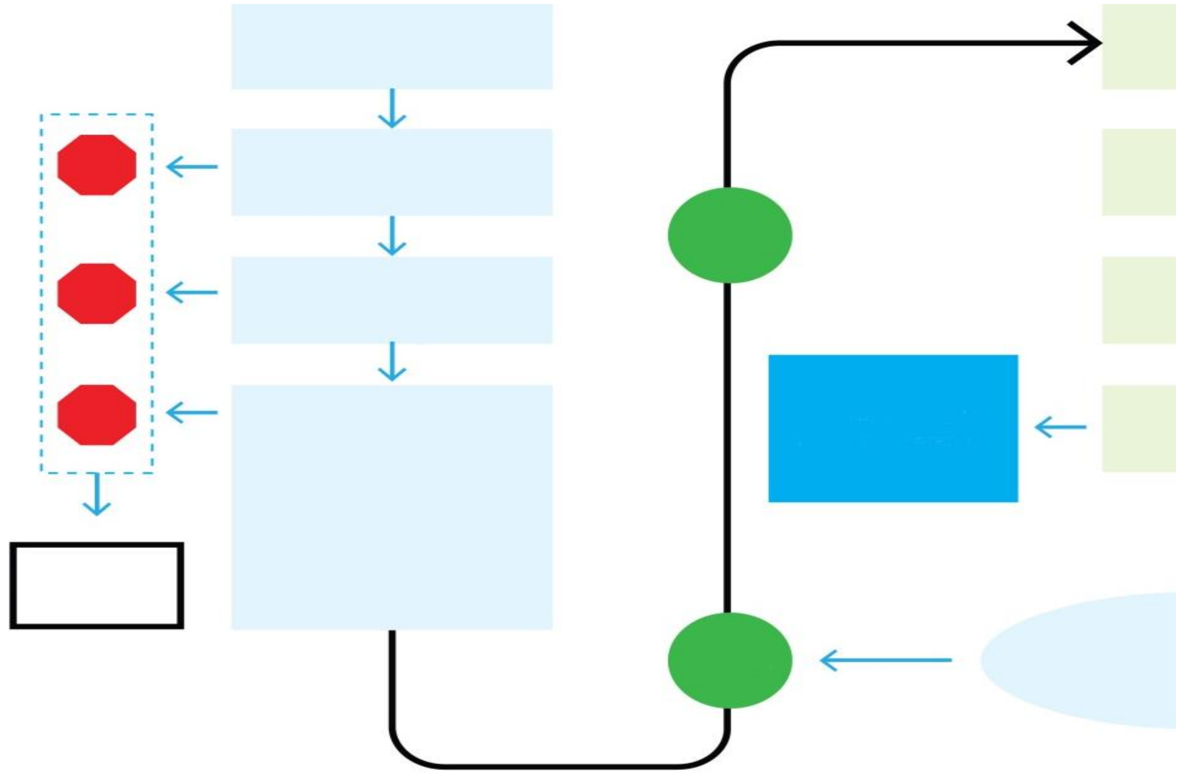

RESEARCH REPORT

Bridging Research and Practice for Juvenile Justice

Systematizing the Approach

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URBAN INSTITUTE

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The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

Juveniles in crisis—from those who commit serious and violent offenses to victims of abuse and neglect—pose a challenge to the nation. Charged by Congress to meet this challenge, OJJDP collaborates with professionals from diverse disciplines to improve juvenile justice policies and practices. OJJDP, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, accomplishes its mission by supporting states, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective programs for juveniles. The Office strives to strengthen the juvenile justice system's efforts to protect public safety, hold justice-involved youth appropriately accountable, and provide services that address the needs of youth and their families.

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Bridging Research and Practice for Juvenile Justice: Systematizing the Approach

Purpose and Framework

In 2015, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) entered into a cooperative agreement with the Urban Institute (Urban) to develop the Bridging Research and Practice Project to Advance Juvenile Justice and Safety (Bridge Project). The Bridge Project aims to facilitate the translation of juvenile justice research into actionable policy and practice changes through the development of practitioner-friendly, application-ready products. In the first year of the project, Urban's team of multidisciplinary researchers focused on identifying areas where research is *not* fully informing policy and practice. Using a systematic approach, the Urban team identified *Applying a Child and Adolescent Developmental Approach to Practice* as a pressing gap in the field—one in which practitioners, stakeholders, researchers, and national experts agreed that few practical tools for translation exist.

