

An Overview of the Innovation Diffusion and Adoption Research Project (IDARP)

The [Surgeon General](#) (1999), [NIMH](#) (2001), and the [President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health](#) (2002) have emphasized the importance of implementing mental health programs that have a track record of leading to valued outcomes. The [Ohio Department of Mental Health](#) (ODMH) also has taken a strong stance in support of evidence-based practices (EBPs) by funding several [Coordinating Centers of Excellence \(CCOEs\)](#). CCOEs are based in universities and/or organizations in metropolitan areas around Ohio. Each CCOE concentrates on one EBP and serves as a resource in Ohio for that practice. The shared goal of CCOEs is to encourage the adoption and facilitate the implementation of EBPs by providing training, technical assistance, and consultation to service providers.

While mental health leaders agree that the quality of care will be improved by the introduction of EBPs into systems of care, the decision to adopt a best practice is complex and may not be right for every organization. A host of factors such as fit, timing, and cost must be weighed by organizations in deciding whether or not to adopt a particular EBP.

Recognizing this reality, the [MacArthur Foundation](#) and ODMH funded the Innovation Diffusion and Adoption Research Project (IDARP). The IDARP research project focuses on two broad questions: 1) What factors and processes influence the adoption of EBPs by behavioral healthcare provider organizations? 2) What factors and processes contribute to the longer-term assimilation and impacts of EBPs by adopting organizations?

The Innovation Diffusion and Adoption Research Project (IDARP) is a collaborative endeavor among the Ohio Department of Mental Health, [Decision Support Services, Inc.](#), and The [Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business](#), to contribute practical and theoretical knowledge to the field regarding the implementation of evidence-based and other innovative practices by mental health agencies. The project is longitudinal, to allow the research team to track the adoption decision and implementation processes as they occur among EBPs that are linked to the following four CCOEs: The Dartmouth Integrated Dual-Disorder Treatment Model (IDDT), the Ohio Medication Algorithm Project (OMAP), Multi-systemic Therapy (MST), and Cluster-based Planning (CBP). Currently, the research team is analyzing results from 91 projects within 71 mental health provider organizations that participated in IDARP.

In early 2008, IDARP researchers will begin a sustainability study to investigate the factors that contribute to the successful long-term implementation of an EBP. The four primary research questions associated with the sustainability study include: 1) What factors account for the extent to which an organization sustains or persists with the implementation of an EBP over time? 2) In situations in which implementation is sustained, what critical factors account for the extent to which an organization is able to implement and sustain EBP as prescribed (i.e., adherence to fidelity)? 3) In situations in which implementation is sustained, what factors account for the extent to which desired outcomes of implementation are achieved (i.e., innovation success)? 4) Does prior success (i.e., favorable innovation outcomes) hurt or hinder the effectiveness of subsequent efforts to implement an EBP?

In order to investigate the factors that contribute to the successful long-term implementation of an EBP, the IDARP research team will gather data from a sub-set of mental health provider organizations that participated in IDARP from 2001 to 2005. The subset will be comprised of organizations that were still implementing one of the four EBPs when the IDARP team last contacted them. Key informants that include chief executive officers and case managers will be asked to participate in interviews and complete surveys. As time permits, data collection may be expanded to organizations that had either discontinued or had decided not to adopt one of the four EBPs.

To learn more about the IDARP project and follow its progress, visit the [IDARP Web page](#).