

Appendix C

Frequently Asked Questions

Treatment Integrity

What is treatment integrity?

In the most general sense, treatment integrity refers to the degree to which a treatment is implemented as planned. Many contemporary conceptual models of treatment integrity represent it as a multidimensional construct. Commonly, these models consider the adherence (what intervention steps were implemented), quality (how well were steps implemented), and exposure (how much of each intervention step was delivered) of intervention implementation.

Why should I be concerned about treatment integrity?

The importance of knowing exactly how school-based interventions are implemented cannot be overstated. When it is assumed that an intervention was implemented as planned, and it was not, the likelihood of making an incorrect conclusion about the effectiveness of the intervention is high. Deviations from the intervention plan may negatively impact student outcomes. The concept of treatment integrity is central to the daily implementation of interventions by school personnel.

How is treatment integrity related to student outcomes?

Treatment integrity can be directly related to student outcomes. When interventions are implemented as planned, or with a high level of treatment integrity, there is a better chance that the intervention help the student reach their intervention goal. When interventions are not implemented as planned, or with a low level of treatment integrity, there is a lower chance that the intervention will produce the intended positive student outcomes. Additionally, if interventions are being implemented as planned but the student is not

making progress, teams are able to make sound decisions regarding changing interventions or the intensity of interventions.

The implementer is uncomfortable with assessing her treatment integrity. What can I do?

Discomfort with implementation assessment can be a common situation when the concept of treatment integrity is not openly discussed or not discussed in a supportive manner. Talking about treatment integrity openly from the beginning of consultation or discussing the concept at the beginning of the year with all teachers, such as at professional development meetings, can be a good first step toward making implementers more comfortable with treatment integrity. Additionally, explaining that evaluating treatment integrity is another way to make sure interventions are working the way they are supposed to and linking it to student outcomes can be helpful.

PRIME

How can I use PRIME to support my school's RTI process?

In addition to monitoring student outcomes through the Response-to-Intervention (RTI) process, monitoring treatment integrity is another piece to making appropriate data based decisions about the appropriate level of intervention supports. Students should not be moved between tiers unless there are treatment integrity data to support that interventions are indeed being implemented the way they were intended. If the intervention is being implemented with adequate treatment integrity and students are still not making adequate progress, then they should be considered for receiving more intensive supports and “move up the triangle.” However, if treatment integrity is low and a student is not making adequate progress, then appropriate decisions cannot be made about changing interventions. In this case, implementers should be supported with their implementation through the PRIME Model. The intervention may produce positive results for the student if it was fully implemented. See Chapter 9 for further discussion on integrating treatment integrity and progress-monitoring data.

How much time will PRIME take? Are there efficient ways to use PRIME?

Like any new system, PRIME will take time to set up at the beginning. Familiarizing stakeholders with treatment integrity, setting up systems of data

collection, deciding how to measure treatment integrity, and familiarizing yourself with the different PRIME supports available to implementers may seem like a daunting task. But once in place, measuring treatment integrity and using PRIME will become more efficient and routine. As you begin, remember that not all teachers require intensive implementation supports and data on treatment integrity can be collected in a variety of ways, and not all by the same person.

How can I describe PRIME to my administrators to support their buy-in?

There are a variety of ways to approach describing PRIME to administrators. PRIME will promote efficiency within multi-tiered systems of supports. Looking at student outcomes as well as treatment integrity data will aid in making appropriate data-based decisions. Further, taking and using treatment integrity data is not only best practice, but is also either implicitly or explicitly required by law in several states. In addition, PRIME can be described as a way to support student outcomes, as well as improve implementer confidence and skills in delivering interventions.

How can I describe PRIME to parents?

PRIME can be explained as a system of supports that aims to train implementers in appropriately delivering evidence-based interventions. Delivering interventions as they were intended promotes better student outcomes in academics and behavior. However, if students are not making gains despite the implementer delivering the intervention appropriately, the data collected through PRIME will allow the team to make data-based decisions about what are appropriate next steps for supporting the student. The bottom line is that implementation data is designed to provide support to implementers and ensure students receive interventions as designed.

How can I explain the PRIME findings to a team?

A discussion of treatment integrity, what it means for student outcomes, and how to support implementation to achieve sufficient treatment integrity should take place. Treatment integrity graphs can be used to illustrate implementation alongside student outcomes (see Chapter 8 regarding graphing and analyzing data). Graphs can be especially powerful when first explaining the importance of treatment integrity when student outcomes are low and implementation is also low, but after PRIME Implementation Supports are

offered, both treatment integrity and student outcomes increase. The combination of treatment integrity and student outcome graphs are valuable in making data-based decisions within a team and treatment integrity should always be considered when changes in interventions are made.

How do I decide between the different PRIME Implementation Supports?

The use of the different PRIME Implementation Supports depends on the level of support a teacher needs. Tier 1 supports, such as Direct Training and/or Implementation Planning, should be offered when first introducing an intervention to an implementer. These supports should provide most implementers with the skills and confidence needed to sufficiently implement the intervention as planned. If treatment integrity is low after Tier 1 supports are delivered, more intensive supports may be needed. Decisions about what supports are most appropriate to use with a particular implementer are based on a variety of implementer characteristics. To learn more about how to choose supports, see Chapter 9 of the PRIME Manual, which discusses data-based decision making in great detail.

What are the major advantages and disadvantages to using PRIME?

There are always advantages and disadvantages to implementing a new system. PRIME can be used to support implementers in their delivery of evidence-based interventions, which will facilitate better student outcomes. It also helps teams to make appropriate decisions about levels of intervention support. To start, PRIME could be considered time consuming as there will be more data to collect, and more graphs to make and interpret. This can seem like a pretty resource- and time-intensive activity. However, these data are essential to making appropriate decisions for students, and collecting treatment integrity data in schools is required by many states. Additionally, the focus on supporting and promoting implementation will likely lead to a decrease in developing more intensive interventions that may not be necessary.

Where can I learn more about PRIME?

You can find out more about PRIME including the research, PRIME materials, and people involved at the website: <http://www.primeimplementation.com/> There you may also email PRIME Manual authors for additional information.