

An initial typology of approaches to plan for and achieve the sustainment of health interventions

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Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I present from today and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future.



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What is sustainability?



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A word cloud featuring various synonyms for 'maintain' and 'sustain'. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with 'maintain' and 'sustain' being the largest and most central. Other words include 'keep', 'continue', 'prolong', 'support', 'nurture', 'bolster', 'save', 'assist', 'proportion', 'validate', 'foster', 'yield', 'uphold', 'institutionalize', 'falling', 'supply', 'buoy', and 'assist'. The colors range from light blue and green to pink and purple.

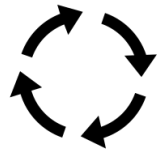
Words included in the cloud:

- maintain
- sustain
- keep
- continue
- prolong
- support
- nurture
- bolster
- save
- assist
- proportion
- validate
- foster
- yield
- uphold
- institutionalize
- falling
- supply
- buoy
- assist

What is sustainability?



“After a defined period of time,



the program, clinical intervention, and/or implementation strategies continue to be delivered and/or,



individual behaviour change is maintained,



the program and individual behaviour change may evolve or adapt



while continuing to produce benefits for individuals/systems”



Why is sustainability important?



~20% of EBIs are sustained 2yrs after initial implementation



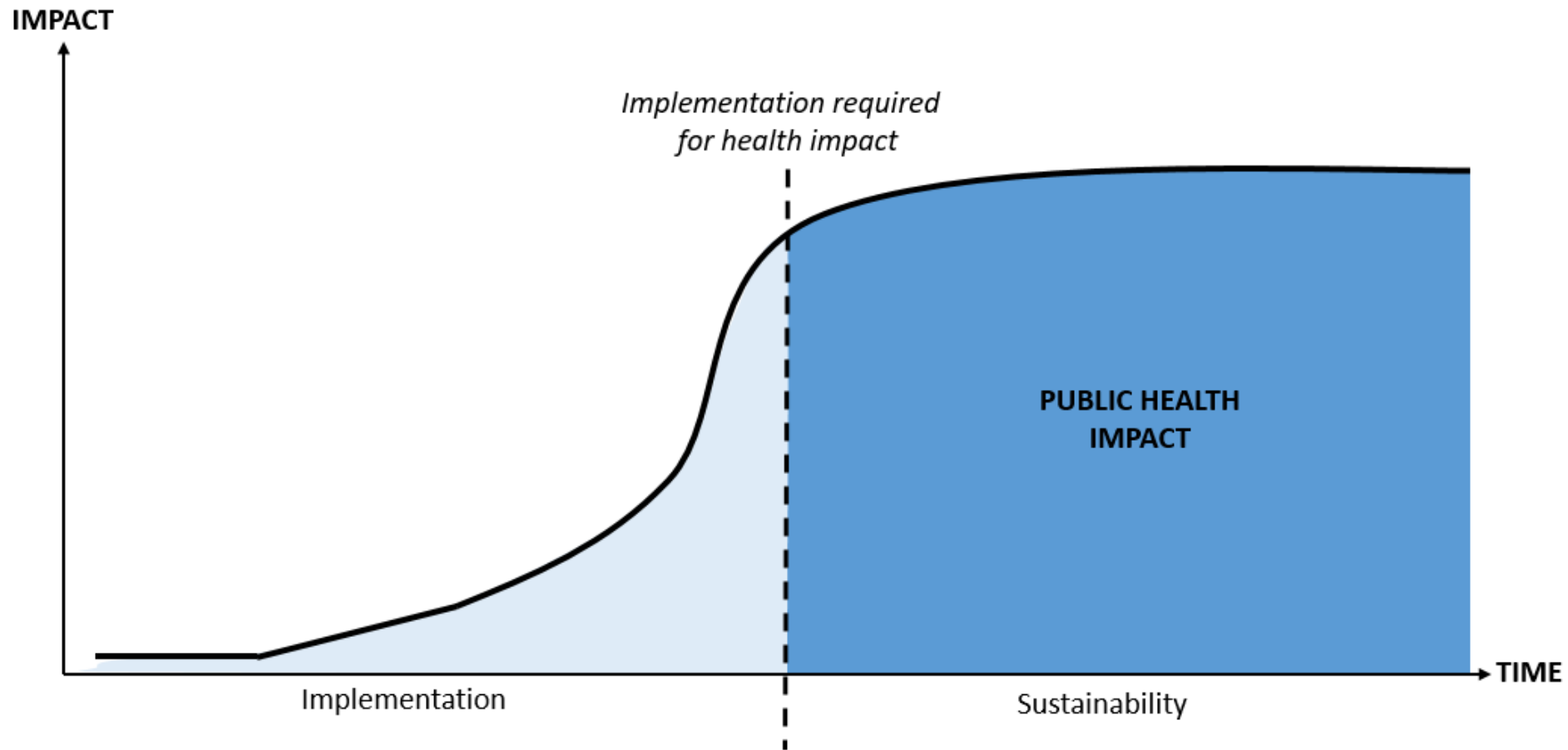
Wastage of public health investment in developing and delivering EBIs



