Beyond Fidelity II: Assessing the Context of Implementation

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Importance of Good Implementation

Implementation

	Good	Poor
Effective	👍 A	👎 B
Ineffective	👎 C	👎 D

Program

Outcomes:

👍 **Moderate-Strong Effect**

👎 **No-Weak Effect**

Lack of Attention to Implementation Context

- A review of the evaluation literature on the implementation of EBPs indicates that much of the focus is on assessing **fidelity** of implementation

- EBPs are implemented within organizational, political, and socio-cultural **contexts**, which may exert powerful influences on the implementation, operation, and sustainability of EBPs

The Solution

- An evaluation **framework** that helps evaluators anticipate and assess how the **context of implementation** (COI) might affect the implementation, operation, effectiveness, and sustainability of EBPs

- Armed with a better understanding of the COI evaluators would be better positioned to help clients **anticipate** or **trouble-shoot implementation problems**.

- **Better implementation = better outcomes**.

Structure of Think Tank

- **Theories** that aid our understanding of the COI

  – Implementation theory

  – Systems theory

- Key **questions** for assessing the COI

  - Boundaries
  - Levels and factors
  - Relationships
  - Implementation and systems change

What is the Context?

- "Context is the site, location, environment, or milieu for a given evaluand" (Greene, 2005, p. 83)

    - **Boundaries** of the relevant context?

    - **Levels and Factors** within that context?

    - **Relationships** between levels and factors?

Theories

- **Implementation**
  - Contextual **levels** and **factors** that influence implementation

- **Systems**
  - **Boundaries** around the relevant COI
  - **Relationships** among levels and factors
  - **Perspectives** on systems

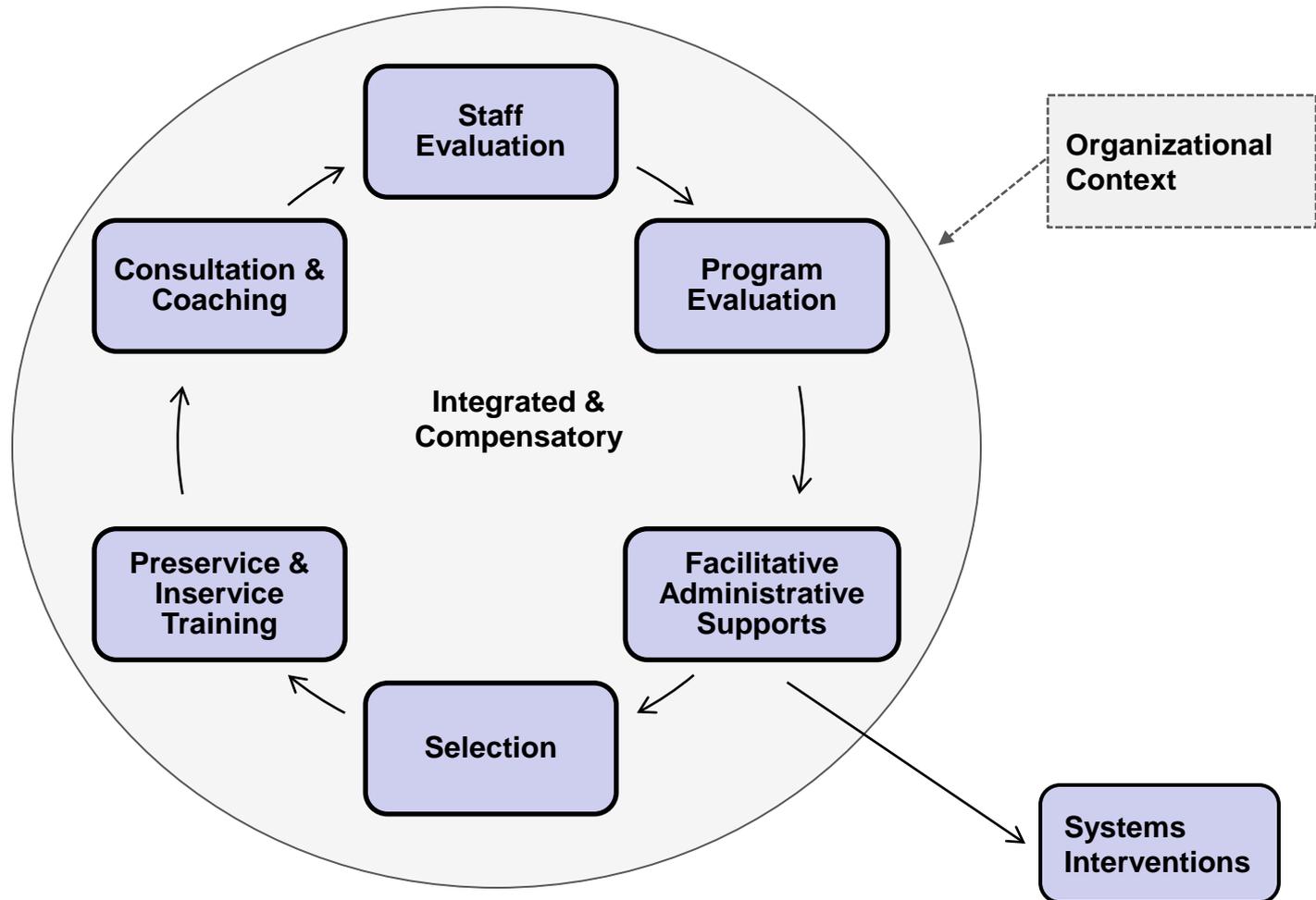# Implementation Factors (Durlak and DuPre, 2008)

