



Five-Step Checklist for Implementing Behavioral Health Evidence-Based Practices



Worried about how to succeed at launching that exciting new practice? Scratching your head about why your efforts at implementing the latest evidence-based practice (EBP) have fallen flat? Implementation of behavioral health EBPs requires strategic investment in staff, technology, processes, and finances to build a culture of change. This Five-Step Checklist offers a quick guide to implementing your EBP and taking it to scale.

1. Establish Fit in Context

Review and document the evidence for implementing this EBP, at this time, and in this particular service location. Identify your target audience and their needs. Outline a plan to share your findings and your vision for the successful impact of this new EBP across the organization.

2. Establish Key Performance Indicators

Identify the data and metrics that will be the indicators of better quality and outcomes. Do you have systems in place to gather, collect, and measure impact?

3. Target the Implementation

Determine your target audience. Firmly establish when and where the new EBP will be available to that target population. Establish which of your staff will be trained and ready to deliver this EBP. Determine how you will supervise and support them over 1–3 years as the new practice becomes institutionalized.

4. Conduct an Organizational Readiness Assessment for EBP Implementation

Assess and invest in the resources required to support and sustain this change.

- Where will you find appropriate training and technical assistance to support the adoption of this EBP over time? Adapting practice and sustaining change may take 2–3 years.
- What are the purchasing and contracting needs surrounding this new practice? What are the costs associated with full implementation?

- What are the licensing or regulatory requirements?
- What are the IT, data management, and reporting needs?
- What are the clinical and business operations impacts?
- What are the organizational barriers or challenges to implementation? What is needed to overcome them?
- Is the effort financially viable?

5. Plan the Implementation for Success

Even with all of this, leadership must leverage clinical and operational expertise that champions and supports a change-friendly environment and aligns key levers for successful implementation, including:

- Timelines for rollout
- Metrics to track outcomes
- Resources required to support success
- Return on investment
- Sustainability and spread

Remember that culture is crucial. Your organization must value consumer input, create conditions for cross-agency collaboration, and approach organizational development by building both human capabilities and systems capacity. Partnering with staff and building capability for responsiveness through continuous improvement takes ongoing assessment of the needs of populations served, data-driven aims, and leadership support. Stay committed for the long haul.