



Improving Support Systems for Students and Families: Incorporating Evidence-Based Prevention Programs in Child Welfare and Their Relevance to Educators

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INTRODUCTION

Child welfare systems play a critical role in safeguarding the well-being of at-risk children and families. This research study investigates the implementation of nine evidence-based practices (EBPs) (each federally recognized by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse) within Florida's child welfare system and explores the relevancy of these practices for teachers and school counselors. The nine EBPs include Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, Family Functional Therapy, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Home Builders, Motivational Interviewing, Multisystemic Therapy, Nurse Family Partnership, and Brief Strategic Family Therapy.

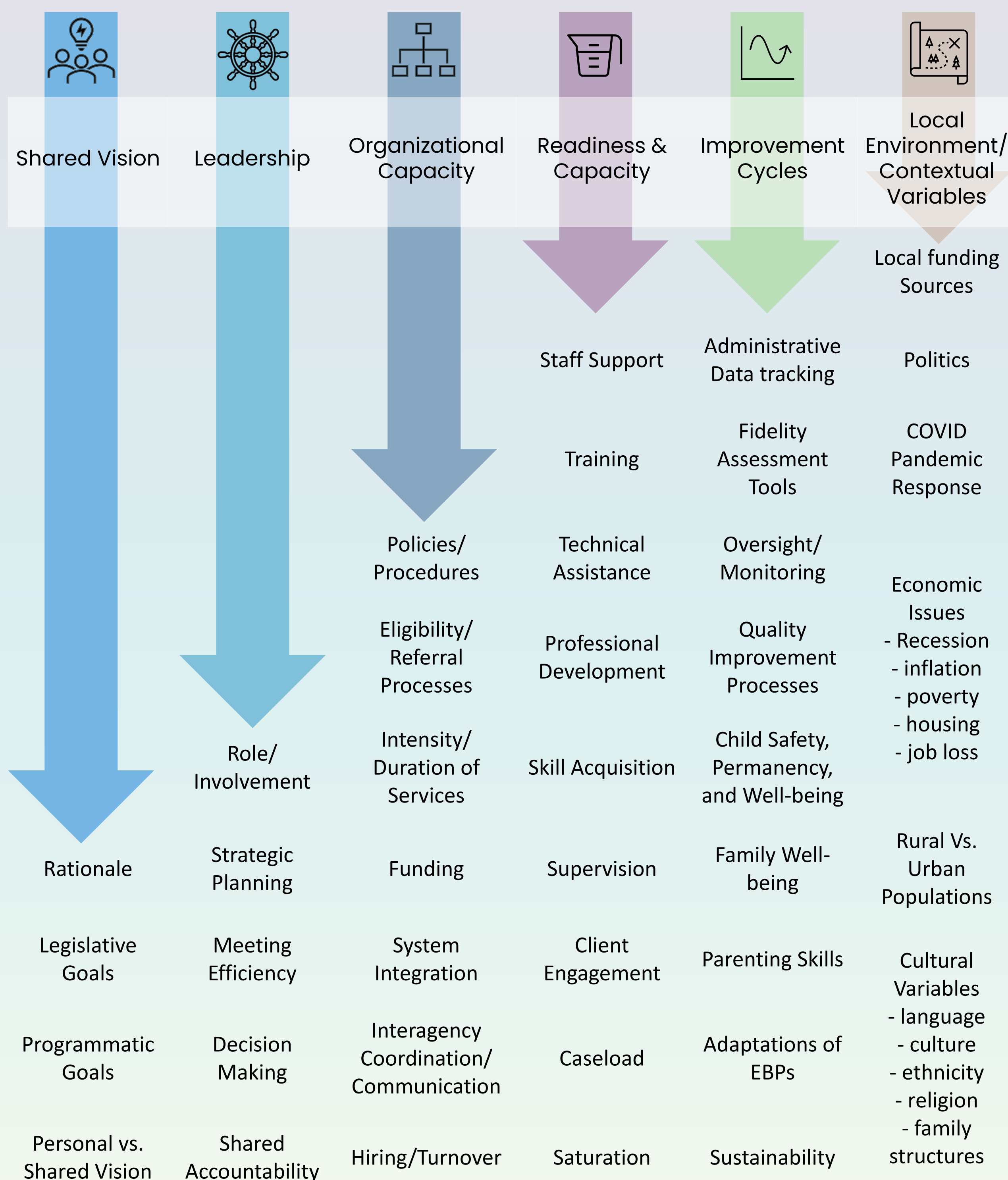
METHODS

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with child welfare and behavioral health professionals, a statewide survey, and document review of implementation workgroup meetings and training materials. Research questions included:

1. What strategies have been employed at state and local levels to support implementation of the selected EBPs?
2. What challenges or barriers to successful implementation have sites experienced?
3. What solutions have been developed (at state or local levels) to overcome barriers to successful implementation?

FINDINGS

Findings support a framework of key determinants for successful implementation of EBPs, across six domains.



IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING STAFF AND EDUCATORS

As child welfare agencies increasingly adopt EBPs, educators find themselves working with students who have experienced trauma or family disruptions. To support these students effectively, educators must be trained in trauma-informed practices, recognizing signs of trauma, and providing a safe, nurturing classroom environment. Collaboration between child welfare agencies and schools is essential to share information and develop tailored support plans for affected students.

EBPs in child welfare can be highly relevant to educators and school counselors. Here are several ways in which these practices intersect with the roles of educators and school counselors.

Identification of At-Risk Students

Educators and school counselors are often on the front lines of identifying students who may be at risk due to issues such as abuse, neglect, or other forms of maltreatment. Understanding evidence-based practices in child welfare can help educators recognize signs of trauma or distress and refer students to appropriate support services.



Collaborative Interventions

Educators and school counselors can work collaboratively with child welfare professionals to implement evidence-based interventions that support the overall well-being of students.

Trauma-Informed Approaches

Many evidence-based practices in child welfare are rooted in trauma-informed approaches. Creating a trauma-informed school environment can contribute to a more supportive and understanding atmosphere for students who have experienced trauma.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Understanding evidence-based practices in child welfare can guide the implementation of preventive strategies within the school setting. Early intervention and support can help address issues before they escalate, potentially preventing the need for more intensive child welfare involvement.

Communication and Information Sharing

Effective communication and information sharing between educators, school counselors, and child welfare professionals are essential for providing comprehensive support to children. Knowledge of evidence-based practices can facilitate more meaningful and collaborative discussions among professionals involved in a child's care.

Professional Development

Professional development opportunities that focus on evidence-based practices in child welfare can enhance the skills and knowledge of educators and school counselors. Training in these practices can empower educators and counselors to better meet the diverse needs of students and collaborate with other professionals.

CONCLUSION



In summary, evidence-based practices in child welfare provide a framework for addressing the complex needs of vulnerable children and families. Educators and school counselors, as key stakeholders in children's lives, can benefit from integrating these practices into their work to create a more supportive and effective educational environment.