

Evidence in Action:

How to set baseline expectations, set targets for change, and monitor actual performance

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For today

- Explore the main drivers of **evidence use**, here in the form of rigorously derived performance data: the Baseline, Target, Actuals (BTA) report.
- Discuss the ways in which the BTA report is being used - and customized, locally – to encourage a culture of evidence use such that staff in different roles use evidence to their advantage and to the benefit of children and families.

The BTA Report

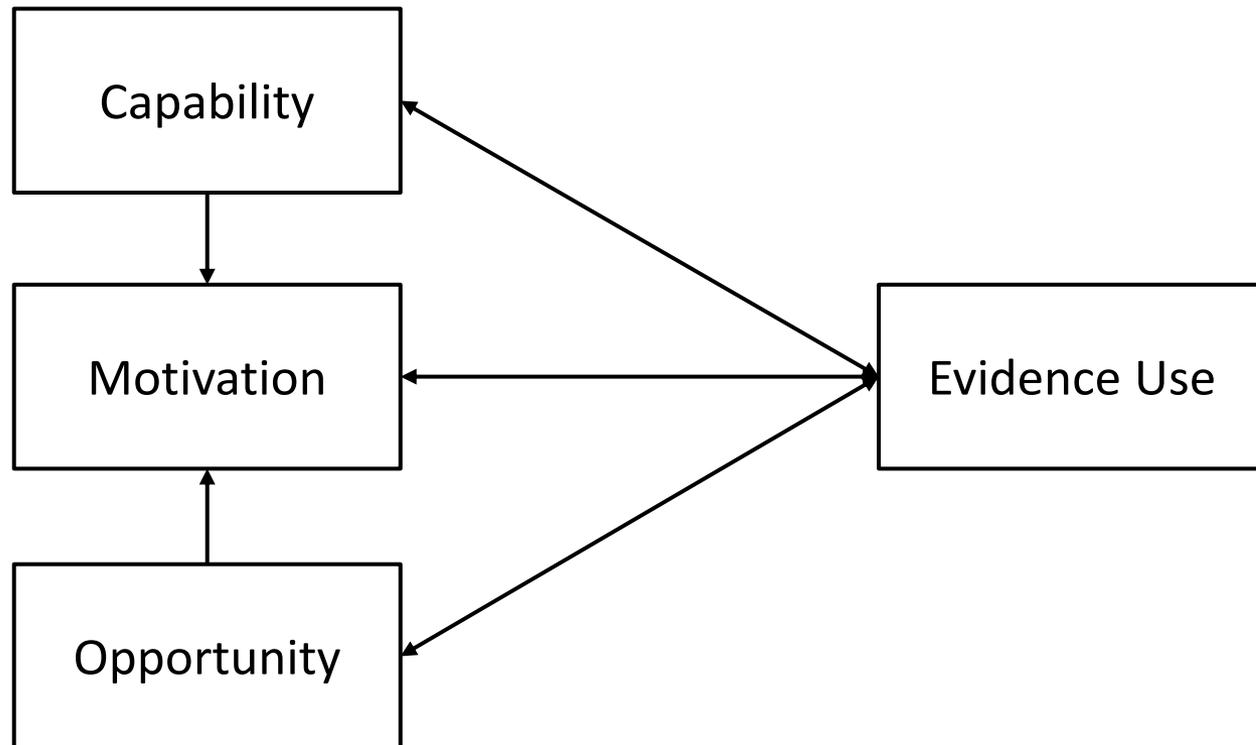
A straightforward approach to performance monitoring that enables child welfare systems to:

- Establish **baseline** performance
- Set performance **targets**
- Measure **actual** performance