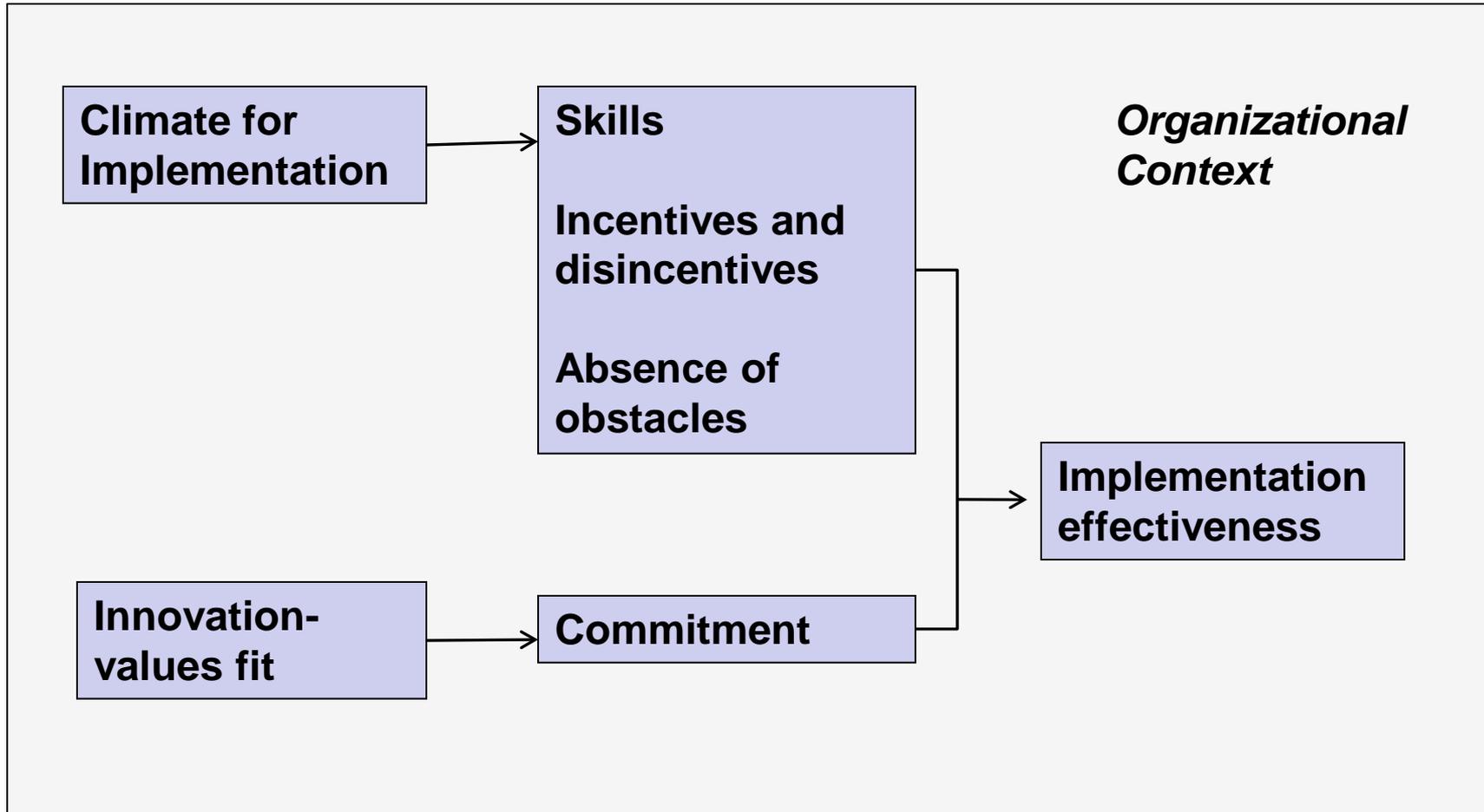| Levels	Factors
Prevention Support System	• Training & Technical assistance
Community	• Theory & research • Politics & Policy • Funding
Prevention Delivery System (Organizational Capacity)	• Org climate, norms, vision • Practices and processes • Staffing (leadership, administrative support)
Innovation	• Compatibility • Adaptability
Provider	• Perceived need for and benefits of innovation • Self-efficacy • Skill proficiency