Loss of community trust and confidence in program delivery and benefit



Public health impact begins when programs are sustained



How much focus is there on sustainability research in the current literature?



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“The most significant translational research problem of our time” Proctor et al., 2015



10,588 articles of which 1.3% focused on sustainability



Most were descriptive... few focused on how to sustain, measure and none on cost effectiveness



Only one study assessed the effect of specific sustainability strategies to support the continued delivery of an intervention.



How can we successfully sustain?



PLAN



IDENTIFY



STRATEGY



- Plan and consider sustainment early
- Identify what factors may impact on sustainment
- Select, refine and operationalise delivery of sustainment strategies to address barriers
- Seek feedback on effectiveness of sustainment strategies
- Monitor ongoing delivery
- Revisit and adapt as needed



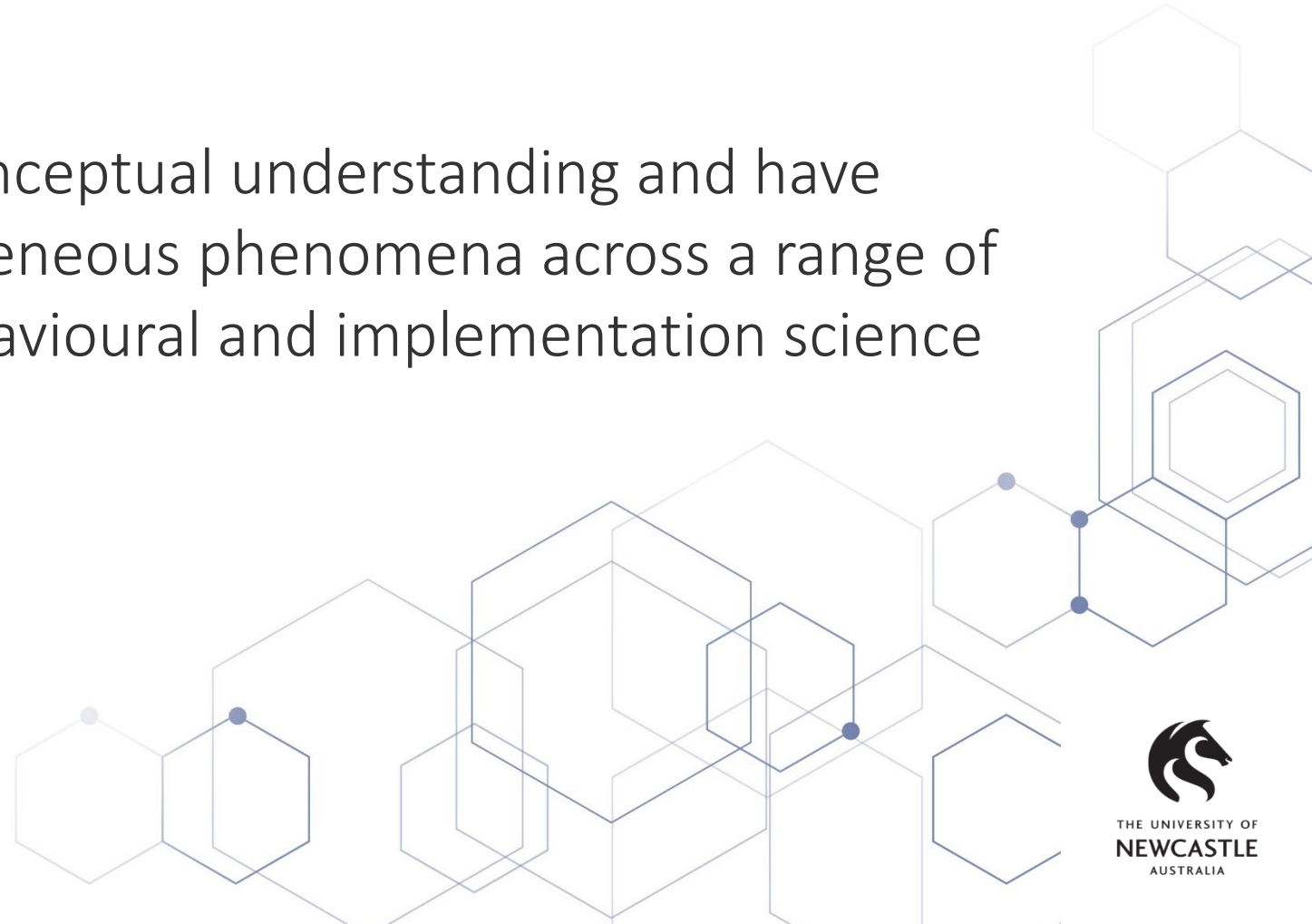
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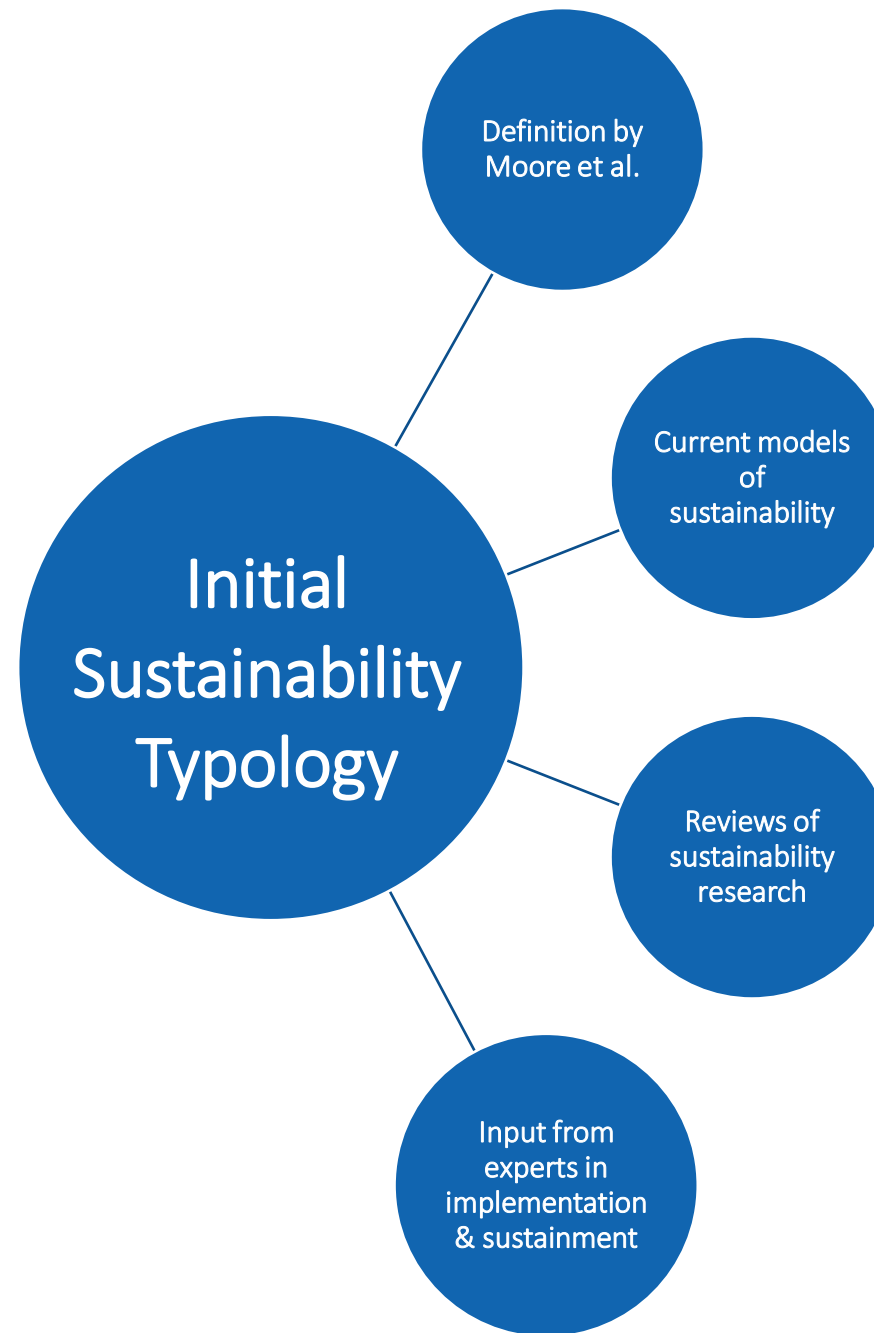
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What is a typology?

