The role of champions in the adoption and implementation of Project RESPECT, an evidence-based behavioral HIV/STI intervention
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BACKGROUND

• Project RESPECT is an evidence-based behavioral HIV/STI intervention that is being disseminated by the CDC. It includes brief counseling and testing.

• Translational research investigates the implementation and dissemination of interventions, like RESPECT, into real-world settings.

• When programs are translated, agencies may benefit from having a champion to help with integration into the agency.

• A champion is a person who motivates other members of the agency when an innovation is introduced, and can also play a crucial role in the adoption of the intervention and problem-solving.

• The goal of this research is to determine if agencies have champions and to examine the role of champions in the adoption and implementation of Project RESPECT.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

CHAMPIONS

• Two thirds of respondents identified champions in their agencies.

  I: And is there a person who’s been particularly effective in keeping personnel motivated and enthusiastic about RESPECT?
  R: Yeah, that’s me. I’m the RESPECT cheerleader. Ra Ra Ra.

  I: And is there a person who has been particularly effective in keeping personnel motivated and enthusiastic about RESPECT?
  R: Oh absolutely. I think [X] has been out front and center on that.

PROGRAM ADOPTION

• Most respondents (7/10) who identified themselves as the champion of their agencies also were integral in the decision to adopt RESPECT for their agencies.

  I: And so the decision to select RESPECT, just so that I’m understanding this very clearly, was, it was not mandated by any other organization. It was a voluntary decision by you and your organization.
  R: Mm-hmmm... And then I just brought it forth to our team after I slaved over it.

  I: And was the decision to add RESPECT made primarily by yourself, a management team, an agency-wide workgroup or staff management, an outside advisory group, or was someone else involved?
  R: Primarily myself... It fits for our agency. I’m the only one that has any HIV experience in a management position in the agency.

• Agencies with mandated and voluntary program adoption were found to be equally likely to have a champion. 7/12 mandated and 12/18 voluntary adoption agencies identified champions.

DISCUSSION

• Agencies with both mandated and voluntary program adoption had champions, which suggests that strong internal support may facilitate implementation.

• Prior research suggests that champions are key to the adoption and sustainability of programs, and that they also play an important role in the motivation of staff and problem-solving.

• Our future work will examine the role of champions in staff morale and program fidelity.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

• Using a purposive sample, data were collected from thirty agencies implementing RESPECT. The agencies were selected to provide variation in geographic location (urban or rural) and agency type (Department of Public Health or Community-Based Organization).

• Interviews with agency leaders (e.g. Executive Directors and Program Managers) provided data for the current analyses.

• A set of questions was extracted that pertained to the presence of a champion and voluntary versus mandated adoption of the intervention.

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