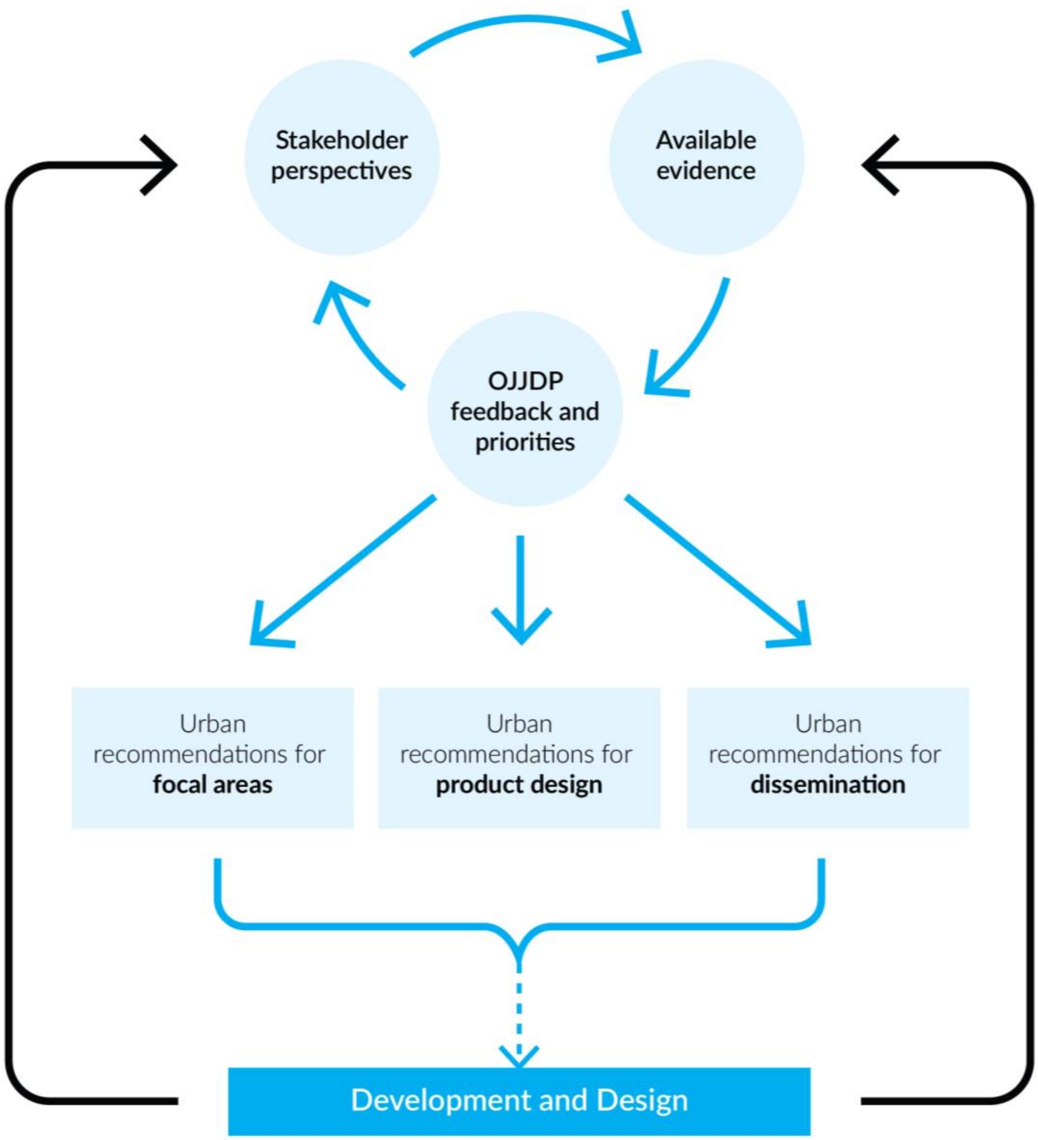
As part of the systematic approach to identifying this focus area, the Urban team conducted literature and resource scans across a range of issue areas to become familiar with research, efforts, and initiatives in the field; synthesized findings from implementation research to ground the translation process; solicited input from the field through two focus groups and 32 in-depth interviews with key practitioners, researchers, and national experts (Love and Harvell 2016); and collaborated with OJJDP, including its research team, to ensure the proposed topic fit within current priorities. In every stage of these efforts, the developmental approach emerged as a pressing research-to-practice gap with few resources to help practitioners apply it in their daily practice. Though most key informants were aware of the importance of incorporating findings from developmental research in their work, many pointed to a gap in resources outlining *how* to do so effectively when working with system-involved youth. This document provides an overview of the project approach in four stages: (1) deciding what to translate, (2) translating the evidence into practice, (3) designing and developing products, and (4) disseminating work products.

Systemizing the Project Approach

The approach draws from implementation science research (Durlak and DuPre 2008; Fixsen et al. 2015; McCoy 2015; Van Dyke 2012; Wandersman et al. 2008), which emphasizes the importance of creating a continuous decisionmaking feedback loop, and the larger project goals to make decisions based on available evidence and feedback from stakeholders. Figure 1 depicts the underlying decisionmaking framework for this project: a continuous consideration of evidence, stakeholder feedback, and OJJDP input carefully weighed and considered by the Urban team at multiple decision points.

FIGURE 1

Overall Approach: Continuous Decisionmaking Process



Below, the process is presented in more detail, focusing on how it informs four key points: deciding what to translate, translating the research, designing and developing the products, and disseminating the products.

Phase 1: Deciding What to Translate

Deciding what to translate depends on both value and evidence, as depicted in figure 2. The first part of the decision is determining which focal areas would create the most value for the field (the left side in blue). The second part is determining whether sufficient research exists to support the prioritized efforts (the right side in green). On both sides of the schematic, the stop signs indicate places where ideas are removed from consideration because they do not meet the needs or do not have sufficient research to support them.

Ultimately, the decision to translate is determined by (1) feedback on what the field thinks it needs, (2) topical areas that align with priority areas for OJJDP, (3) areas that could create the most value for the field, and 4) sufficient research to ground translation efforts. The rest of the text in this section outlines the decisionmaking flow shown in figure 2.

WHAT DOES THE FIELD THINK IT NEEDS?

In its initial assessment to determine what the field thinks it needs, the Urban team solicited input through two focus groups and 32 in-depth interviews with 34 key practitioners, researchers, and national experts between December 2015 and June 2016. In this initial assessment, the Urban team focused on understanding dimensions of the following questions:

1. In what areas do practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and/or stakeholders identify needs for more information to improve practices or align polices?
2. In what areas are practitioners searching for ways to improve practice but not seeing or understanding the research that could help them?
3. In what areas are policymakers and program-shapers trying to adjust their policies and programs but not seeing or understanding the research that could help them?
4. In what areas do researchers perceive that practitioners or policymakers are not using the research?
5. In what areas do stakeholders perceive that policy or practice is misaligned with available research?

