

Learn, Innovate, Improve

Applying the Science of Self-Regulation and Goal Pursuit to Improve Employment Outcomes for HPOG Participants

OFA Health Profession Opportunity Grant Annual Meeting

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Session objectives



Introduce the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) framework for improving HPOG programs

Demonstrate how HPOG grantees might use LI² to build research evidence for making everyday decisions and to build research Eevidence for the field

Illustrate how LI² can be used to design and implement science-informed goal pursuit practices to improve outcomes for program participants

What motivated LI²?

At best, most employment programs have modest impacts on sustained employment

Very limited success moving people out of poverty

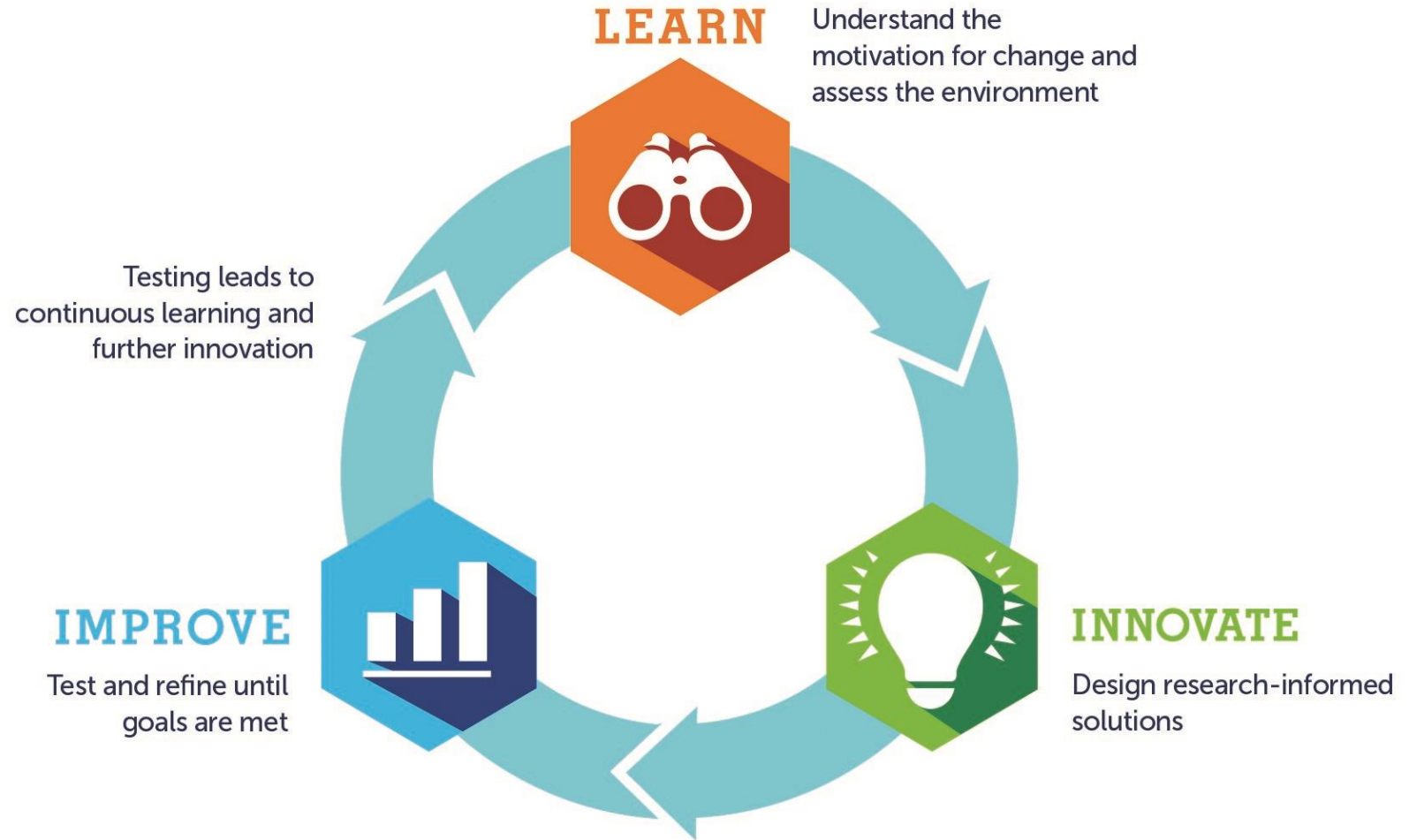
Limited capacity among public agencies for research-driven decision making

Is it that the interventions don't work, implementation is poor, both, or something else?