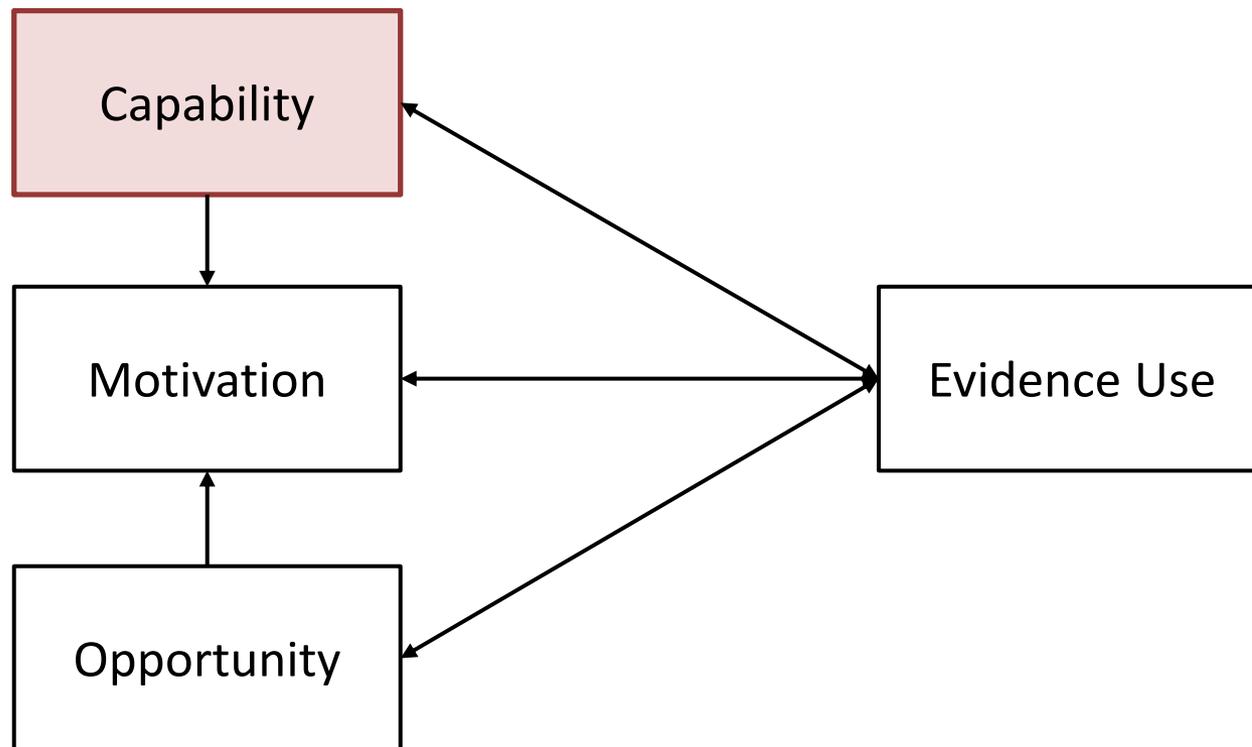
The BTA is generally updated every six months, allowing time for systems to:

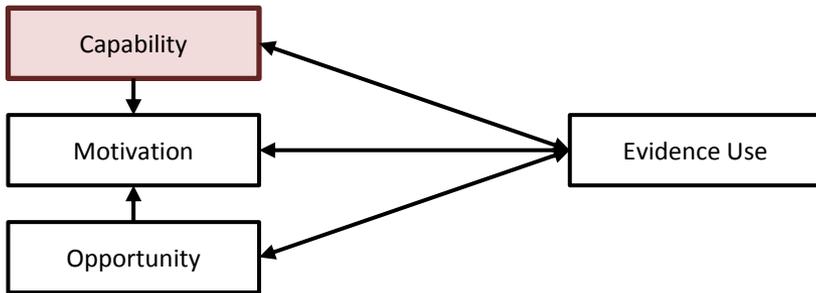
- **Make observations** about progress
- **Hypothesize as to why** there may yet be a gap between target performance and actual performance
- Identify needed **course corrections**
- Recommit to or **adjust targets for improvement**