As summarized in "The Bridge Project: Stakeholder Perceptions of Research and Practice Gaps in Juvenile Justice" (Love and Harvell 2016), stakeholders identified six primary, overlapping focus areas that needed research translation: applying developmental research to practice; implementing risk/needs assessments; engaging youth and families; matching youth to services, improving case planning practices, and engaging probation officers; implementing sustainable reentry practices; and operationalizing evidence-based practices. Over time, the project could address multiple focus areas. The Urban team will determine iteratively how best to prioritize topics, considering multiple dimensions outlined below.

DO FOCUS AREAS APPEAR TO BE A PRIORITY FOR OJJDP?

Focus areas for the Bridge Project must align with the goals of OJJDP's ongoing programs and initiatives. The Urban team will systematically collect feedback from OJJDP staff members. A potential topic will be excluded if OJJDP employees have indicated it is not a critical topic, it conflicts with other OJJDP efforts, or it is already being pursued under other OJJDP contracts.

WHERE CAN THE PROJECT CREATE THE MOST VALUE?

In addition to aligning the project focus with OJJDP's programs and initiatives, the Urban team will consider overarching questions to prioritize potential focus areas, including the following:

- What focal areas would benefit the most youth?
- What focal areas would benefit youth the most?
- What focal areas face the fewest challenges to adoption (e.g., if a particular audience would benefit from a particular product but would be the least likely to take it up, should that audience be a lower priority)?
- What creates a foundation on which the project could build its next effort?
- What trade-offs should the project make in determining where to focus the efforts?

DOES SUFFICIENT RESEARCH EXIST TO DEVELOP THE RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE MATERIALS?

For each focal area (and beginning with the application of a developmental approach) Urban will determine if sufficient research exists to create the research-to-practice materials. The research may exist either inside or outside the juvenile justice field. For example, research in youth development, child welfare, foster care, and other policy or disciplinary areas focusing on youth may be relevant. The research must demonstrate promise in its effectiveness in helping juvenile justice practitioners create better outcomes for youth, but it must also speak to the implementation practices that facilitate or impede the outcomes. In other words, does the intervention require a certain way of interacting with the youth (creating a warm relationship versus generating fear) or some other implementation mechanism to be successful?

For each potential focal area, the Urban team will conduct a systematic literature review consistent with the principles of high-quality reviews outlined by the Cochrane Collaboration[1] to identify relevant research; set minimum criteria for inclusion based on methodological rigor consistent with the goals of clearinghouses like the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse and CrimeSolutions.gov but adapted for this context to include nonexperimental research; and synthesize findings across the literature base to define evidence-informed, developmentally appropriate practices. See figure 3 for more detail about the elements of "sufficient" research. For each potential focus area, the Urban team will be examining the literature with the following questions in mind:

- Does appropriate research exist—either within the juvenile justice field or in a related field—to form the basis for translation to improve the identified practices or align the identified policies?
- Is the evidence base strong enough to support the claim of evidence-based, best practice, or promising practice?
- Does the research include information on ideal implementation, acceptable variation, and unacceptable variation? Can such variation levels be inferred from similar research in related fields?
- Does the research include information on implementation drivers as identified by implementation science, including competency drivers, organizational drivers, and leadership drivers? Does the research include information about context?
- Does the research include information on practices or elements needed during the various stages of implementation as identified by implementation science, including exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation? Can sufficient information to inform a research-to-practice bridge be inferred from the research?

[1] The Cochrane Collaboration is a global independent network of researchers, professionals, patients, and people whose mission is to improve health care decisionmaking through high-quality, systematic synthesis of evidence according to 10 key principles.

