

# Partnership-Building Considerations for Embedding Implementation Science in Alberta's Health Care

Stephanie Brooks<sup>1,2</sup>, Cody Alba<sup>2</sup>, Denise Thomson<sup>2</sup>, Sara N Davison<sup>3</sup>, Kate Storey<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Alberta, School of Public Health; <sup>2</sup>Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit; <sup>3</sup>University of Alberta, Department of Medicine

## Background

- Implementation science (IS) is inherently team-based, requiring trans-sectoral partnerships between applied researchers, innovation teams, and implementation facilitators.
- Implementation science has been shown to improve implementation successes; however, challenges that hinder partnerships to advance implementation science continue to persist.

## Research Questions

- What facilitates or hinders implementation science collaborations?
- How do partnership considerations differ depending on whether you are recruiting implementation support practitioners or implementation scientists to your team?

## Methods

- Semi-structured group and individual interviews (n=21) with 53 participants.
- Analyzed interviews in NVIVO
- Used the Partnership Model for Research Capacity Building, to assess Alberta's ability to embed implementation science into implementation initiatives.

## Results

- People lack IS capacity, shared language and communication pathways required to identify potential collaborations and discuss implementation research opportunities.
- Implementation community members need accessible connection mechanisms to find implementation partners.
- Dedicated time, funding and priority/mandate are required for health system teams to engage in implementation research.

### Alberta's Strengths and Weaknesses

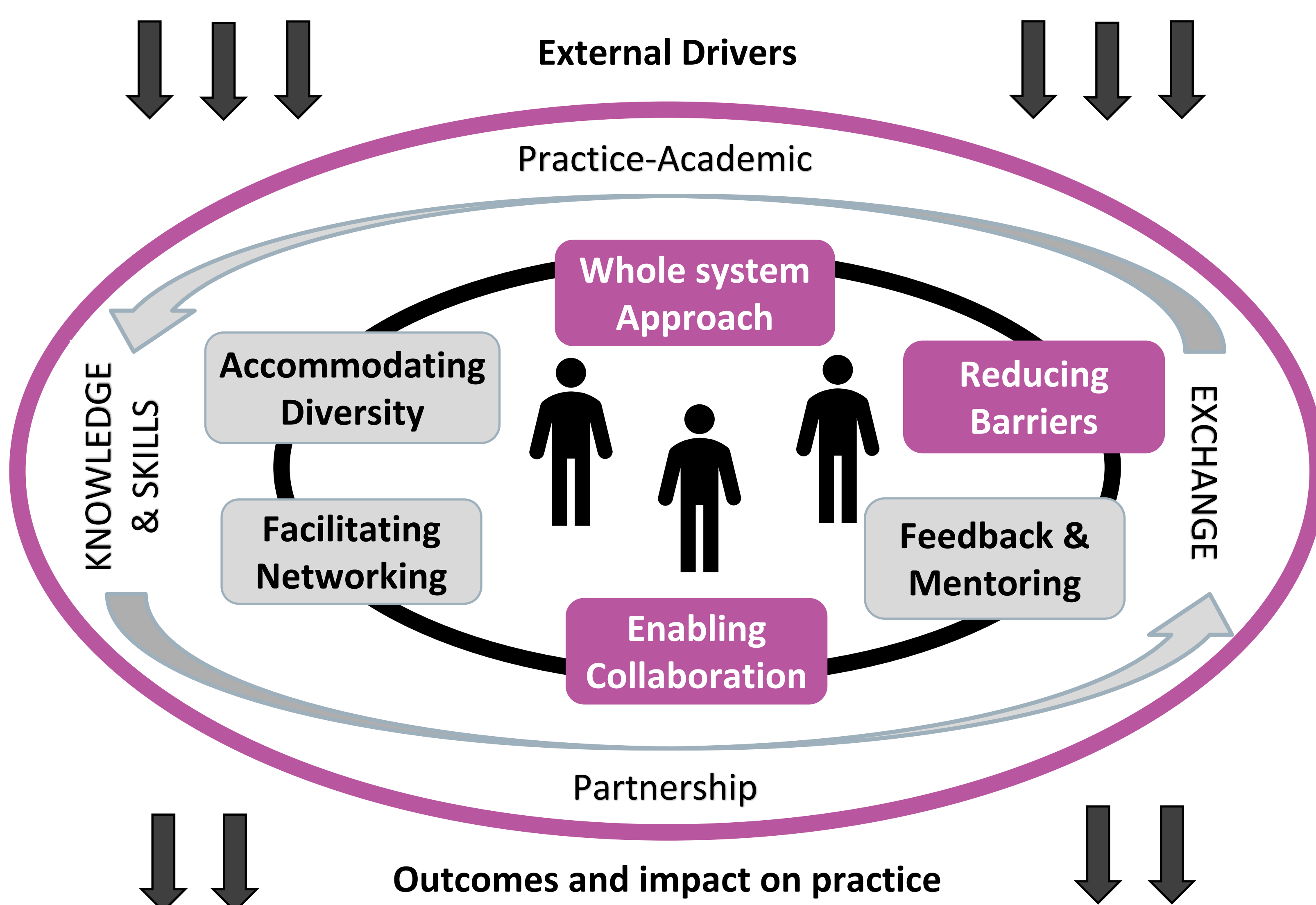


Figure 1. Partnership Model for Research Capacity Building (Whitworth, et al., BMC Health Services Research, 2012)

### AbSPORU's Response to Reduce Barriers

#### Knowledge & Skills Exchange

- Embedded implementation research support where possible.
- Lessons Repository to share implementation lessons learned across siloed teams.
- Seminar Series to learn from experts and share experiences.
- IS Certificate clarifies and standardizes IS terminology.

#### Accommodating Diversity

- IS Collaborative provides methodological guidance to
  - strengthen IS capacity of transdisciplinary implementation teams
  - align rigour and practicality

#### Feedback & Mentoring

- IS Certificate increases IS capacity
- IS Collaborative supports health innovation teams looking to incorporate IS into their work

#### Facilitating Networking

- The transdisciplinary membership of the IS Collaborative provides organic networking opportunities.

## Conclusions

- The Partnership for Research Capacity-Building Model is a useful tool to assess gaps and enablers for IS in a given context
- The IS Collaborative provides methodological support and connects implementation teams to learn from one another.
- AbSPORU also delivers various other capacity-building programs for individuals and is developing a cross-sectoral mechanism to share implementation lessons learned.

## Acknowledgements

This work was led by the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit (AbSPORU), which is co-funded by the Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research Program of the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), Alberta Innovates, and the University Hospital Foundation. SB is the recipient of additional funding through the AbSPORU Graduate Award in Patient-Oriented Research, the CIHR Canadian Graduate Student-Doctoral Award, and the University of Alberta Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship.

## Strengths

"I have a lot of really amazing partners that are open to my crazy ideas... because I've built up that trust and rapport that IS is necessary. And that this should be something that we're invested in not just doing kind of these one offs."

– Academic 5

## Weaknesses

"I'm not even sure where to go to find the people who know what they're doing in this field, and that are comfortable in working in the messiness of healthcare delivery."

– Provincial Office 1