Promoting evidence use: Three main drivers



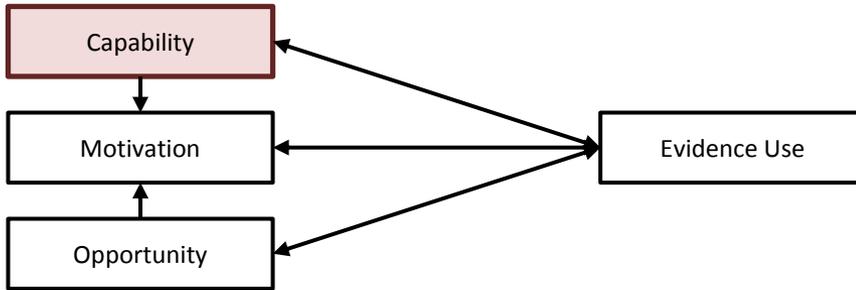
Capability: How do I do this?





Capability: How do I do this?

1. Multi-level staff training: **Priority concepts**
 - **Who** are you talking about?
 - Recognize the value in **stratifying** your data
 - Be clear about **the window**
1. Learn how to tell the story



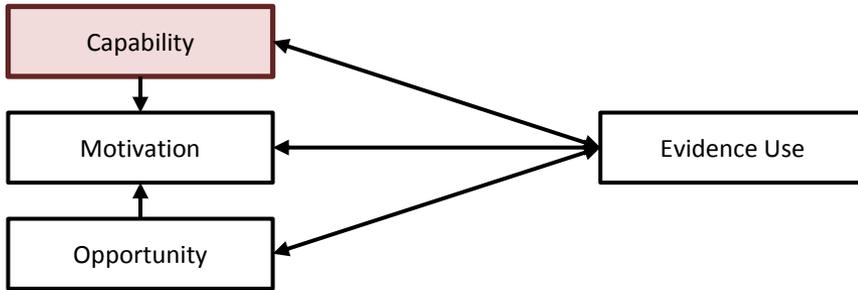
Capability:
How do I do this?

Who are you talking about?

Stock and Flow

We might expect the outcomes associated with children *on* a given caseload at the time a change effort is set in motion (the “in care” group) will be different from the outcomes for those who are *added to* a caseload after the change period begins (the “admits” group).

* Also important: previous time in care (for the in care group)

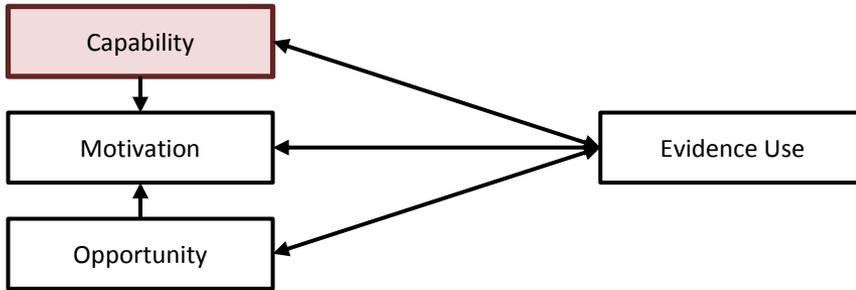


Capability:
How do I do this?

Stratify your data

Appreciate the value of arranging children into diagnostically related groups

We would expect the outcomes for a child who entered state custody as an infant to be different from the outcomes for a child who entered as a teenager.



Capability:
How do I do this?

Change occurs within a window

The **window** is a period of time during which a particular innovation or strategy will implemented.

It has a **start** and **stop** date that are connected to the theory of change: **How long** do we expect it will take to observe an effect?