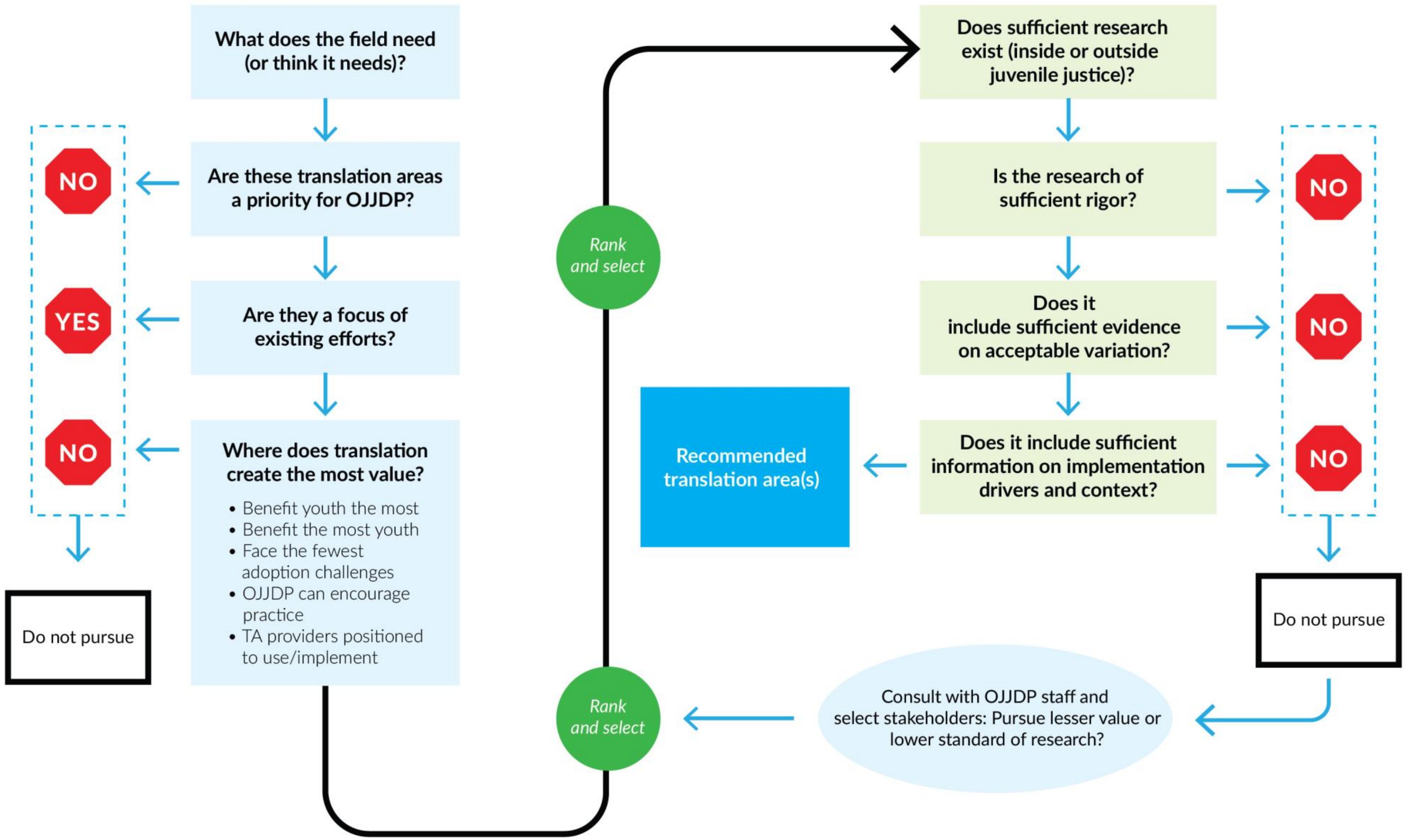
Transitioning from this phase to the next one, the Urban team will consider the appropriate level of intervention and audience the research could be adapted for. The following questions will be considered and evaluated to more fully delve into how to visualize the package of translation materials:

- For what audiences (types of practitioners) does the research support adoption? In other words, is the research sufficient to suffuse this type of intervention throughout the work of multiple types of practitioners at various places within the juvenile justice system?
- What level or type of intervention is this: policy, systems level, or community-based level?

If the scan of the research determines that sufficient research exists, then the project moves on to phase 2: the translation of research or evidence into practice language and context. If the systematically identified research does not yield sufficient rigor and implementation information, then the project turns to the focal area identified as yielding the next-best level of value.

FIGURE 2

Deciding What to Translate



Phase 2: Translating Research into Practice Language and Context

Once research of sufficient rigor and implementation information to translate the research to practice is confirmed, the translation process begins. This phase has six key steps: synthesizing the impact research, synthesizing the implementation research, developing the implementation stages, developing the self-assessment materials and draft content, soliciting feedback and refining materials, and adapting the research for language and context. The fourth and sixth steps (developing self-assessment materials and draft content and adapting the research for language and context) occur in tandem with phase 3: designing and developing the product. Each step is described below and depicted in figure 3.

SYNTHESIZING THE IMPACT RESEARCH

The Urban team will synthesize the available impact research related to the effectiveness of using a developmental approach with youth. Much of this research will be drawn from disciplines outside, but relevant to, juvenile justice practice. Synthesis of the impact research will delineate the theory of the intervention(s), the specifications of the model(s), the populations to which the intervention(s) can be appropriately applied, the allowable adaptations to the model(s), and the community-level factors likely to influence success. The Urban team will need to draw out these factors from each study and synthesize across studies to form the evidence base; the team will also need to draw from developmental research more generally when insufficient detail exists for particular evidence-based programs (see boxes with pink headings in figure 3).

SYNTHESIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

The Urban team will synthesize the available research to explain the three types of drivers identified as essential by implementation science for successful implementation of interventions: competency drivers, organization drivers, and leadership drivers (see boxes with orange headings in figure 3). Implementation science emphasizes that organizations must attend to three key facets of implementation in order to install and sustain new interventions in their organizations; in other words, these three facets of implementation are key to creating real changes in how organizations operate and the practice of their services.

Competency drivers focus on the staff members that will implement the intervention (left-most box with orange heading). Sometimes organizations may have staff members that they are hoping to convert into new positions. Other times they may be considering hiring new staff. Either way, it is important to understand what kinds of skills staff members will need to enact the intervention, how to assess if existing workers or new hires have those skills, how to train workers to acquire the skills, and how to evaluate staff performance.

