ABL) regarding what works well, and what aspects need adjustment to work in their counties. Strategy purveyors and service providers are developing working relationships with county teams, and responding to requests as they are able. County teams are identifying necessary and beneficial

partnerships in their communities to sustain their work. Discussions at team meetings often focused on how to engage and communicate needs with community members, including legislators, county board members, and local advocacy groups. Coaches and county teams are excited about messaging possibilities. Discussion of messaging often focused on strengthening relationships within the county and refining connections.

Our questions for consideration:

Might it be helpful to create/update communication protocols to use within counties, across counties, and between county and state personnel, to establish how feedback loops are expected to function?

Might opportunities related to learning how to create effective messages be approached by members of the county teams?

Sustainability: Using Data and Transitions

As expected in Year 3 of the TZ grant, much discussion and activity focused on sustainability. All teams and partners want to see the ongoing transformations take root and continue to grow in the TZ counties. Two processes have been identified as key to sustainability: 1) learning to use data to support implementation and systems change, and 2) learning in the context of transitions.

Using Data

Evaluation team observations:

In addition to learning to collect data, counties have been identifying types of data that enable the counties to reflect TZ strategy *efforts*, examine implementation *fidelity*, and look forward to eventual *outcomes* reflected in children's readiness and family engagement.

Coaches and county teams have been focused on how to use data from purveyors and what data they need to collect from families and other stakeholders for the Systems Scans.

Our question for consideration:

How might each county determine specific needs for collecting and using data to support EBPs?

Transitions

Evaluation team observations:

Each county is experiencing transitions in their teams and implementation coaches. Counties are learning that sustainability will be determined by how well their systems are in place in the context of transitions. County teams have had rich

discussions about what characteristics are needed for personnel and team members, and who will best help move their TZ and county goals forward. County leadership teams are also thinking about their group identity beyond the TZ grant: "What will early childhood leadership look like in our county?"

Our question for consideration:

When faced with transitions in team members, how might county teams continue to learn to identify leadership and implementation team members who make decisions and effect change in their communities?