Change the way researchers and practitioners work together

A framework for change

- Learn
 - Clarify the motivation for change
 - Assess the environment's readiness for change
- Innovate
 - Co-create science-informed solutions
- Improve
 - Iteratively test and refine implementation
 - Scale up and test for impact



What sets LI² apart?

Framework informed by evidence

Systematic process anchored by analytic methods

Co-creation at the core

Emphasis on *using* and *building* evidence

Builds evidence for practitioners' everyday decision-making

Builds Evidence for the field

Explicit efforts to build local capacity

Focuses first on implementation and integration to achieve scalability and sustainability in the long run



People are at the center.

- LI² intentionally takes into consideration the diverse array of human experiences at every step
 - Identifying the problem
 - Exploring new possibilities
 - Testing and improving
- What works for whom, and under what circumstances?



Learn Activity: Think about the roses, thorns, and buds (RTB) in your program

Rose

Something positive or that works really well about your program

Thorn

Something negative or that doesn't work so well about your program

Bud

One opportunity you see for your program

3 min

- Jot down at least one rose, thorn, and bud in your program

5 min

- In your team, share and discuss
- Cluster stickies on your blank poster paper

3 min

- Full group discussion and debrief
- How might you use RTB in your program?



Case study: Science-informed goal pursuit

A transformation of practice... but, why?

Programs are often entrenched in a transactional, compliance-driven approach...particularly common in public agencies

A mismatch between what customers need and what programs do

Little-to-no focus on skill-building

At best modest impacts on sustained employment for most programs; very limited success moving people out of poverty



A revolution (est. 2014)

We started experimenting in partnership with people at the front lines

Drew on behavioral science, neuropsychology, social science research to rethink existing approaches
Used an analytic change process to generate new ideas and try them out

Key partners—Experts, research communities, practitioners, advocates

Science-informed strategies

Goal

To activate clients' motivation and commitment to change

How?



Support responsive relationships



Reduce sources of stress



Strengthen core skills

Support responsive relationships



Staff facilitate, teach, and model the goal achievement process

Focus on what matters most to customers within context

Resolve individual barriers and challenges in the context of goal pursuit

Start with the future, not the past

Draw on principles of a trauma-informed approach:

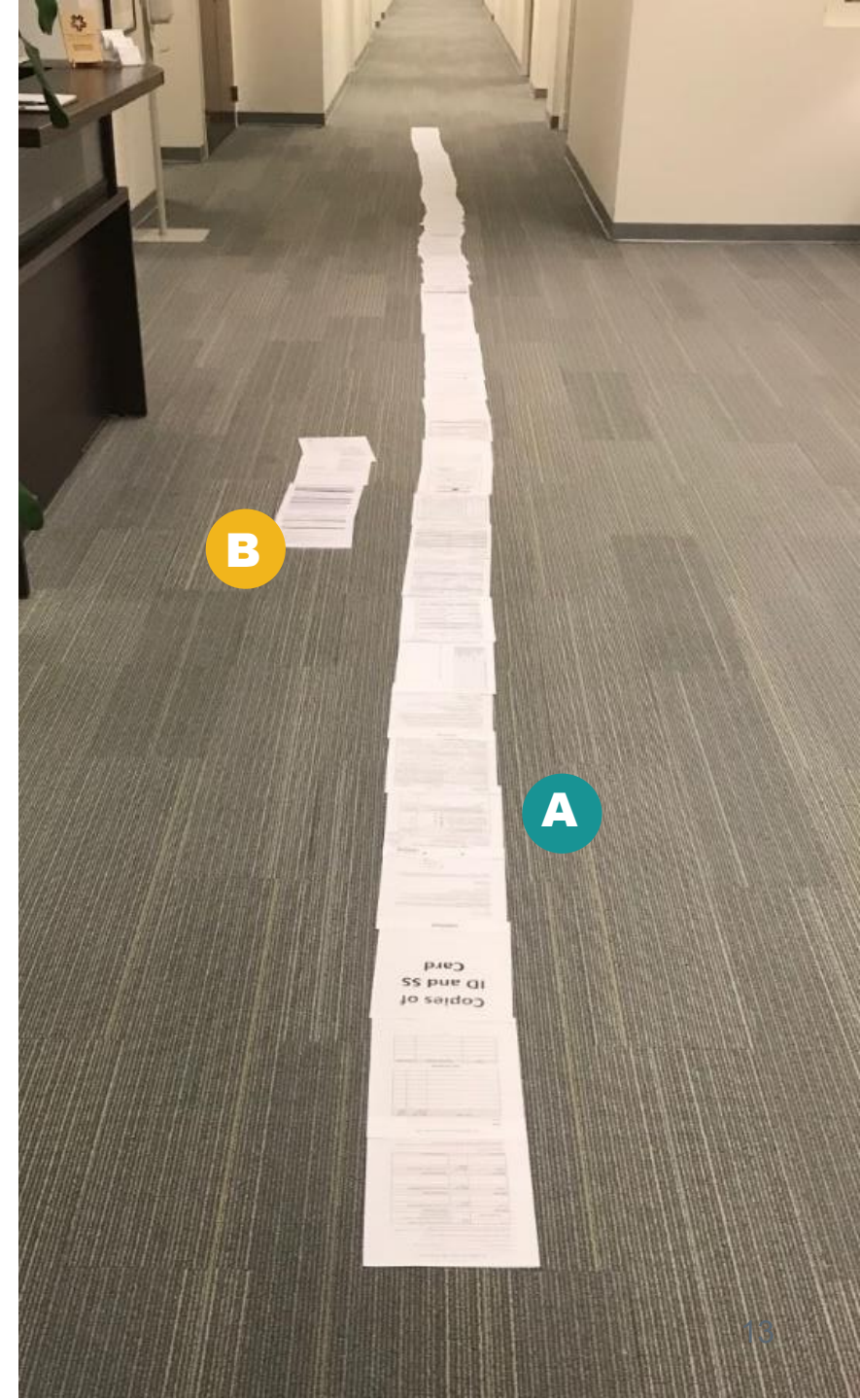
- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and identity issues