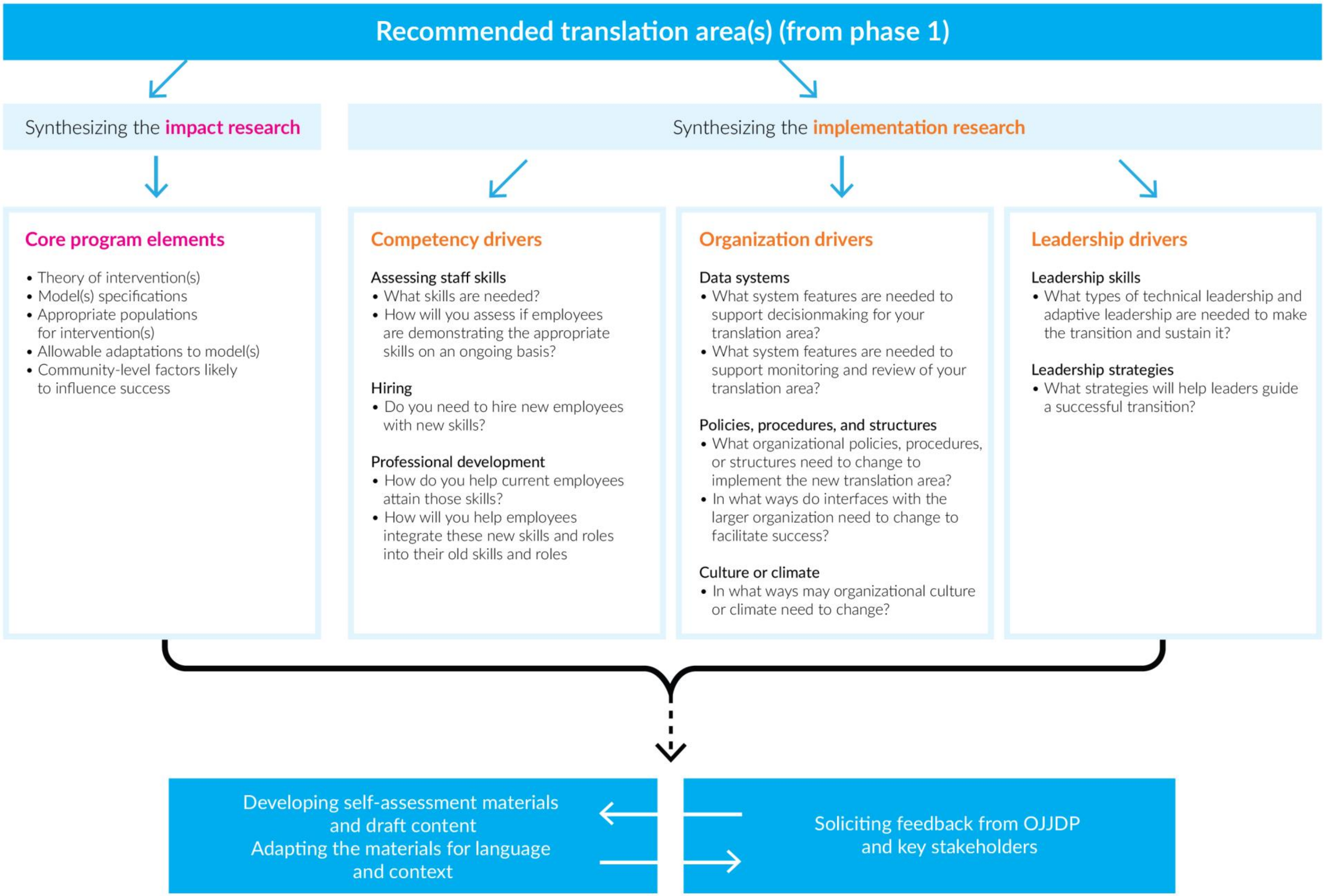
Organization drivers focus on the data systems, policies, procedures, infrastructure, and culture or climate within organizations (middle box with orange heading). Interventions exist within an organizational infrastructure, and some infrastructures may support particular interventions better than others. It is important to understand how the new intervention may relate similarly or differently to the organization in which it operates, and the types of policies and procedures that may be required to implement the intervention effectively. In addition, will the implementation require a different type of climate or culture than the previous intervention?

Leadership drivers refer to the skills and strategies needed to effectively lead the new intervention (right box with orange heading). While the competency drivers refer to the front-line workers, the leadership drivers speak to the people who will guide the implementation to success. The leadership staff will need a mix of the technical skills specific to the intervention and adaptive skills to lead the change processes identified in the other two drivers.

Thus, the Urban team will work to identify research that provides information about these implementation factors, to synthesize that evidence, and to create guidance from the evidence. Where evidence is lacking, the team will use implementation science and principles around human resources, organizational development, and leadership to fill in gaps. The project will draw from the best evidence available, whether specific to the intervention or more generic to the field.

FIGURE 3

Translating the Research into Practice Language and Context



DEVELOPING THE STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation science researchers Fixsen and colleagues (2015) identify the stages of implementation as exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation. These stages are not shown in the diagram, but each driver must be further explained within the specific implementation stage to help organizations change their practice and know what to expect. In other words, the stages of implementation recognize that organizations cannot simply switch from one type of fully embedded practice to another just by deciding that a new practice is warranted. Each of the four stages is described briefly below.

Exploration: At this stage, the organization or agency determines whether an intervention is appropriate. Is the intervention appropriate for its population, does it fit in with the rest of the services the organization offers, could the organization be adapted to deliver this kind of intervention, and is this the right time to implement a new intervention? The Urban team will create self-assessment materials to facilitate this exploration stage. The materials will need to address the other three stages, including providing an expected timeline and considerations for each stage and for achieving full implementation.

Installation: At this stage, the organization or agency assures that appropriate employees, resources, and organizational infrastructure are in place to implement the intervention (to actually begin providing the service). In other words, the initial level of all the implementation drivers have been addressed to get the project started. Although the stages are framed separately in the literature and perhaps would be ideally implemented that way, the real world is not always so neat. We will identify potential strategies to handle implementation across multiple stages occurring at once.

