CHAPTER 4

Implementation Planning

What Will This Chapter Tell Me?

Implementation Planning helps an implementer define the logistics of delivering an intervention and identify potential barriers as well as related solutions for maintaining implementation. Within PRIME, Implementation Planning is a Tier 1 Implementation Support that can be reviewed and updated throughout implementation. This chapter provides an overview of how to work with the implementer to develop an Implementation Plan (i.e., how to create both an Action Plan and a Coping Plan). It explains the purpose of Implementation Planning, how to prepare for an Implementation Planning session, and how to deliver steps of Implementation Planning. After reading this chapter, you will understand the components of Implementation Planning.

What is Implementation Planning?

The overall purpose of Implementation Planning is to prepare the implementer to deliver all of the steps of the intervention and identify potential barriers to ongoing implementation. Implementation Planning includes detailed logistical planning (Action Planning) and barrier identification and development of strategies to overcome those barriers (Coping Planning). An Implementation Planning session consists of first reviewing the intervention and making modifications to intervention steps, as necessary. Next, the implementer identifies the logistics of each intervention step as well as any necessary resources. Last, the implementer identifies potential barriers to implementation as well as potential strategies to address those barriers. The outcome of effective Implementation Planning is enhanced implementer confidence in delivering the intervention with high levels of treatment integrity.

PRIME Tip

The implementer can complete implementation Planning independently. The electronic version of Implementation Planning (available at www.primeimplementation.com) walks the implementer through the Action Planning and Coping Planning items. Initial research indicates that implementers can successfully complete the electronic version of Implementation Planning and it facilitates improved levels of treatment integrity. That said, more research has evaluated Implementation Planning within a consultation format and so if it is possible to deliver this strategy within this format, we suggest it is done collaboratively.

How to Prepare for Implementation Planning

When preparing to deliver Implementation Planning, 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. In addition, decide how to organize the intervention plan into teachable grouped intervention steps and gather the Implementation Planning forms and materials. If the intervention has already been grouped logically into steps (e.g., for Direct Training), use the same groupings. If not, spend some time with the intervention plan. Are there steps that fit together or can be grouped in a logical way? If so, plan to address those steps together, as a group, rather than in individual pieces. For more information about breaking an intervention down into teachable grouped steps, see Chapter 3 (How to Prepare for Direct Training).

Gather the Implementation Planning Protocol (Appendix G) and necessary materials. If you prefer paper and pencil, you will need four pages of Implementation Planning forms (Appendix G). If you would like to take notes electronically, access the electronic version of the Implementation Planning Form. Add the intervention steps, organized by group, to the Implementation Planning Forms. In addition, bring a written list of the intervention steps to the meeting.

PRIME Tip

To facilitate the meeting process, consider bringing a second copy of the Implementation Planning Form so that the implementer can follow along. We have found this action helps implementers understand the meeting format in general, follow along with the Action Planning items, and in particular, keeps the meeting running at relatively quick pace.

How to Deliver Implementation Planning

The steps of Implementation Planning are described below. This description of the purpose of and how to deliver each step is a companion to the Implementation Planning protocol and treatment integrity measure found in Appendix G.

Step 1: Explain the Purpose of the Session

The purpose of this step is to open the Implementation Planning session in a collaborative manner by previewing the plan for the session, explaining Implementation Planning, and developing goals for the session. Start by providing a general description of why you are meeting with the implementer. Explain that you are going to look at intervention logistics and plan for implementation.

Explain to the implementer that Implementation Planning consists of two steps: Action Planning and Coping Planning. The goal of the Action Planning step is for the consultant and the implementer to look at the intervention steps and plan the details of the intervention. The goal of the Coping Planning step is to identify and problem solve barriers to implementation. Thus, the overall purpose of Implementation Planning is to facilitate the definition and adaptation of the intervention so that it fits the implementer's specific context and classroom.