BTA Tool: The Basic Structure

Children ADMITTED after initiative begins

OR

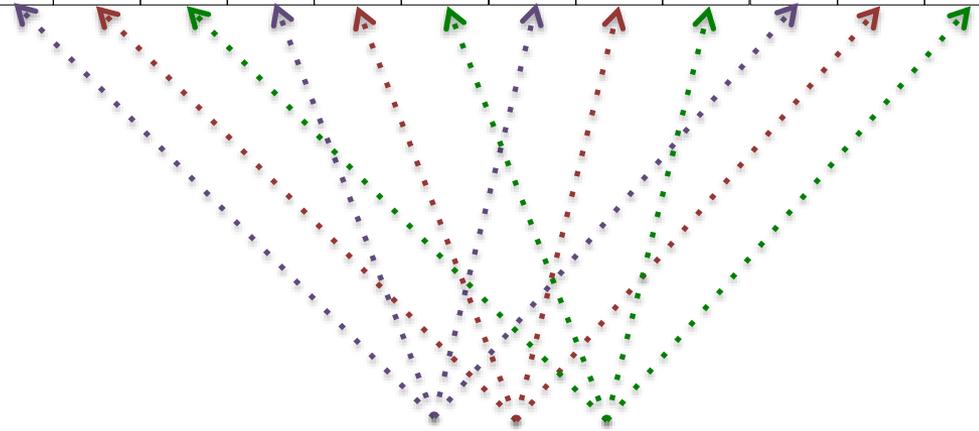
Children IN CARE at the time initiative begins

Previous Time in Care Age at Entry The Window



LT 2 Y	Under 1	Year 1
GT 2 Y		Year 2
LT 2 Y	1 to 5	Year 3
GT 2 Y		Year 1
LT 2 Y	6 to 12	Year 2
GT 2 Y		Year 3
LT 2 Y	13 to 17	Year 1
GT 2 Y		Year 2
LT 2 Y	JJ Youth	Year 3
GT 2 Y		Year 1
		Year 2
		Year 3

Population at the Start			Permanent Exits			Non-Permanent Exits			Still in Care			Care Days		
Base-line	Target	Actual	Base-line	Target	Actual	Base-line	Target	Actual	Base-line	Target	Actual	Base-line	Target	Actual