Initial implementation: At this stage, the organization or agency begins delivering the services of the new intervention. This is designed to be a learning stage where new policies and procedures are put to the test, staff are observed to see if they are successfully using the new skills and strategies, and data are gathered and examined to reflect on efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of services. The practitioner-focused materials need to point to the items that practitioners should be paying most attention to at this stage to ensure that the new policies, procedures, and practices are implemented as intended. Materials need to include procedures that allow for tweaking strategies and retraining employees to achieve the desired state.

Full implementation: At this stage, the intervention is fully integrated into the organization and is operating routinely. Mechanisms for quality assurance need to be in place to sustain efficient, effective, quality services. Materials need to include information about how long it may take to reach this state and how to sustain practices over time.

DEVELOPING SELF-ASSESSMENT MATERIALS AND DRAFT CONTENT

Once the first three steps are completed, the Urban team will draft self-assessment materials and content (see lower left blue box in figure 3). This includes reshaping the information from a research-oriented format to a practitioner-oriented format—in other words, switching from what the research says to what the practitioner needs to do.

Self-assessment materials: These materials facilitate the exploration stage of implementation. Not all interventions will be appropriate for all populations or environments. The self-assessment materials will help organizations or agencies easily discern if the intervention is appropriate for the population they are serving, their goals or mandates in serving that population, how they need to adapt their way of doing business, and whether they have the flexibility to adapt in a reasonable amount of time.

Draft content: The draft content translates the synthesized research into practitioner-oriented language. At this stage, the translation would strive to create a practitioner-language version of all content elements. The purposes of this step are to be sure the translated information is comprehensive and clear and to get feedback from key stakeholders about how to adapt the information most effectively for particular audiences and contexts.

SOLICITING FEEDBACK AND REFINING MATERIALS

This point initiates a continuous feedback loop (see lower right blue box in figure 3). The draft self-assessment materials and draft content would be shared with OJJDP, research experts, and key stakeholders for feedback regarding appropriate identification and representation of information, including ways to improve clarity. The Urban team will also discuss with stakeholders the key audiences for which the materials will be translated and adapted and ask for advice around language and context considerations to inform the next stage of the work. Materials would be refined based on the feedback and considerations provided.

ADAPTING THE MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT

When the Urban team receives feedback from the stakeholders and OJJDP, materials will be adapted for the key audiences and contexts (two-directional arrows between the bottom blue boxes). At this point, the focus is still on the self-assessment and draft content materials. After the adaptations for language and context, the materials will be shaped into particular products for dissemination.

Language: In the original synthesis of the research and evidence, the Urban team will focus on assessing and categorizing the important elements and facets of the research. Thus, the initial synthesis is likely to maintain the research language. A second step will be to translate that research language into practitioner-oriented language. Depending on the approach taken, this may result in multiple translations. For example, if the intervention is to be translated for judges and probation officers, then the materials need to be relatable to judges and probation officers. Translations will be made for each group using its common terminology.

Context: The materials will also need to be adapted for the implementation context. Using the example above, if judges and probation officers are both target audiences, then the content needs to be adapted to address its use in a courtroom versus in an agency delivering probation services. The framing of the competency drivers would need to consider the relevant types of positions. The framing of the organization drivers would need to consider the varying organizational structures. The framing of the leadership drivers would need to consider the types of leaders that would oversee the implementation in the different settings.

Phase 3: Designing and Developing the Product(s)

This phase of work will be closely coordinated with the development of self-assessment materials and draft content (phase 2) and will be attentive to the stakeholder feedback received to inform both the design and dissemination phases of this project. An important consideration will be to determine the target audience for the product. Determining the target audience has three dimensions. First, determine who the intended user is: the practitioner or T/TA providers. For example, is the product being designed for immediate consumption and use by practitioners, or is it being used as source materials for a training module or curriculum that is developed by T/TA providers, thus resulting in derivative products?

Second, the Urban team will determine which specific practitioner audiences within the juvenile justice system are the target of the translation products (e.g., individuals focused on prevention and diversion, community-based alternatives to placement, detention and secure confinement, or reentry). Third, the specific types of practitioners to which materials will be targeted within each system point will be determined. For example, the prevention and diversion system point could include materials tailored for law enforcement, prosecutors, probation officers, judges, and community service providers. The project will prioritize different juvenile justice system points and types of practitioners on a rolling basis by focusing on the following criteria: which focus area could benefit the most youth; which presents the least adoption challenges, the availability of training and technical assistance providers positioned to use and implement tools, the ability to leverage existing OJJDP partnerships both within the Department of Justice and across agencies, and OJJDP's capacity to provide leadership. Ultimately, every product will be informed by both practical considerations for adoption and its potential to improve the life outcomes of the most youth possible.

In discussions with key stakeholders, designed to determine primary focal areas for the field and the kinds of products that would be most useful, the following list of product options emerged: fact sheets, checklists, pocket cards and toolkits, briefs, newsletters, short videos (talking heads), whiteboard videos (more detailed), interactive videos, webinars, online training with simulations, in-person group training, presentations at conferences, and a one-stop shop website or online clearinghouse. Process and design considerations to inform product design and development are detailed below.

PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS

The Urban team has identified several practical concerns, many of which can be explored and addressed simultaneously with the translation phase of this work. These concerns range from scans of product designs and formats, to cost considerations, to designing for input and feedback loops (see blue boxes on left side of figure 4).

Scan existing resources (tools and products). To minimize overlap or redundancy with other resources on a particular topic, the Urban team will scan existing materials designed to translate research to practice in the identified areas. As products are identified, the Urban team will review and determine the best way to link to these resources in any new products. This scan will include identifying any OJJDP T/TA initiatives and coordinating with these initiatives to ensure translation efforts are not duplicated.

