Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic Review of the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment (EPIS) Framework

Version: 0 Date: 10 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Andrea Chambers

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The EPIS framework description (page 4) - can you link readers to the visual in the introduction when explaining the EPIS framework. Currently the visual is referred to later in the manuscript. I support practitioners understand and apply implementation science models, theories and frameworks and this one in particular is harder for practitioners to follow. I think this might become a paper that people access to better understand the framework. The more examples the better in understanding aspects of this framework. It would go a long way to have an example of interconnectedness and relationships between outer and inner context entities (bridging factors) and its significant to the implementation of an intervention - potentially elaborating on some of the brief examples provided already.

I was asked recently whether implementation frameworks are building upon each other - or at least, demonstrating how they are better or different from other published frameworks that explain aspects of implementation. This is really helpful information that can guide a user to select the framework. The discussion mentions that frameworks might be better at different things (e.g., CFIR is good for qualitative measures) etc. without suggesting what this framework would be optimal for.

The abstract may persuade practitioners (intervention developers and implementers) to read the article as it states there is a need to better understand how individual frameworks and models are applied in practice. I'd recommend a shift in language here to be more accurate - I don't think this manuscript is for practitioners looking for guidance on how to apply the framework better when making decisions about an intervention. There is a need to clarify what we mean by applied in practice (I think we mean applied in research/evaluation practice).... I'd also suggest that somewhere in this manuscript the authors acknowledge that there hasn't been a lot of prescriptive guidance on how to use this framework to inform decisions about implementation (or potentially there has been that I am not familiar with - have there been attempts to help translate and guide the use of the framework outside of manuscripts?). Based on the nature of the review I think what is meant is applied in the evaluation/research that examines the implementation of interventions (how to measure things) and not actual practice.

Level of interest

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