Reduce sources of stress

A Paperwork before LI² (right)

B Paperwork after LI² (left)

Approximately 20,000 hours per year of
client and staff time saved



Strengthen core skills

Self-regulation – what is it?

A set of skills that allows us to intentionally control thoughts, emotions, and behavior

(Blair and Raver 2012; Murray et al 2015)

Framework developed under the GOALS Project that Mathematica conducted on behalf of ACF/OPRE

Cognitive Skills

executive function
selective attention
metacognition

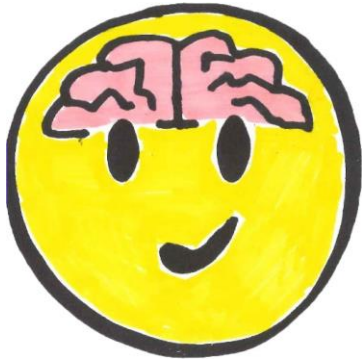
Emotional Skills

emotional regulation
emotional understanding

Personality Factors

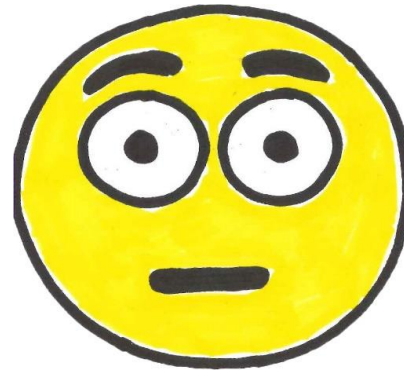
motivation
grit
self-efficacy

Cognitive skills



Executive function

the air-traffic-control center of the brain; helps regulate actions, process information, and multitask



Selective attention

filtering out distractions to focus on one task



Metacognition

reflecting about one's own thinking and actions

Emotional skills



Emotional regulation

making emotions useful or
manageable



Emotional understanding

recognizing and labeling emotions

Personality factors



Motivation

the reasons for, or desire to, pursue, persevere, and accomplish tasks



Grit

passion and perseverance for long-term goals
(motivation + action)



Self-efficacy

belief in one's own ability to perform at a high level

Why does self-regulation matter?