Scan exemplary product designs, features, and formats. In addition to searching for resources on specific topics identified for translation, Urban will identify useful or otherwise creative ways to present content and maintain a collection of exemplary products and designs that could be adopted or adapted to improve the user experience or interface, with the goal of increasing review and adoption of products and content developed for practitioners.

Investigate product development costs and timeline. Product development will consider the resource investment and time required. The Urban team will select options that bring useful products to practitioners in a timely manner and maximize value to the field. This investigation will include identifying any OJJDP T/TA initiatives to which this product could be appended or delivered.

Incorporate principles of continuous improvement and feedback. Building in opportunities for continuous improvement and feedback is core to every phase of the Bridge Project. The project will build in opportunities for review and feedback during product design from varied stakeholders and potential users (including practitioners and T/TA providers). Processes for obtaining feedback on the products at three- and six-month intervals after the product has been released will be included. Multiple options may be offered, for example an online portal to let users share any comments about the product, or push-out short surveys to individuals who have downloaded or otherwise interacted with a product (e.g., attended a training). The Urban team will also strategize how best to incorporate feedback into published products.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to process considerations, product development will be informed by principles of adult learning, alongside some practical considerations related to presentation and format (see green boxes on right side of figure 4).

Incorporate adult learning principles. To the extent feasible and appropriate, product design will seek to maximize the adult learning experience. Knowles (2005), an expert on adult learning, offers the following five assumptions regarding adult learners.

1. Adults want to know why they should learn. They are more motivated to learn if they understand the benefits and costs of learning.
2. Adults need to take responsibility. This means product design should recognize that adults want to take charge of their learning and should be given opportunities to assess their learning.
3. Adults bring experience to learning. This can be good and bad—good in that adults bring resources to the table, bad in that these experiences may be biased or unsupported.
4. Adults are ready to learn when the need arises. The main challenge here is that adults often perceive employer-provided training as employer-required training.
5. Adults are task oriented. This suggests that content should be organized around tasks, not subjects.

Ability to incorporate various principles of adult learning and instructional systems design will depend on the mode and format of the product ultimately selected. As noted earlier, the Urban team will also consider the end-user of products developed to determine the best way of incorporating these principles into the product itself and/or if necessary, providing guidance or instruction to trainers who may disseminate the information to practitioners. It is important for new information to build a bridge from the old information to help practitioners cross over from what they have been doing to where they need to go. The materials need to address why the new strategies or techniques are important, explain how the new approaches will benefit practitioners, and be actionable.

Acknowledge the broader ecosystem. Practitioners operate in complex systems, within varied organizational structures, and with different sets of skills, not to mention under wide-ranging factors beyond their ability to control. Products design will be cognizant of these realities and competing factors, making them explicit in materials and, where possible, offering practical solutions for mitigation. A likely starting place is a review of factors tied to the competency, organizational, and leadership drivers explored in the review of implementation research (phase 2).

Use easy-to-understand language from reliable and credible sources. One of the most common obstacles to use of research findings is that the findings are often not presented in language that is accessible and useful to practitioners' day-to-day work. Products will be drafted in accessible, practitioner-oriented language as used by the targeted audience (e.g., practitioner-oriented language for law enforcement and practitioner-oriented language for judges may not look the same) and, to the extent possible, vetted with practitioners to identify areas of clarification before the final product is released.

Incorporate the stakeholder or practitioner voice. Another common critique of research is that it often fails to reflect or include the needs or practical concerns of practitioners or end-users. Practitioner point of view and perspective, based on interviews during phase 2, will be incorporated into product design. This principle is highly consistent with good instructional design in that adults want to be involved in their own learning and bring experiences that may influence the adoption or implementation of recommended strategies or changes in approach to a particular issue or problem.