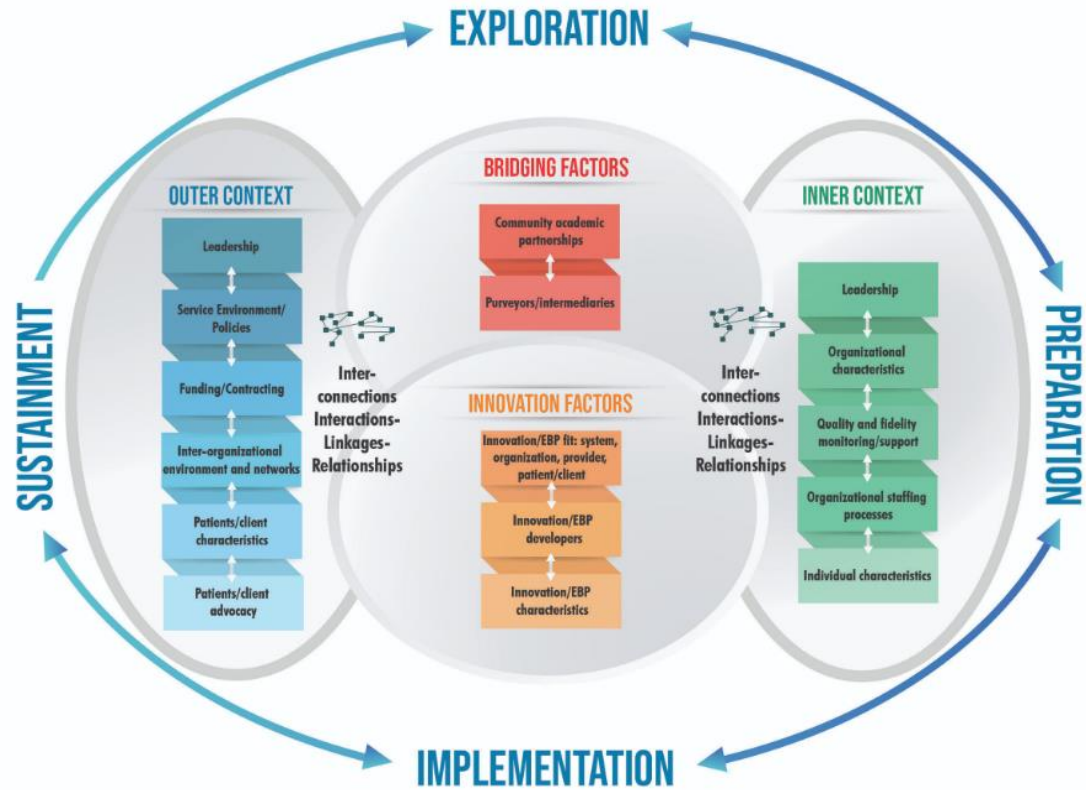
Typologies are tools to aid conceptual understanding and have been used to classify heterogeneous phenomena across a range of scientific fields, including behavioural and implementation science