Implementation Components (Fixsen, et al., 2005)

- Core <u>Intervention</u> Components

  - The "most essential and indispensible components of an intervention practice or program"

- Core <u>Implementation</u> Components

  - The organizational "infrastructure" that supports and surrounds the intervention activities of practitioners

    - Facilities and funding

    - Organization management

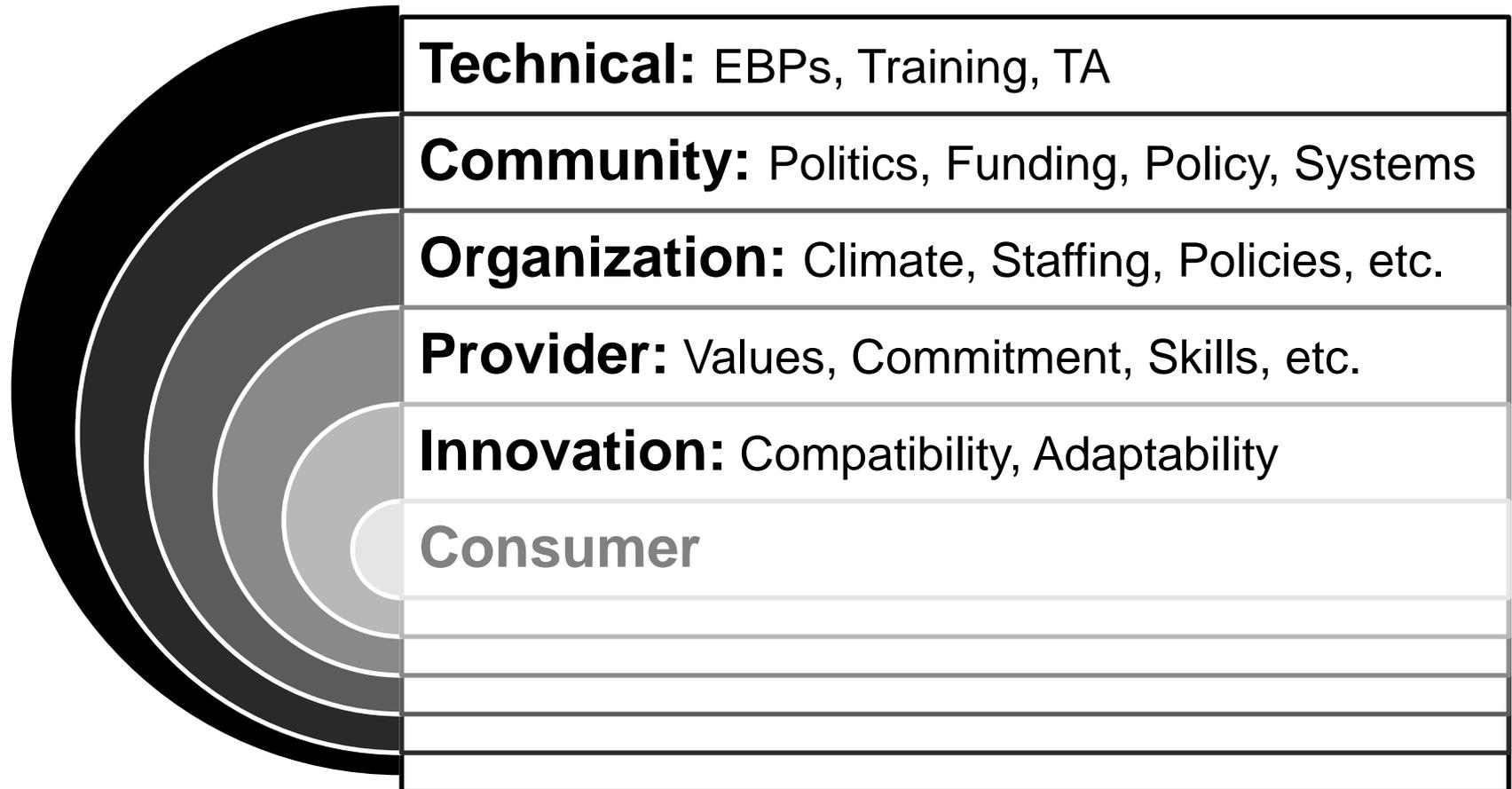   - Staff selection, training, supervision, evaluation

Core Implementation Components

Fixsen et al., 2005

Climate for Implementation (Klein & Sorra, 1996)

Contextual Levels and Factors

Technical: EBPs, Training, TA

Community: Politics, Funding, Policy, Systems

Organization: Climate, Staffing, Policies, etc.

