

## CHAPTER 3

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# Direct Training

### **What Will This Chapter Tell Me?**

Direct Training includes didactic training, consultant demonstration of the intervention, implementer practice, and feedback to facilitate an implementer's treatment integrity. In the PRIME Model, Direct Training is considered a Tier 1 Implementation Support. The chapter describes the purpose of Direct Training and explains how to prepare for and deliver Direct Training. After reading this chapter, you will be able to describe and deliver the steps of Direct Training.

### **What is Direct Training?**

The overall purpose of Direct Training is to increase the implementer's confidence in delivering the intervention by teaching her or him foundational intervention implementation knowledge and skills. Direct Training is delivered before intervention implementation and "booster" Direct Training sessions can be provided if an implementer is struggling to deliver the intervention with adequate treatment integrity. Direct Training consists of didactic training on intervention steps, followed by the consultant demonstrating the intervention, the implementer practicing the intervention, and the consultant providing feedback to the implementer. After an effective Direct Training session, the implementer has an increased under-

standing of the intervention, a positive experience with implementation of the intervention steps, and more optimistic expectations about intervention effectiveness and implementation success.

## **How to Prepare for Direct Training**

To deliver Direct Training, some preparation is necessary. Be sure to review the general guidelines for a PRIME Implementation Support meeting (see Appendix E). In particular, make sure to review the intervention plan and feel prepared to describe and implement it. Beyond the general guidelines, preparation for Direct Training includes 3 steps:

- Breaking down the intervention plan into teachable intervention steps;
- Deciding how to proceed through Direct Training steps based on treatment integrity data; and
- Preparing necessary materials.

### ***Step 1: Breaking Down the Intervention Plan***

First, review the intervention plan. In doing so, ask yourself, “How can the intervention plan be best taught to the implementer?” Divide the intervention plan into grouped intervention steps that will help the implementer understand (a) the overall intervention plan and (b) how the intervention steps fit into the larger components of the intervention. For a behavior support plan, it may be helpful to group intervention steps into antecedent (e.g., establishing and defining a classroom schedule, active supervision), teaching (e.g., teach behavior expectations, teach problem solving), and consequence (e.g., class-wide group contingencies, positive reinforcement) strategies. For other types of interventions, organize intervention steps into logical groups to teach to the implementer. For example, you may divide the intervention steps according to *when* the steps must be implemented (e.g., all steps delivered at once, different steps provided at separate times) or the theoretical links

between intervention steps (e.g., if several steps are based on one principle, if intervention steps build on one another).

### ***Step 2: Plan How to Complete Direct Training***

Next, decide how to proceed through Direct Training based on how you grouped the intervention steps and any available treatment integrity data. You may decide to go through the didactic training, demonstration, practice, and feedback (Direct Training steps 2 to 10) for the entire intervention at once. Alternatively, you may choose to complete these Direct Training components for an individual intervention step or group of intervention steps before repeating them for the next intervention step or group of intervention steps. You may also find that it is not appropriate to demonstrate and practice specific intervention steps (e.g., posting a sign). To decide how to proceed through Direct Training steps, consider how you broke the intervention into teachable intervention chunks, as well as the number and complexity of intervention steps. Use any available treatment integrity data to decide if you need to focus on specific intervention steps for practice.

### ***Step 3: Gather Materials***

Last, gather the materials needed for the Direct Training session. These materials include the intervention plan or a written list of the intervention steps, as well as any materials needed to implement the interventions (e.g., forms, student worksheets, rewards).

#### **PRIME Tip**

Direct Training involves teaching the implementer the content of an intervention plan and the behaviors required to implement an intervention plan. The implementer will likely be learning something new as part of his or her participation in Direct Training. As such, these activities could be considered a form of professional development. Therefore, consider the following best practices in

professional development when planning and implementing Direct Training.

Professional development is best when it...

- Links to both educator professional development goals and student goals;
- Involves collaboration and collective participation;
- Includes training on the content and skills relevant to evidence-based interventions;
- Includes corrective feedback and planned follow-up;
- Occurs with administrative support and leadership; and
- Aligns with state and national standards for professional development.

## How To Deliver Direct Training

The steps of Direct Training are described below. This chapter is a more detailed companion to the Direct Training protocol and treatment integrity measure found in Appendix F.

### *Step 1: Explain the Purpose of the Session*

A preview of the objectives for Direct Training will help the implementer understand the purpose of the session and what his or her role will be during the session. It may be beneficial to give the implementer an actual written agenda that briefly lists each of the session objectives. Consider asking the implementer if there are any additional items he or she would like to add to the agenda. This step will help set a tone of collaboration and active engagement during the session.