Necessary for goal setting and pursuit, which lead to a variety of positive outcomes *(Deci and Ryan 2000)*

Conditions associated with chronic stress, including poverty, can hinder the development and use of self-regulation skills *(Mullainathan and Shafir 2013)*

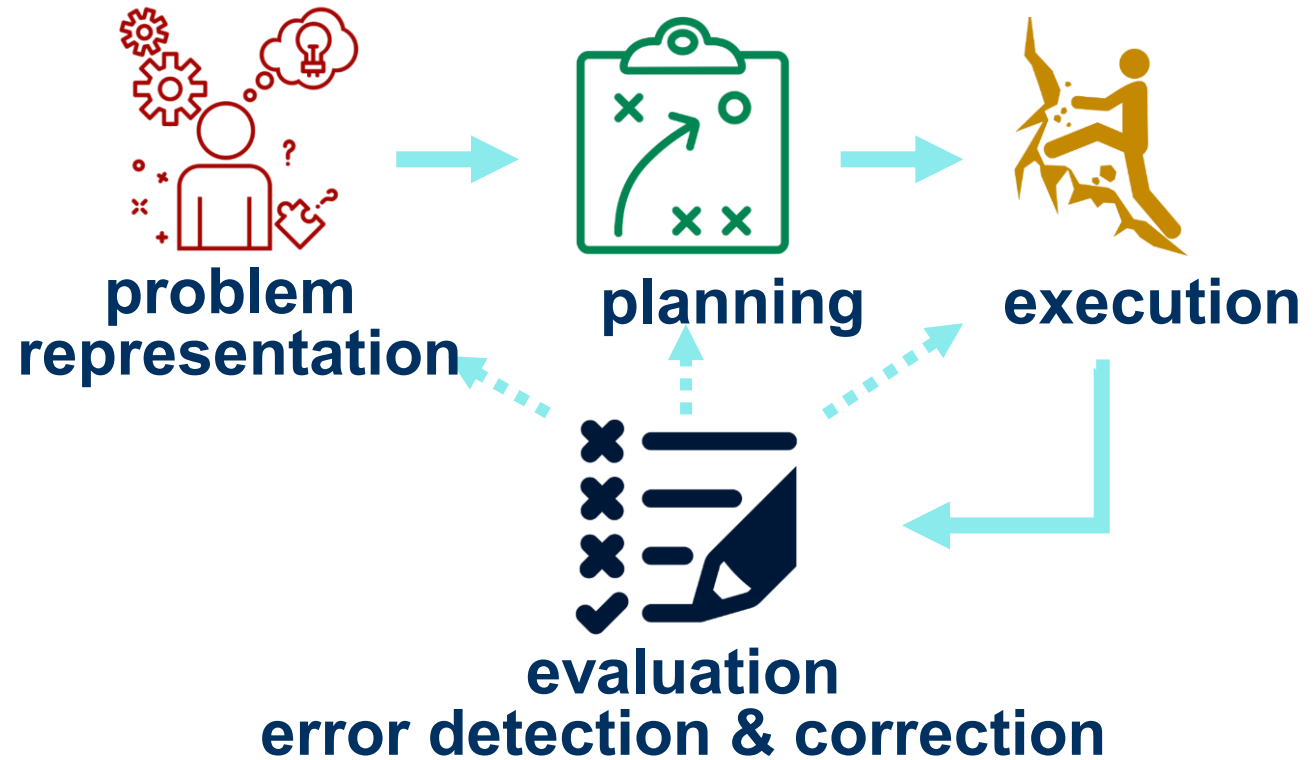
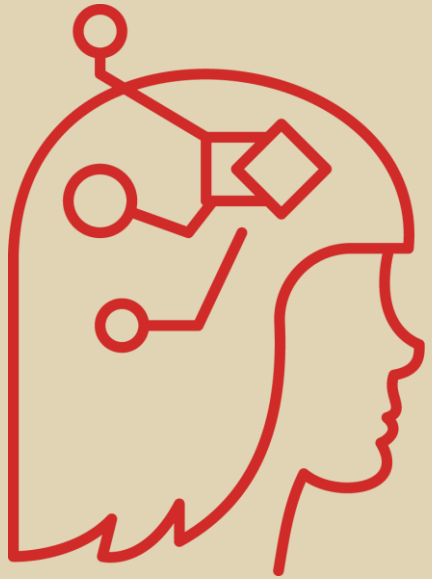
Self-regulation skills continue to develop and improve in adulthood *(Blair and Raver 2015)*

Critical to success in school, work, and life more broadly

Poor executive functioning can lead to poor productivity



Executive functioning as a problem-solving process



Self-regulation in goal pursuit

Zelazo et al.