Provider: Values, Commitment, Skills, etc.

Innovation: Compatibility, Adaptability

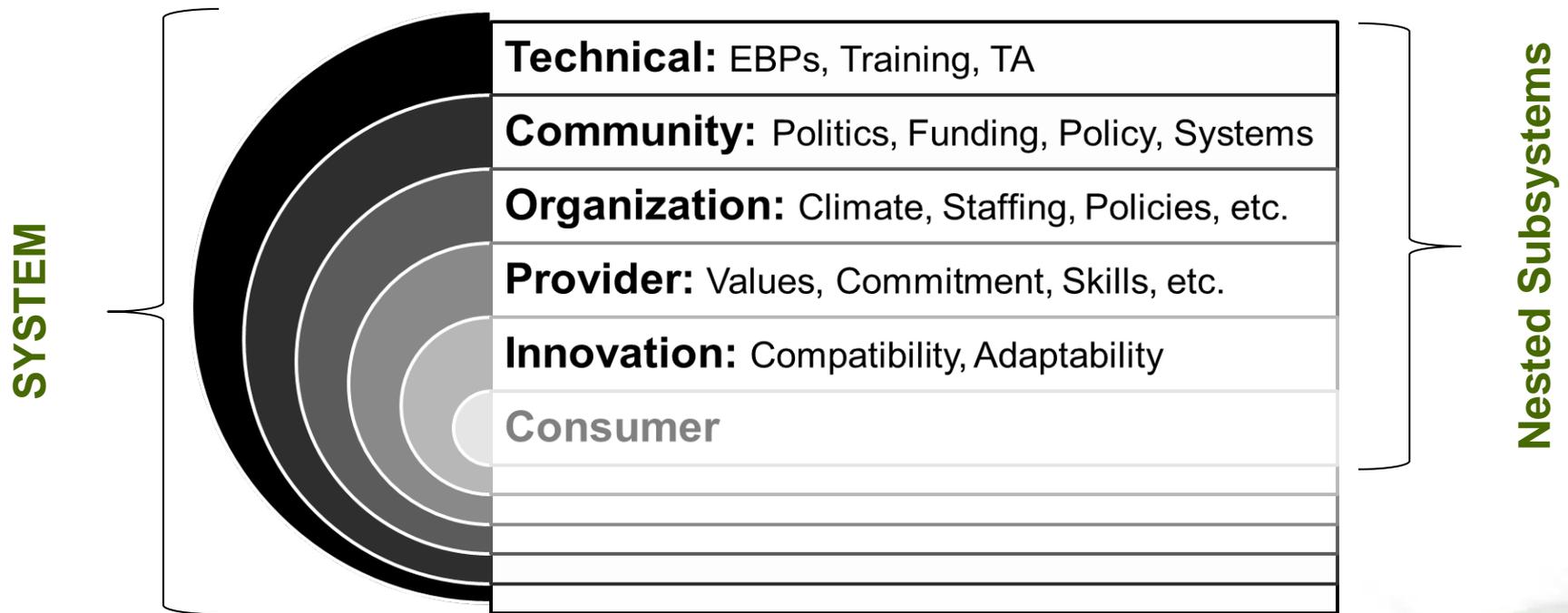**Consumer**

Insights from Systems Theory

- **Systems:** collections of interacting parts that, through their interactions, function as a whole

- EBPs and their COIs can be viewed as systems

SYSTEM

Nested Subsystems

Technical: EBPs, Training, TA

Community: Politics, Funding, Policy, Systems

Organization: Climate, Staffing, Policies, etc.

Provider: Values, Commitment, Skills, etc.

Innovation: Compatibility, Adaptability

Consumer

System Boundaries

- Arbitrary, but essential

- Delineate what is inside/outside the *situation of interest*

- Boundary choices have ethical implications

- Social, organizational, functional, geographical, political…

System Relationships

- Systems are interconnected networks of factors operating at several levels
- Change in one part of the system produces change in other parts of the system, consequently:

Implementation = Systems Change

- Systems changes:
  - Planned, foreseen
  - Unplanned, unforeseen/unforeseeable
- The more interconnected and complex the system, the more *unforeseeable* systems changes will be

System Perspectives

- System actors (individuals, organizations) have **diverse perspectives** on the system, including boundaries, factors, and relationships
- Any effort to assess or transform a system must both account for and **negotiate** between the diversity of perspectives on that system

Activity

- Select an EBP and discuss the following questions
  - What are the **boundaries** of the system within which the EBP is embedded?
    - What are the implications of drawing the boundaries more narrowly vs. more widely?
  - What are the major **levels and factors** of that system?
  - What are the important **relationships** between the levels and factors to consider for implementation?
  - How must the **system change** to support and sustain the implementation of the EBP?

References

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