A preview of objectives involves presenting an overview of how the Direct Training process works. Tell the implementer you will be reviewing the intervention plan, demonstrating the intervention steps, providing an opportunity for the implementer to practice the

intervention steps, and giving feedback to ensure he or she masters the intervention.

Additionally, outline the goals of the session for the implementer. Goals for a Direct Training session may include increasing the implementers' implementation skills and/or confidence (e.g., "Our goal for today is to make sure you feel confident implementing each step of the behavior support plan with the student every day during circle time and small group reading."). Ask the implementer what goals they might have for the meeting (e.g., "I wonder what other goals you have for the session today?"). When the implementer shares goals, validate his or her goals and explain how each goal can be met during the session or how and when you will address the goals after the session. Be sure to make connections between how each part of the Direct Training session will help meet the session goals (e.g., "Our goal is to increase your confidence during implementation and looking at the intervention in detail and having an opportunity for demonstration and practice should facilitate your comfort and confidence with implementation").

### ***Step 2: Didactic Intervention Training***

Provide didactic training to ensure the implementer understands the purpose of each intervention step and how to implement each intervention step. The goal of this process is to provide an overview of the intervention plan, as well as how the intervention can support student outcomes.

Didactic training involves a review of each intervention step needed to implement the intervention and detailed instructions about how to carry out each step. When reviewing each step, be sure to reference and show any materials needed to implement the step. Emphasize (a) *why* each step is important and *what* it accomplishes, and (b) any relevant research support for the effectiveness of the step, as appropriate. In doing so, describe the rationale for the effectiveness of the intervention plan for this particular student and tar-

get concern. Throughout the process, encourage the implementer's active involvement by asking questions about implementation and use of the step as well as answering any questions.

Ideally, provide a written copy of the intervention plan to facilitate didactic training. The written intervention plan will help the implementer follow along with your explanations of each step and provide them with a place to take notes on how to implement each step.

### ***Step 3: Answer Implementer's Questions***

Following didactic training, it is likely the implementer will have questions about implementation of the intervention plan. Prompt for questions in a way that provides a supportive atmosphere. This step in the Direct Training sessions gives the implementer an opportunity to ask questions or bring up any concerns that arose during the review of the intervention plan.

#### **PRIME Tip**

Ask the implementer questions to elicit their opinions, concerns, or questions about the intervention or implementation. Go beyond generic questions such as “Do you have any questions?” or “Does that make sense?” that simply require a yes or no answer. Instead, have the implementer consider their impressions of the intervention, how the intervention will fit into their routines, and what potential questions or issues may arise during implementation. Below is a list of potential questions to include during Direct Training and your other consultation meetings. Use these and similar questions to guide your consultation.

- How do you see that intervention step happening in your classroom?
- Have you implemented interventions like this in the past? Tell me about your experience.
- What do you think will be easiest about implementing this

intervention? What intervention steps might be challenging?

- What intervention steps do you see the student being particularly responsive to?
- How will you describe this intervention to the student's parents? Can I help facilitate this discussion?

Address implementer questions and concerns as best you can based on intervention research and your experience. It is important to validate the thoughtfulness and perspective of the implementer's questions and concerns (e.g., "Great question! I had not thought of that," "I see why you might have that concern about this intervention plan with this student."). It is okay to ask the implementer in return what they might think about their own question or concern, (e.g., "In your experience, how have you handled that issue?"). Part of the consultation process is valuing the skills and knowledge of both the consultant *and* implementer. These types of responses will reinforce the collaboration and mutual trust critical to the consultant-implementer relationship.

#### ***Step 4: Demonstrate Intervention***

Your demonstration of the intervention will give the implementer an example of how to deliver each step of the intervention plan. You may simply act out how to deliver the intervention steps as planned, but it is often beneficial to also describe what you are doing. Use intervention materials, as appropriate. During the demonstration, highlight intervention adherence (i.e., delivering the intervention as planned) and quality (i.e., *how* you are delivering intervention components). That is, beyond the intervention plan itself, describe and demonstrate how to deliver the intervention with quality. Specifically, make sure your demonstration includes the following quality features:

- Appropriate interaction with the student (e.g., tone, non-

- verbal behavior);
- Smooth and natural implementation (e.g., responding automatically to the student, having materials accessible);
  - Appropriate timing (e.g., clear instructions given before new activity);
  - Competent implementation (e.g., clearly responsive to student's needs).