Goal4 It!™

self-regulation skills



**problem
representation**

GOAL

Metacognition, prioritization,
working memory



planning

PLAN

planning, prioritization, time
management, working memory



execution

DO

task initiation, response inhibition, time
management, flexibility, sustained
attention, working memory, organization,
persistence, stress tolerance,
emotional control



**evaluation
error detection
& correction**

**REVIEW &
REVISE**

metacognition, working memory,
flexibility





Goal pursuit activity

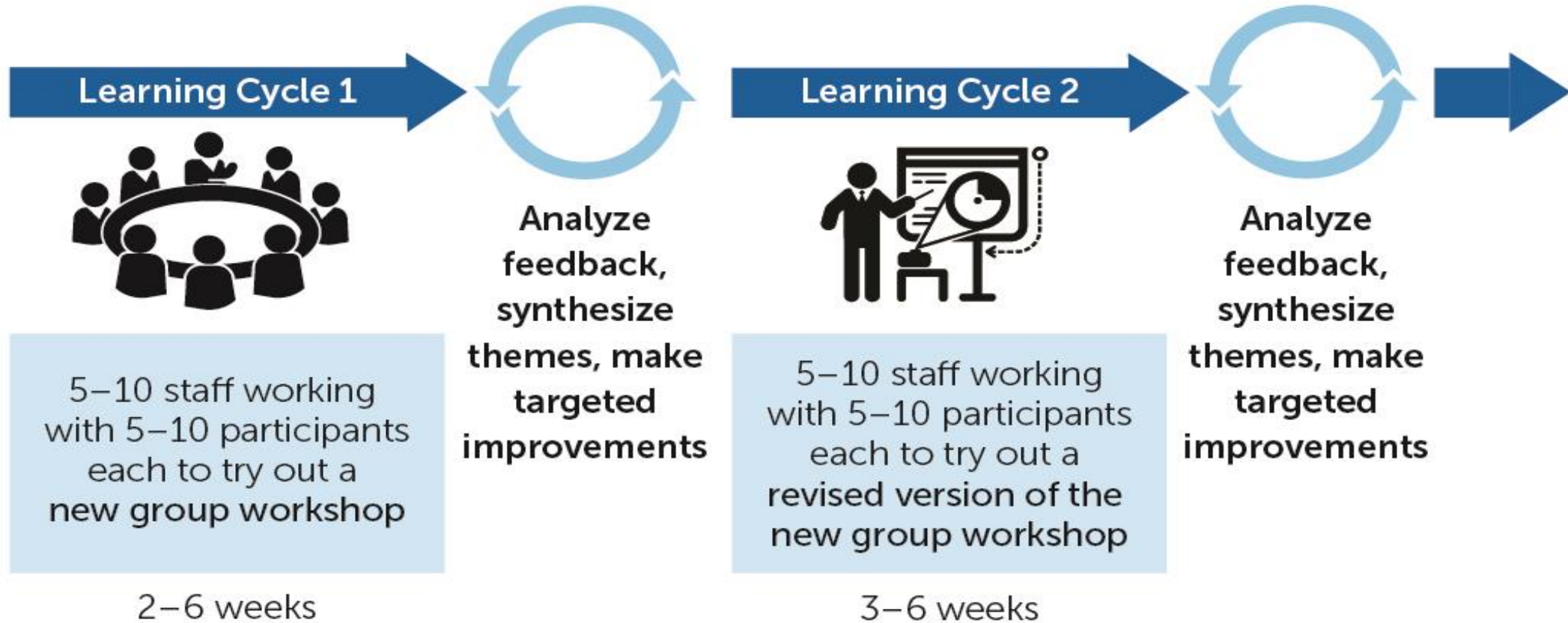
Victor's garage before goal pursuit



Victor's goal success!



Road test for design, implementation, and integration



Select road test findings

Implementing science-informed goal pursuit in a public agency with complex regulatory requirements is complicated

The fix: Align the curriculum to meet state requirements and eliminate redundant paperwork and processes (for example, required assessments)

Policies, procedures, and performance measures are not well-aligned with an individualized approach and create mixed messages for staff and customers (e.g., TANF work participation rates [WPR])

The fix: Provide staff with guidance for managing the WPR and develop performance measures that encourage client accountability and progress

For maximum benefit, encourage goal-directed behaviors at all levels within the organization, especially in supervision

The fix: Implement a parallel goal pursuit process where supervisors work with staff on their personal and professional goals

Goal4 It!™ for clients...and staff



Where are we now?

Goal4 It! implemented in more than 50 communities within 10 states

Programs include TANF, workforce, youth, and employers

Focusing on the process for scaling up science-informed practices with fidelity

Jefferson County Department of Human Services is a site in OPRE's Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations Evaluation

Lessons learned with LI²

Collaboration is key

Trust and buy in

Better ideas

Stronger implementation

Fail fast, learn fast

This work is fun!



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