Based on this description of Implementation Planning, work with the implementer to collaboratively develop goals for the session. Developing meeting goals will allow you to target the discussion and ensure there is a shared vision for the meeting. Goals for Implementation Planning might include helping the implementer's preparation for implementation or making adaptions to the intervention to ensure it is contextually appropriate. Use your understanding of the Implementation Planning strategy to help target the implementer's suggestions for the session goals. Once you've decided on shared goals, briefly explain how Implementation Planning will help meet these session goals.

Step 2: Review Student Issue and Goal

To set up the discussion of the intervention, briefly review the target student issue, current data (if available), and the intervention goal. That is, you may highlight the major issues and address the current level of student progress compared to the intervention goal. This review of the student concern will ensure that the discussion of the intervention through the rest of the Implementation Planning steps is appropriately contextualized.

Step 3: Review Intervention Steps

This is the first step of Action Planning, and consists of reviewing the list of intervention steps with the implementer (see Action Plan

Worksheet, Part A). If the intervention steps have been grouped together, it is important for the consultant to go over how the steps were grouped and the logic behind the grouping, to make sure that the steps are divided in a way that makes sense to the implementer. If the implementer has any questions or suggestions about how the steps have been divided or the order of the intervention steps, make revisions to the list of intervention steps at this time.

Step 4: Modify Intervention Steps, if Needed

It is important to ensure that the intervention is feasible and contextually appropriate. At this point, ask if the implementer has identified any intervention steps that may need modifications to be appropriate for his or her context or the target student. If modifications are requested, it is important to keep in mind the empirical and theoretical support for each intervention step and to ensure that any revisions follow the same theoretical logic. Have an active discussion that results in an evidence-based intervention that is well-suited for the implementer's context. Any modifications that are made should be agreed upon by the consultant and the implementer, and noted on the Action Plan Worksheet: Part A.

Step 5: Identify Logistics of Each Intervention Step

The purpose of this step is to plan out the logistical aspects of the intervention. Planning exactly what is needed to accomplish each step of the intervention plan facilitates sustained implementation of the plan. For each intervention step, the consultant and implementer should work together to answer the following questions:

- *When?* When will this step of the intervention plan be completed? For steps occurring daily, this may mean a particular time of day (e.g., 9:00 a.m.) or a particular time period (e.g., during morning meeting, during fifth class period). For steps that occur only as needed, the type of behavior occurring prior to the step, or the antecedent, can be described. Examples of this option may include, "when students are off task" or "when students are showing appropriate behavior." Some steps may include permanent products (e.g., posting a schedule, arranging the classroom in a way that minimizes crowding and distraction) and may only need to be completed once. For steps such as these, examples may include "At the beginning of the year" or "By next Tuesday."

- *How Often?* How often will this step of the intervention be completed? Examples may include "daily" or "as needed." You may want to use this step to specify a goal for how often this step should be delivered. For example, behavior specific praise could be described provided "at least 10 times per period." For steps involving simple permanent products, such as posting behavior expectations, "once at the beginning of the year" may be appropriate.
- *For how long?* For how long will this intervention step last? Examples may include a specific length of time for more discrete steps (e.g., 5 minutes, 20 minutes). Some steps may not have a proscribed length of time to complete, and "as needed" may be appropriate. Steps involving permanent products may last all year.
- *Where?* Where will this intervention step occur? Many (if not most) intervention steps will occur within the classroom. However, it may be appropriate to describe a specific place in the classroom (e.g., on the rug area, on the calendar board, at the teacher's desk) where each intervention step will occur.
- *Resources needed?* What resources or materials (if any) are needed to complete this step? Examples of resources may include construction paper, materials for a specific lesson, or supplies for a reinforcement system.

All of these responses can be listed on the Action Plan Worksheet: Part B. If the implementer struggles to identify the logistics of implementation, the Action Plan Sample Responses form can be used to provide examples. It can also be helpful to ask questions such as: "What would that step look like?" or "Talk me through the completion of that step." These types of questions may help elicit responses from the implementer about how each step of the intervention will be completed. It is important to ensure that the implementer's responses reflect his or her impressions of how the intervention will work in the context of his or her classroom.