### **Step 5: Engage the Implementer in Guided Practice**

Guided practice of the intervention steps will help the implementer understand how he or she will implement each intervention step. It gives the implementer an opportunity to try new skills needed to implement the intervention in a supportive environment and ask new questions that arise with actual implementation practice. The *guided* practice step of the Direct Training session occurs before the *independent* practice step (Step 8). Guided practice allows for more supported, collaborative practice of the intervention steps with the consultant, while independent practice allows the implementer to demonstrate that he or she can implement each intervention step without support.

To engage in guided practice, have the implementer practice the intervention and provide supportive guidance as needed. Guidance may include additional explanations of intervention steps, prompts, hints, guiding questions, answering implementer questions, and encouragement. Provide the implementer with materials to implement each step, as necessary.

#### **PRIME Tip**

Some implementers may be a bit uncomfortable with demonstration and practice so take care to make sure that the process is as comfortable and naturalistic as possible. To do so, set up your demonstration as an opportunity to share examples and use scenarios from the implementer's setting that you have observed (e.g., "To implement this step, at the beginning of circle time you might say

...” or “When you’re handing out papers, that would be a great time for you to ...”). After providing the demonstration, ask a question to facilitate the practice (e.g., “So, that’s how it could look at circle time, what might you say during independent seatwork?” “So, in your own words, what do you think you’ll plan to say when you’re handing out papers?”). This way the demonstration and practice remain a natural part of the conversation around implementation.

### ***Step 6: Provide Feedback about the Guided Practice***

Following the guided practice, provide feedback to the implementer about their intervention implementation. Give specific feedback on the implementation of each step in a positive and constructive manner. Be sure to reinforce successes and correct any implementation errors. Share with the implementer the particular steps he or she implemented according to plan and/or with high quality, and the steps he or she should focus on for improving adherence or quality. The implementer should feel more confident and positive about intervention implementation following appropriate and reinforcing feedback.

### ***Step 7: Repeat Guided Practice and Feedback, if Necessary***

After the first round of guided practice in Step 6, check in with the implementer about his or her knowledge about and confidence in implementing the intervention. Some implementers will benefit from repeated guided practice and feedback. If it appears the implementer needs more practice to feel confident implementing the intervention plan with the actual student after the first try at guided practice, repeat steps 5 and 6 until the implementer successfully implements each component of the intervention. Subsequent rounds of guided practice do not have to be identical to the initial practice. Consider fading the intensity of guidance to help the implementer transition successfully from guided to independent practices.

### ***Step 8: Implementer Engages in Independent Practice***

Now transition to independent practice of the intervention steps without guidance. This independent practice will give the implementer an additional opportunity to validate his or her confidence in how to implement each intervention step and ensure he or she is prepared to deliver the intervention. To engage the implementer in independent practice, ask the implementer to independently practice the intervention or grouped intervention steps. Do not provide any guidance during the independent practice, but identify areas of strength during implementation as well as areas for improvement. In doing so, identify the implementer's level of implementation adherence (i.e., the match between steps implemented and steps written in the intervention plan) and quality (i.e., the quality of the delivery of the intervention plan).

### ***Step 9: Provide Feedback about the Practice***

Ask the implementer to reflect on his or her own independent practice. In doing so, help the implementer identify what steps he or she implemented with sufficient adherence and quality, and what intervention steps still need improvement. The self-evaluation will might also result in additional questions or concerns about the intervention plan. Provide constructive feedback regarding the implementer's independent practice. Remember to keep feedback positive and constructive. In doing so, be sure to correct any implementation errors, but also reinforce successes.

### ***Step 10: Repeat Independent Practice and Feedback, if necessary***

As with the guided practice, examine the implementer's skill and confidence during independent practice and response to feedback. If the implementer needs more practice to confidently deliver the intervention with adequate treatment integrity, repeat steps 8 and 9. Provide additional independent practice and feedback until the im-

implementer successfully delivers each component of the intervention without your support.

### **Step 11: Close Direct Training**

The implementer should leave the Direct Training session understanding the intervention steps and confident in their implementation. Revisit the consultation goals and evaluate if those goals have been met through Direct Training. This session is a way to provide the implementer with a large amount of helpful and extensive information about the intervention plan and its implementation. As a result, ask the implementer if he or she has any remaining questions about the intervention plan or implementation. Validate the implementer's active engagement in the meeting. End the session by providing positive feedback to the implementer about his or her participation in Direct Training.

### **What Did I Learn About PRIME?**

Direct Training prepares the implementer to implement an intervention plan with high levels of treatment integrity. The consultant should select which steps of the Direct Training protocol will be used during the session to help the implementer learn the steps of the intervention plan. During the session, the consultant will lead the implementer through didactic training, a demonstration of the intervention, guided practice, independent practice, and feedback.

### **Chapter 3 Key Terms**

Didactic Training

Direct Training

Intervention Step