Collaborative for Implementation Practice
UNC School of Social Work

Data Source Selection Matrix

Introduction

The purpose of this matrix is to assist implementation teams in determining and prioritizing potential data that can be used to answer their implementation improvement questions, as well as potential sources from which they can gather the identified data. There are two main types of data:

- Quantitative data are numerical and can be counted, quantified and analyzed mathematically (e.g., number of parents enrolled in a class, frequency of contacts with a family).
- Qualitative data are usually nonnumeric and used to provide meaning and understanding to program results; these data can strengthen validity and depth of understanding of quantitative data (e.g., interviews or case reviews).

Additionally, there are different types of data sources. Examples include:

- People — You can survey or interview individuals and/or groups (e.g., staff, community partners, focus population).
- Documents — You can review existing documents (e.g., administrative data reports, case records, needs assessments).
- Observations — You can observe organizational practice or programs (e.g., staff meetings, events, face-to-face contacts).

Working collaboratively, the implementation team should first identify their questions for implementation improvement. The team can then use this tool to consider potential measures that would help answer the question. Once they have identified potential measures, team members can discuss potential data sources for these measures, including both quantitative and qualitative sources. Finally, the implementation team can consider how useful, feasible, sensitive and accurate the data sources are. Based on this information, the implementation team can prioritize the top two or three sources for each question. It is ideal that teams review more than one type and source of data for each implementation improvement question.

Data Source Selection Matrix

Questions *In this column, list the questions your team wants to answer to support implementation improvement. What are the top 2–3 questions that come to mind when you think about the practice or program's implementation? Try to avoid yes/no questions and instead phrase questions as open ended (e.g., in what ways, how will we know).*	Potential measures *In this column, list potential measures that can be used to answer each of the questions. Consider different types of data.*[1]	Potential data sources *In this column, list potential data sources, including qualitative and quantitative data, for each indicator.*	Prioritized data sources[2] *Consider how useful, feasible, sensitive and accurate each potential data source is. Consider whether the data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity as well as other relevant subpopulation characteristics (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, geography). List prioritized sources for gathering data on each indicator.*

[1] Different types of data include the following: 1) program data: data relevant for the administration of the program or practice (e.g., number of referrals, retention rate, staffing); 2) fidelity data: data that measure the extent to which the program or practice is being implemented as intended (e.g., supervisor/staff/client ratios, frequency of service, delivery of content); 3) outcome data: results data that measure the impact of the program or practice (e.g., increased knowledge, improved skills, changes in attitude).

[2] Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Gather credible evidence. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/step4/index.htm