The BTA

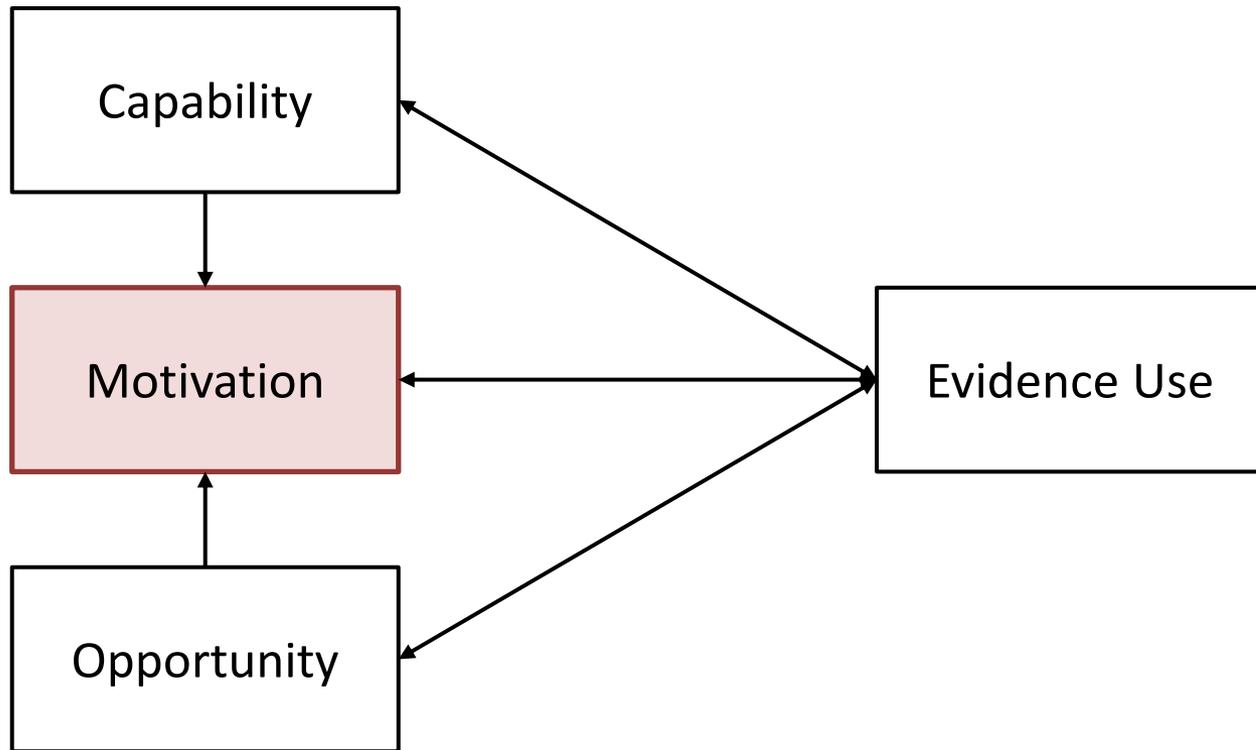
Telling the Story

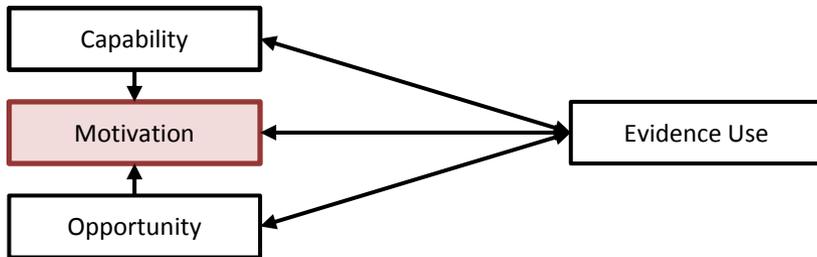
		Population at the Start			Permanent Exits			Non-Perm. Exits		Still in Care, Year End			Care Days		
		Baseline	Target	Actual	Baseline	Target	Actual	Baseline	Actual	Baseline	Target	Actual	Baseline	Target	Actual
Under 1 Year	Year 1	44	44	44	13	14	9	0	0	31	30	35	6,704	6,034	7,459
	Year 2	31	30	35	16	18	11	0	0	15	12	24	7,763	6,697	5,149
	Year 3	15	12	24	10	11	0	0	0	5	1	24	3,557	2,569	***
1 to 3 Years	Year 1	64	64	64	36	39	47	0	0	28	25	17	15,703	14,133	13,122
	Year 2	28	25	17	19	21	10	0	0	9	4	7	6,242	4,915	2,174
	Year 3	9	4	7	7	8	0	0	0	2	0	7	2,109	754	***

Because permanent exits for babies were **slower** than anticipated, this region will be starting off the second performance year at a disadvantage, with more babies still in care at the start of the second performance year than either targeted or expected under baseline conditions. It is a signal to staff in the region to take a look at this population of babies and consider why the pace of exits may be slower than usual.

Toddlers admitted to care during the first performance year exited much **faster** than usual, putting the region at a big advantage going into the second performance year. The advantage was big enough to offset the fact that fewer toddlers exited in the second performance year expected (baseline) or targeted. It's a signal to staff in the region to take a look at this population and consider what may be contributing to the success in achieving permanent exits for this group.

Motivation: Why should I?



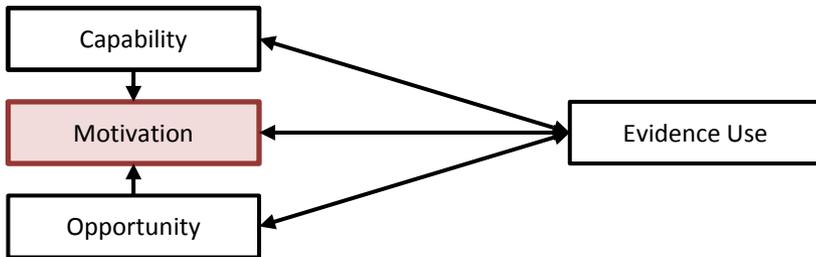


Motivation: Why should I?

Generating staff buy-in

Commitment from leadership

- Commissioner was a primary driver for initial implementation of the tool in TN.
- Utilization was initiated in four of twelve regions and tied to the IV-E Waiver Demonstration project but has been expanded to cover the entire state.
- Regional target setting allowed for customizable but consistent measurement of performance.