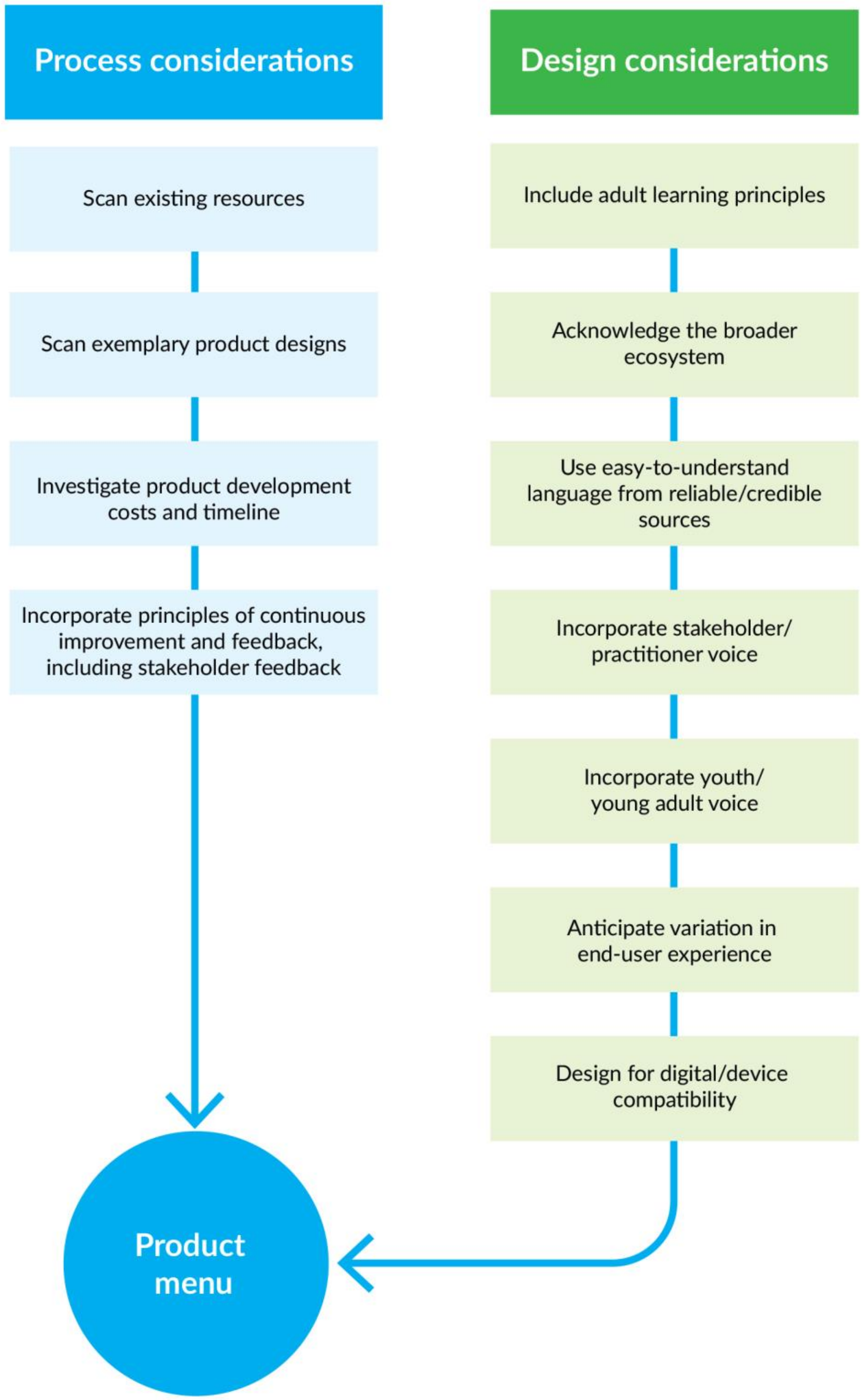
Incorporate the youth or young adult voice. This principle is consistent with the decision to prioritize translational materials in areas that could benefit the most youth. Consideration of and inclusion of the youth or young adult perspective is a necessary link for obtaining buy-in and support from youth as they engage with practitioners. For various practical reasons (e.g., identifying and interviewing system-involved youth and human subjects considerations), youth advocacy organizations will likely be the primary source to incorporate this perspective.

Anticipate variation in end-user experience. This design principle is related to understanding that practitioners operate in different environments with different conditions and experiences. Product design will attempt to anticipate varying needs of end-users by specifying, where possible, alternative ways to implement proposed strategies or possibly defining different scenarios to represent these varying conditions or situational concerns. The organizational self-assessment will be important for determining if the organization can adopt this kind of change and what steps are needed to do so. In addition, the focus on creating materials to institutionalize the practices rather than simply providing training to staff will help to support implementation.

Design for digital and device compatibility. In addition to designing products that comport with 508 compliance requirements to support users with special sensory needs, end-user view and download capabilities on various devices and digital formats will be of utmost importance. Cost and process concerns will be considered.

FIGURE 4

Designing and Developing the Product



Phase 4: Disseminating Products

Product dissemination requires considering the design of the products, the planned end-user (practitioner or T/TA provider), and the targeted audience (placement in the juvenile justice system and type of practitioner). Dissemination strategies will be developed during product design (as suggested by McCoy 2015). In fact, dissemination is an important cost consideration of certain product choices. For example, some stakeholder interviewees expressed a preference for printed materials over electronic ones. Printed materials have different dissemination costs from digital designs, and those costs have implications for the delivery of the information. Thus, product design and dissemination must be considered in tandem to assure viability from cost, usability, and timeliness perspectives.

The Bridge Project's dissemination efforts will involve efforts to build general awareness about the materials and promote uptake. In other words, individuals and organizations should not only learn about the new resources, but should also engage with the materials and implement changes in their activities, policies, procedures, and/or strategies within the juvenile justice system and their communities. Factors like preferences, needs, capacity, and practice norms have a greater impact on dissemination and uptake than evidence of effectiveness itself, making sensitivity to the needs of the target audience critical for both strong product development and effective dissemination (Kreuter and Wang 2015). Kreuter and Wang (2015) suggest that "user review panels" are a key first step to successful dissemination because the users or practitioners will help identify which research is worth disseminating; these review panels are incorporated throughout the Bridge Project to determine where to focus translation efforts and the specific audiences for which translation will be most beneficial.

The project will leverage the OJJDP dissemination structure and platforms, including the NTTAC website, webinars, and newsletter. The Urban team will also explore which professional associations would align best with the focus and target audience of the materials, and work with them to determine the feasibility of presentation at the conferences and/or distribution through their established mechanisms. Strategies may include creating blog posts, newsletter articles, or tweets that associations can easily share through their existing dissemination paths. Prerecorded or live webinars instructing on best use of the materials may also be offered. And, where appropriate and recommended by the NTTAC providers, train-the-trainer materials may be developed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The goal of the Bridge Project is to facilitate the translation of juvenile justice research into actionable policy and practice changes through the development of practitioner-friendly, application-ready products. The approach of the Bridge Project is designed to systematically select focal points of translation, translate from research into practice, develop and design products, and disseminate products drawing from both research of effective practice and feedback from OJJDP, key informants, technical assistance providers, and practitioners on the ground in each step. By dually maximizing considerations of evidence and usefulness, the project seeks to develop products with which juvenile justice practitioners will engage and that will engender sustainable practices in their organizations.

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