Development of an initial sustainability typology

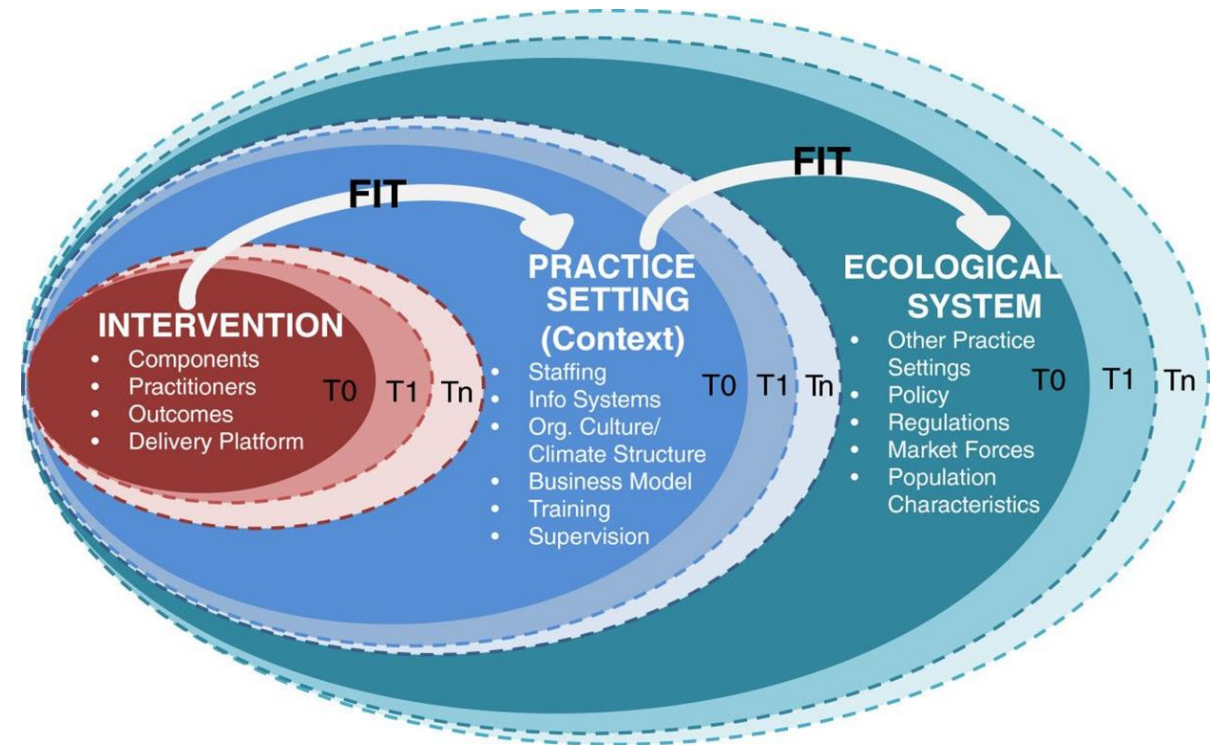


EPIS Framework



Source: Aarons GA, Hurlburt M, Horwitz SM. Advancing a conceptual model of evidence-based practice implementation in public service sectors. *Adm Policy Ment Health*. 2011;38(1):4-23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-010-0327-7>.