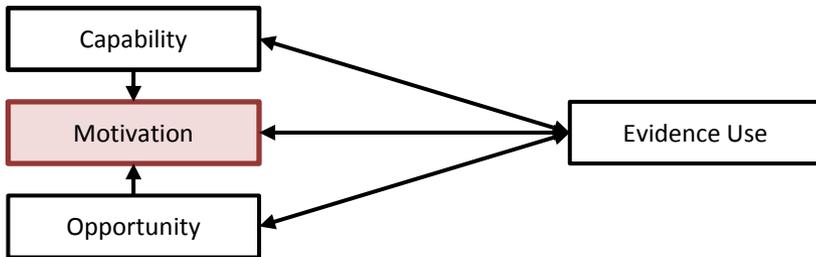


Motivation: Why should I?

Generating staff buy-in

Using strategic levers

- Agency strategic plan prioritizes outcomes reflected on the BTA.
- Performance planning and management incorporates progress toward meeting Targets.



Motivation: Why should I?

Generating staff buy-in

Shifting focus from process to outcomes

- This requires abandoning some traditional performance measures and reports.
- Staff are encouraged to examine the results of their efforts rather than just assessing compliance with policy requirements.

A New Approach

Staff wanted more frequent feedback.

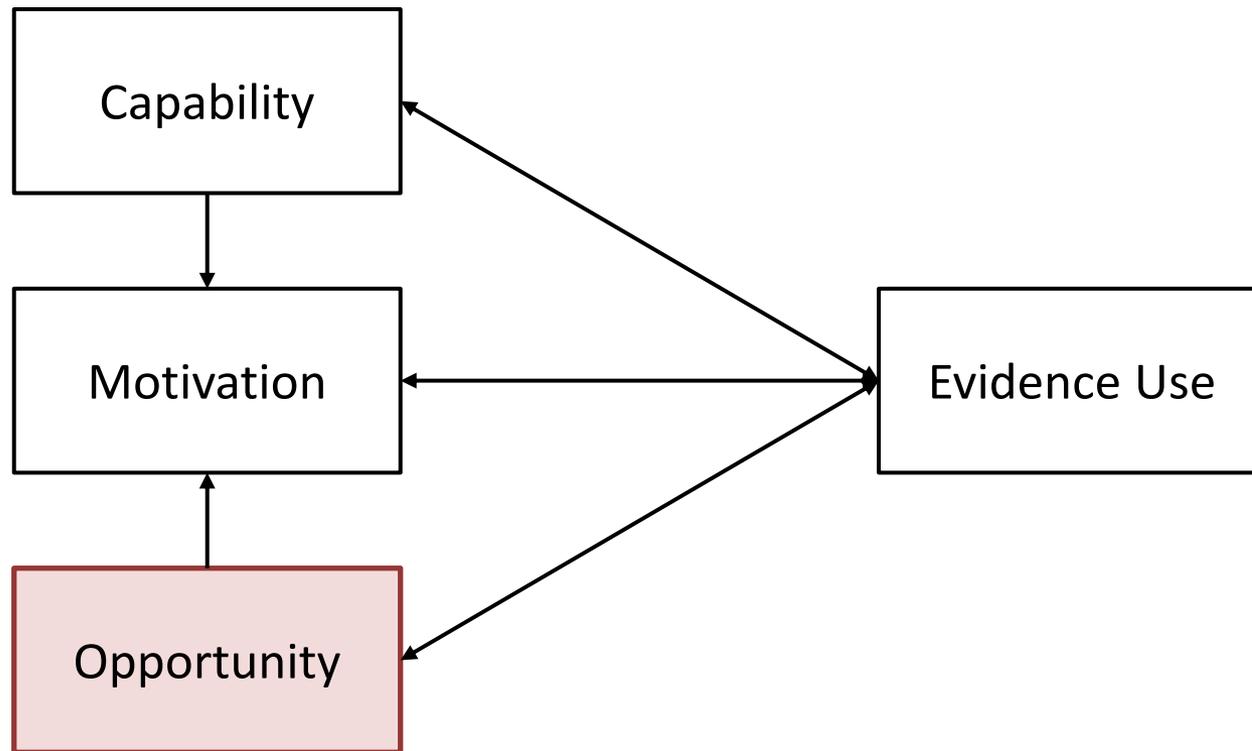
- Rapid cycle improvement strategy was initiated.
- A culture of evidence use emerged as staff at various levels began using the BTA.
- Use of evidence at the macro level to assess performance translated into proactive case planning.

