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A Technical Assistance Model to Facilitate Use of the School Health Index to Assess Chronic Health Condition Management in Schools

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Background

- Chronic health conditions, such as asthma and food allergies, affect a substantial proportion of school-aged children in New Mexico (NM)¹
- School health services, policies, programs, and practices can affect daily management of chronic pediatric health conditions
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s School Health Index (SHI) is a self-assessment and planning guide that evaluates school services, policies, and programs for promoting health and safety.

Objective

- To determine if a technical assistance (TA) model could effectively support school districts in using the SHI to complete a chronic disease needs assessment (CDNA)

Methods

- One charter school and 7 public schools from 7 different districts participated in the pilot
- We used a TA model² to guide service and systems change by:
 - Evaluating the context in which the school teams were functioning
 - Building a partnership with key contacts, and
 - Working through the three phases of the model

TA Phases ²	Context in this Project
Phase I: Decision-Making Process	Decision-making about team members and identifying the team member responsible for results and entering into the SHI tool
Phase II: TA Process/Implementation	Facilitation of SHI completion by school teams
Phase III: Evaluate Impact	Interpretation of the SHI results and consideration of next steps during an in-person summit with representatives from each district

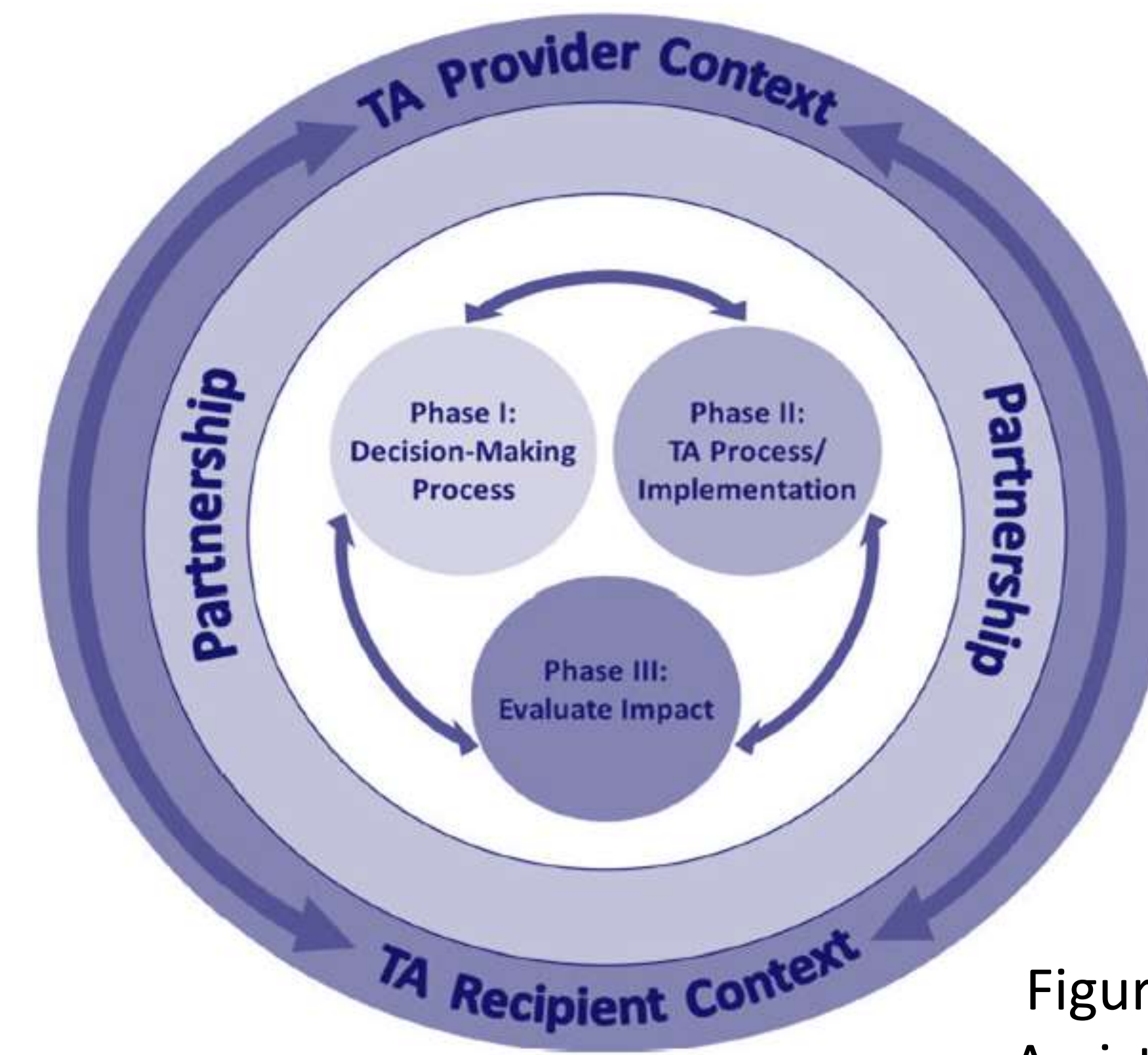


Figure 1: Technical Assistance Process²

Results

Implementation of the TA:

- Envision NM staff condensed the SHI tool questionnaire to only include those questions related to chronic disease management
 - 162 Elementary School Questions -> 81 questions
 - 174 Middle & High School Questions 174 -> 85 questions
- To complete the planning for improvement section, we held a group training in which school teams participated in an action-planning exercise to choose next steps.
- Seven of eight schools completed the questions during the four-week pilot period.

Results from the Chronic Disease Needs Assessment:

- Average CDNA scores indicated that practices and policies were not in place or under development in the areas of employee wellness and health promotion, family engagement, and community involvement.
- Many schools identified the lack of a full-time registered nurse as a weakness in the school health services section
- The majority of schools reported that students with chronic health conditions have access to quick-relief medications and are provided with care coordination.

What schools said (during the end of year spring training):

- They needed more time to accurately complete the assessments
- They needed stakeholder presence for choosing next steps during the action planning activity
- Development of employee wellness programs at the school level is needed

Conclusions

- The SHI is a complex and lengthy assessment for schools to undertake.
- Envision NM effectively used a TA model to help refine the SHI and provide structured assistance for implementing a multi-district chronic disease assessment in NM schools.
- Future assessments, such as the assessment of physical activity and nutrition policies and programs, will continue to use this model, incorporating feedback related to the assessment timeline and action plan step.



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/asthma/index.htm>

References

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- Le LT, Anthony BJ, Bronheim SM, Holland CM, Perry DF. A Technical Assistance Model for Guiding Service and Systems Change. J Behav Health Serv Res. 2016;43(3):380-395. doi:10.1007/s11414-014-9439-2

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