

TITLE: Organizational Communication: Public Health Program Adoption, Implementation, and Fidelity

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: policy makers, program developers and evaluators, researchers

ABSTRACT: Background. Organizational communication plays an important role in the translation of evidence-based interventions to real-world settings. However, few studies have examined communication processes within public health organizations implementing prevention programs. Purpose. We examined patterns of participatory communication (PC) within the Departments of Public Health (DPHs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) implementing the HIV RESPECT program. Methods. Using a maximum variation case-study design, ten organizations were sampled from a national survey of agencies implementing the RESPECT HIV program. Fifty organizational personnel were interviewed to identify PC patterns in program adoption and problem-solving contexts. Approximately 294 RESPECT clients were surveyed to assess program fidelity. Qualitative methods were used to analyze associative patterns between structural and contextual variables in relation to program fidelity. Results. We identified three PC patterns across agencies (full-, partial-, and non-PC). Small and medium-sized CBOs that adopted RESPECT voluntarily, relative to DPHs or organizations mandated RESPECT, more often evidenced full PC across contexts. Full PC agencies consistently evidenced high program fidelity specifically in the implementation problem-solving context. Conclusions. Optimal communication patterns occur more often in smaller, less complex organizations. Larger, more complex DPHs may require programs to augment communication processes, to ensure higher-levels of implementation fidelity.

OBJECTIVE(S): Examine differences in the degree of participatory communication (PC) across different types of organizations within adoption and implementation contexts. Explain the relationship between PC and implementation fidelity.