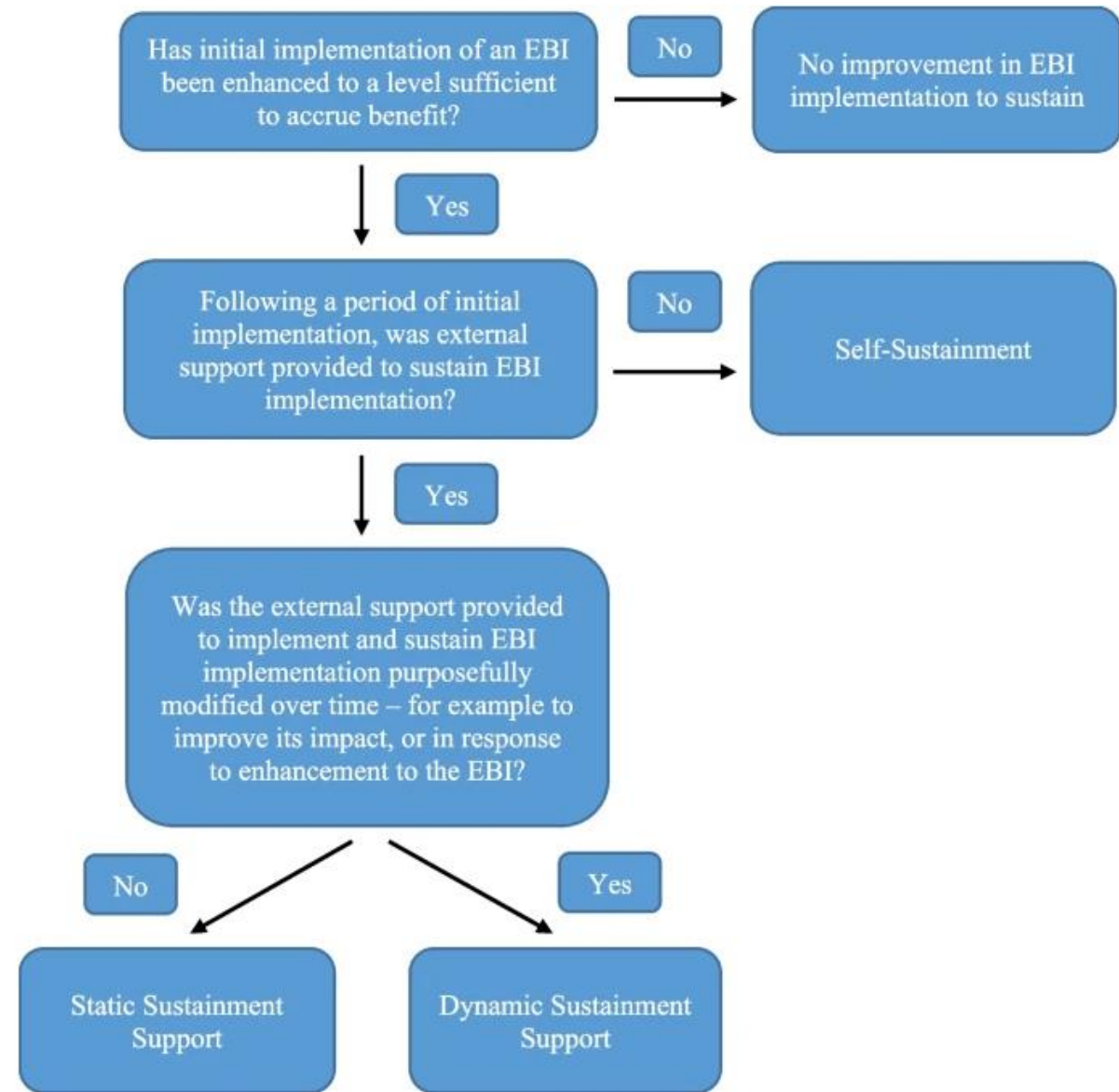
Dynamic Sustainability Framework



Source: Chambers, D. A., Glasgow, R. E., & Stange, K. C. The Dynamic Sustainability Framework: Addressing the paradox of sustainment amid ongoing change. *Implementation Sci*. 2013; 8(1), Article 117. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-8-117>

Decision tree for classifying typology approaches

Source: Wolfenden, L., Shoesmith, A., Hall, A. et al. An initial typology of approaches used by policy and practice agencies to achieve sustained implementation of interventions to improve health. *Implement Sci Commun* 5, 21 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43058-024-00555-2>



Decision tree for classifying approaches to achieve EBI sustainment



Self-sustainment approach

'Self-Sustainment' approaches are those where no support is provided to organisations by external agencies, following a successful period of initial implementation.



