

PHASE → Purpose | HOW | Action Plan | Support | Examine

A Roadmap to Implementation



The Importance of HOW

When implementing a new practice, procedure, or policy in the court system, professionals should consider the impacted individuals, available resources, and effective strategies – otherwise known as determining readiness for change. Assessing for readiness involves evaluating the willingness of individuals and partners to change, understanding the court's capacity, and aligning the change with the organizational culture. **Creating a conducive environment increases the likelihood of successful and sustained adoption.**

Elements of HOW

When preparing to implement and sustain a new practice, procedure, or policy, courts should consider the following questions:

- 1. Who needs to be involved?** At the outset of the implementation process, identify key stakeholders – individuals, groups, and organizations affected by the new policy or change. Involve them early on to foster ownership and include their perspectives in readiness discussions.
- 2. Are we ready to make these changes?** Assessing readiness is crucial before making changes. This involves evaluating the court's and individuals' willingness and capacity to adopt new practices, policies, or procedures. Consider court-level factors such as staffing, resources, and technological infrastructure, and also individual-level factors like staff knowledge and skills. Courts can use structured assessments or checklists to identify strengths to leverage and potential barriers to successful implementation.
- 3. What implementation strategies should we use?** Choose effective implementation strategies or plans designed to introduce and integrate new practices, policies, or procedures effectively. These strategies are meant to facilitate the successful adoption and implementation of changes and ensure they are sustained over time. Options include forming strategic partnerships, establishing learning collaboratives, pilot testing, and continuous quality improvement.

Connecting the Dots

The components of the PHASE framework are interrelated and interdependent. While each component can be focused on in isolation, decisions and efforts in one area affect and inform the others. **How describes the strategy for making the change, considering existing culture, priorities, and capacities.**

- ▶ **Purpose:** A shared purpose with the individuals and groups who need to be included in the change effort promotes buy-in and shared responsibilities.
- ▶ **Action Plan:** Understanding a court's readiness for change facilitates including tasks on the action plan that leverage existing capacities and protect against potential risks.
- ▶ **Support:** Identifying the need to increase knowledge and motivation to change through the readiness assessment informs training and coaching needs.
- ▶ **Examine:** Readiness assessments can be repeated to evaluate changes in motivation and capacity over time.

Considerations for Courts

- ▶ Evaluate the ability of court professionals and community partners to influence or support the change. This is particularly important for those directly impacted by the change.
- ▶ Embrace the opportunities for improvement revealed by assessing the court's readiness to change. Use this information strategically to target implementation strategies, enhance readiness, and mitigate risks. Achieving a perfect score may be unrealistic due to external threats, but addressing challenges during implementation strengthens the court's capacity for future changes.
- ▶ When determining the court's readiness for change, consider the impact of new court practices on existing initiatives, resource availability, and marginalized populations.

For more information or for assistance applying these principles to implement a new policy, practice, or program in your court, visit www.ncsc.org/phase.