Step 6: Discuss How Needed Resources May Be Obtained, if Applicable

If additional materials are needed for the intervention steps, it is important to identify how those materials can be accessed. Is the implementer able to access them? Can the consultant provide them or develop them, if necessary? Do others (e.g., an administrator or other professional) need to be approached to obtain the materials? In thinking about how to access materials, keep in mind that the quicker these resources are obtained, the faster the intervention can be implemented. If necessary resources cannot be obtained quickly, the implementation of the intervention may be delayed. Make sure to delineate what resources are needed, who is responsible, and by when the resources will be obtained on Action Plan Worksheet: Part C.

Step 7: Summarize the Action Plan

Review and summarize any revisions that have been made to the intervention plan and the logistical details that were determined for each intervention step. Once the Action Plan has been summarized, the consultant should praise the implementer for participating in the process. This step completes the Action Planning process.

Step 8: Identify Potential Barriers to Implementation

This is the first step in the Coping Planning process. First, the consultant should show the implementer the Coping Plan Worksheet and ask for any major anticipated or current implementation barriers. Make sure the barriers are identified by the implementer and thus, reflect his or her issues with consistently delivering the intervention with high levels of treatment integrity. Have the implementer rank up to four barriers in order of importance. (1 = highest priority, 2 = second highest, etc.).

PRIME Tip

Some implementers may have difficulty coming up with barriers on their own. In this case, it can be helpful to provide the implementer with an example of a barrier related to a different intervention. For example, if the implementer is implementing an academic intervention it would be appropriate to provide an example from a behavioral intervention. If the intervention targets one student, it may be appropriate to provide an example from an intervention that targets multiple students or an entire classroom.

Step 9: Identify Potential Strategies to Address Barriers

Once barriers have been identified, problem-solve how to overcome them. Ask the implementer to brainstorm ways that the intervention can be maintained in the presence of each of the top four barriers to implementation. If he or she struggles to identify strategies, provide suggestions or ideas in a collaborative manner. For example, if the implementer has identified lack of time as an implementation barrier, the consultant can work with the implementer to identify possible ways to make the intervention or intervention steps more efficient. Or, as is the case with the implementation of many behavioral interventions, the consultant can describe how the intervention may save the implementer time if implemented effectively. For example, a behavior intervention designed to reduce or prevent challenging behaviors will, if effective, reduce the amount of time the implementer will spend managing those behaviors. Once an appropriate strategy has been identified, it should be written on the Coping Plan Worksheet.

Step 10: Summarize Coping Planning

This is the last step in the Coping Planning process. Summarize the strategies that have been developed to overcome the identified barriers to implementation. Next, praise the implementer for his or her participation in the Coping Planning process.

Step 11: Close the Session

To complete this last step in the Implementation Planning process, review the process of Implementation Planning and ask the implementer if he or she has any questions related to (a) the revisions made to the intervention plan (if applicable), (b) the logistics of implementation, (c) who is responsible for obtaining any needed resources and by when this will be accomplished, and (d) the identified barriers and related strategies to maintain implementation. Once any and all questions have been answered, inform the implementer that you will provide a clean, typed copy of the Implementation Plan (including the Action Plan and the Coping Plan; see Appendix G for Implementation Planning Summary Report Template) as well as any resources that the consultant is responsible for obtaining. Finally, thank the implementer for his or her time and work during the Implementation Planning process.

What Did I Learn About PRIME?

Implementation Planning prepares the implementer to deliver an intervention by outlining, in detail, the logistics of each individual step of the intervention as well as by identifying barriers to implementation and strategies to overcome those barriers. At the conclusion of the Implementation Planning session, the implementer should feel confident in delivering the intervention with high levels of treatment integrity.

Chapter 4 Key Terms

Implementation Planning
Action Plan
Coping Plan