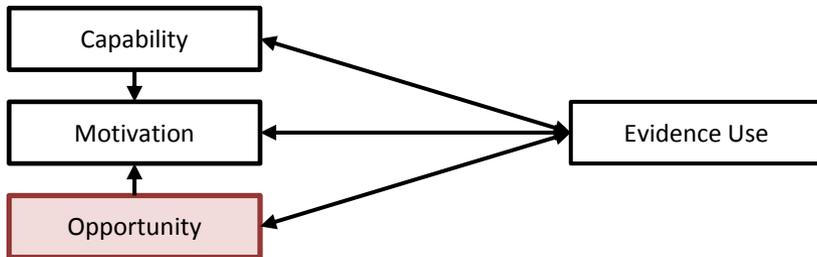
A New Approach



- Monthly updates allow staff to track progress toward targets in “real time.”
- The process of updating the BTA increased understanding of its functionality and application.

Opportunity: Do I have time for this?



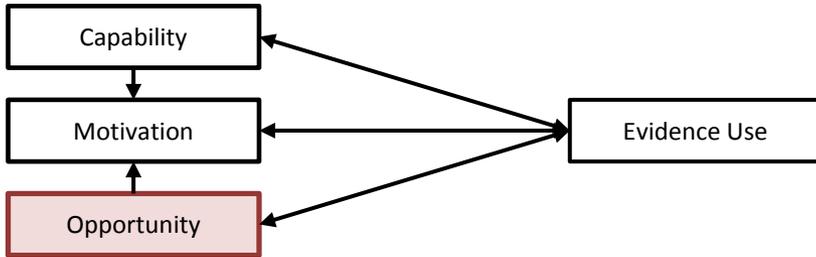


Opportunity: Do I have time for this?

Creating space for evidence use

Assignment of designated “data leads”

- We invested in specific staff and equipped them with the skills necessary to lead work with the BTA “on the ground.”
- These staff, with the support of staff from the Office of Continuous Quality Improvement, developed a network for support and ongoing skill enhancement.

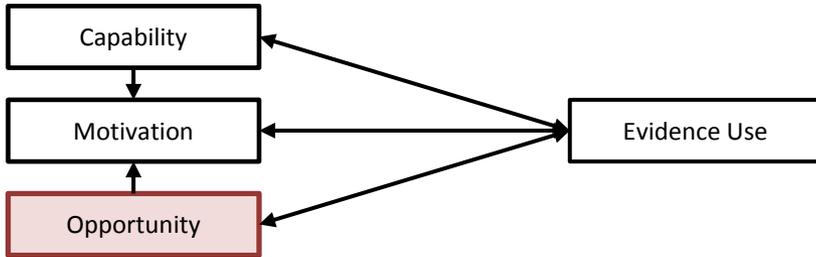


Opportunity: Do I have time for this?

Creating space for evidence use

Dedicated time for assessment of progress

- Initially, weekly discussions were held.
- We've now integrated status updates into ongoing regional performance conversations.



Opportunity: Do I have time for this?

Creating space for evidence use

Evolution of use

- Regions have developed their own variations of the tool.
- The BTA has been integrated into regional management frameworks.

Implications

- **Staff held accountable for using evidence!** The update isn't the end result; rather, the meaning made of the updated BTA report is the subject of regular conversations with the Commissioner

Implications

- No need to wait for end-game analyses; evidence of performance helps feed into the Department's ongoing CQI work
- The simultaneous view of baseline, target, and actual gives staff the information they need to make useful assessments of their progress toward goals.

The Center for
State Child Welfare Data



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Thank you.

The Center for State Child Welfare Data

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