

# Identifying Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change in Cooperative Extension using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research

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## Background

Cooperative Extension (CE) nutrition education programs in Louisiana have shifted towards making policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity according to the social-ecological model of behavior change. The transition to PSE work from an exclusive focus on direct nutrition education posed challenges for CE staff in Louisiana.

## Objective

To identify CE staff's perceived barriers and facilitators to implementing PSE change interventions according to CFIR constructs.

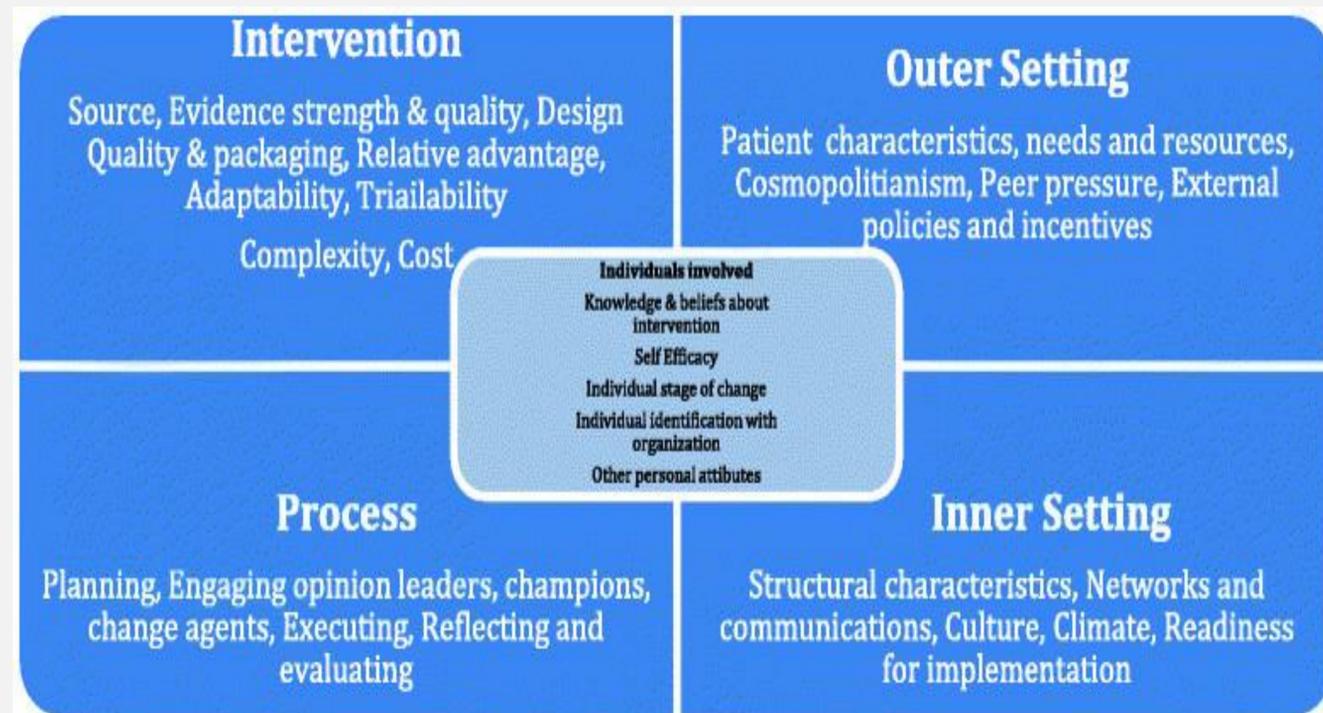
## Methods

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with Cooperative Extension staff using an interview guide with questions based on constructs from the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR).

## Results

Though all 39 CFIR constructs were relevant, 16 emerged through interviews with CE agents as either barriers or facilitators to the implementation of PSE change work. The adaptability of PSE work and its relative advantage over traditional direct education emerged as major facilitators to its implementation. Major barriers to the implementation of PSE change work included the relative priority of PSE change work within CE agents' organizations, the complexity of PSE change work, and a lack of resources to support implementation.

**“Nobody understands what we’re doing. Nobody cares to understand what we’re doing.”**



Source: Palinkas et al. (2016). Measuring sustainment of prevention programs and initiatives: A study protocol. Implementation science : IS. 11. 95. 10.1186/s13012-016-0467-6.

## Major Barriers

- Access to Knowledge & Information (when absent)
- Networks & Communication
- Leadership Engagement
- Cosmopolitanism
- Relative Priority within the organization

## Major Facilitators

- Access to Knowledge & Information (when present)
- Relative Advantage
- Needs & Resources of those served by the intervention
- Networks & Communication
- Available Resources

## Takeaways

- Cooperative Extension (CE) staff felt that access to knowledge and training helped facilitate PSE change work, but was also a barrier when working on a project without training (such as addressing walkability)
- CE staff felt that leadership at their organization, especially outside of Family & Consumer Sciences, were not engaged with PSE changes, and that PSE changes were not a priority for the organization.
- Cosmopolitanism, the degree to which the organization is networked with other organizations, proved to be a challenge by presenting additional obligations.