Self-sustainment approach

Key Features		
EBI Characteristics	External sustainment support	Contexts suggested to be most amenable for the sustainment approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fixed or dynamic EBI components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No substantive external support to facilitate sustainment of an EBI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the characteristics of the EBIs are highly amenable to sustainment (e.g., simple, relative advantage, inexpensive).• Where the required opportunity, capability and motivation for sustainment of the EBI exists within the implementing organisation.• Where initial implementation is high and well integrated into the structures and processes of the implementing organisation.• When there are no/or limited external resource available to support sustainment.



Self-sustainment approach: Example



'No hat no play'

- Australian sun safety policy initially implemented 25-30 years ago
- Reducing sun exposure for children at lunchtime while at school
- Initial mail out strategy and awards program
- No ongoing government investment or policy support
- Continues to be implemented in early childcare and primary schools



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Static sustainment approach

‘Static Sustainment Support’ refers to the same pre-defined support strategy being provided to individual organisations by external agencies to support their sustained implementation of an EBI at a level sufficient to accrue benefit.



Static sustainment approach

Key Features		
EBI Characteristics	External sustainment support	Contexts suggested to be most amenable for the sustainment approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed core EBI components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External support to facilitate sustainment of an EBI that is static, and may be for a defined period or ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the required opportunity, capability and motivation for sustainment does not exist within the implementing organisation. • When the support to successfully sustain implementation of an EBI is known • When EBIs and their sustainment support strategies have stable core components such as those supported by a mature evidence base, with established beneficial outcomes, and little chance of superior alternate interventions emerging in the short to medium term. • When there are external resources available to support sustainment and/or where such resources may be available for at least a defined period of time.



Static sustainment approach: Example

'Good Sports'

- Australian wide preventive health program
- Supports non-elite community sporting clubs to implement alcohol management practices
- Sporting clubs receive support by centralised support staff to support initial and then ongoing implementation
- A study compared existing support and a web-based support program that assisted clubs to undertake routine self-assessments and create an action plan and other prompts, online tools and resources
- At 25–27-month follow-up, sustainment of alcohol management practices was high



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Dynamic sustainment approach

‘Dynamic Sustainment Support’ describes a deliberate approach whereby external agencies provide resources or strategies to support EBI sustainment that continue to change over time which may occur, for example, as part of continuous quality improvement cycles.



Dynamic sustainment approach

Key Features		
EBI Characteristics	External sustainment support	Contexts suggested to be most amenable for the sustainment approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic core EBI components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External support to facilitate sustainment of an EBI that is dynamic (changes over time) and ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the required opportunity, capability and motivation for dynamic approaches to sustainment does not exist within the implementing organisation. • When core components of EBIs and their sustainment support strategies are likely to change, due to an emerging evidence-base, a high likelihood of superior interventions/core components being identified in the short to medium term or other factors. • When there are ongoing external resources available to support sustainment including processes enabling to ongoing improvement and modifications to the provision of support strategies.



Dynamic sustainment approach: Example

'Physically Active Children in Education (PACE)'

- Model of physical activity support to delivered in Australian primary schools
- Iteratively developed over a series of trials and evaluated over 7 years to improve schools' implementation of a state physical activity policy.
- Sequential trials undertaken testing and comparing different implementation strategies – data on effectiveness, cost and acceptability from each phase were used to inform successive phases.
- Identified opportunities to incrementally improve PACE and resulted in a model of care, which was the most effective, cost-effective, efficient for delivery at-scale.



Where to next?...

- Refining the typology of approaches to sustainability
- Delphi study and consensus/member checking process
- Determine research priorities, agenda setting
- Continue to refine over time as our knowledge improves



Thank you



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