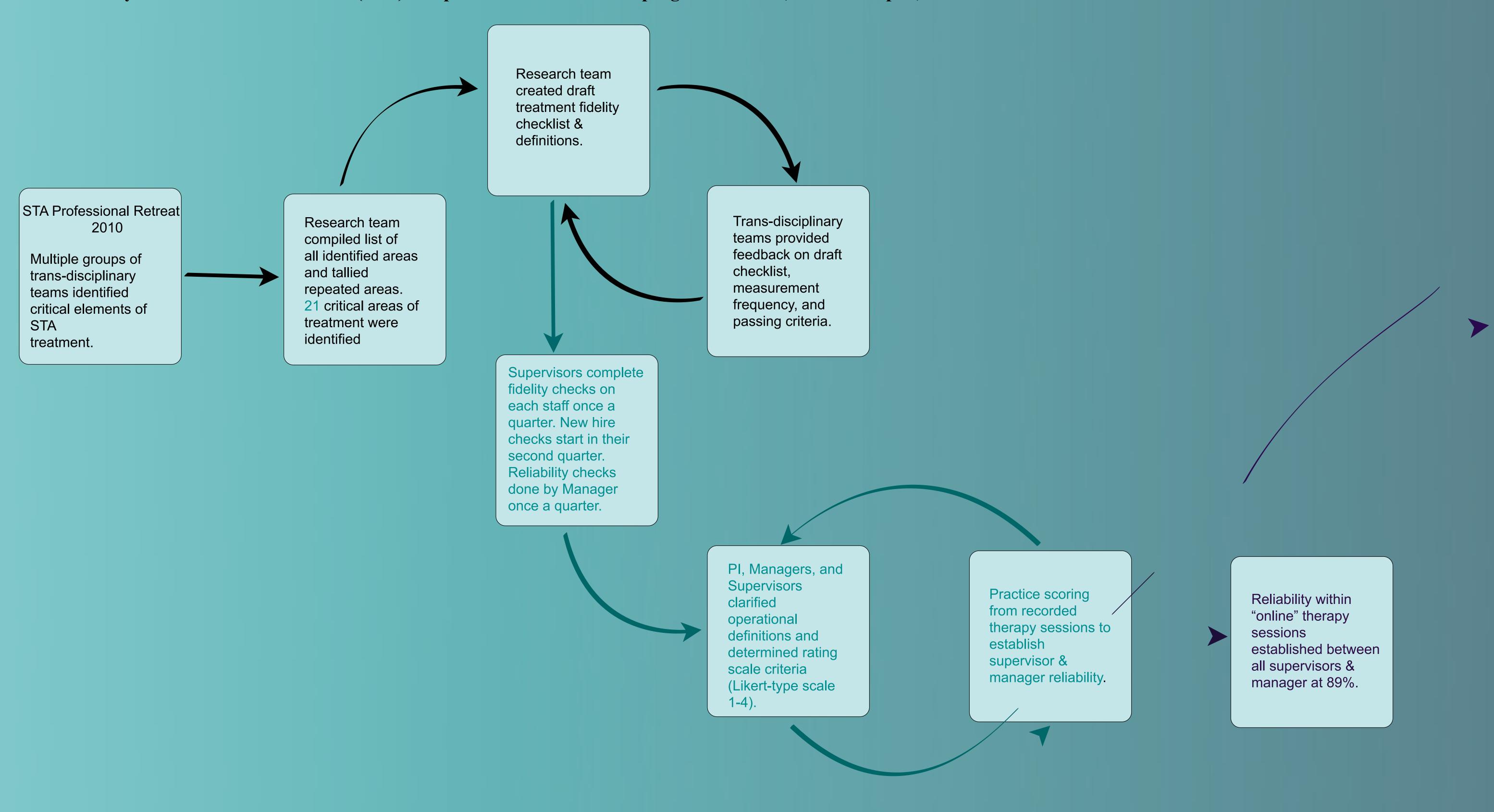
Enhancing Interventions and Embedded Research with Treatment Fidelity

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BACKGROUND

- Treatment fidelity refers to methodological strategies that are used to monitor and enhance the reliability and validity of behavioural interventions. It ensures treatment is implemented as intended.
- Assuring optimal treatment fidelity:
 - Helps clinician researchers validly explain findings;
 - Helps clinicians explain the intervention in relation to child outcomes.
- STA developed a comprehensive paradigm of treatment fidelity, based on the National Institutes of Health's Behavioural Change Consortium model.
 - The model incorporates:
 - a) creation of a treatment fidelity checklist to be used in an intervention study
 - b) training all clinicians
 - c) delivery of the intervention
 - d) young children's receiving the intervention based on STA philosophy
 - e) verification of intervention standards through treatment fidelity checks.
- Society for Treatment of Autism's (STA) comprehensive intervention program is tested, well-developed, and well defined.



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- Training of current front-line staff occurred in August 2012. Training explained the treatment fidelity check procedure and reviewed STA's critical elements of intervention.
- Newly hired front-line staff receive initial training of intervention principles and have a probationary period of six months.
- Ongoing training includes monthly supervisory observations and feedback, as well as regular consultation and feedback from a trans-disciplinary treatment team.
- Preliminary results indicate first quarter fidelity was at 87%.
- Treatment fidelity measures are currently being used as part of a study investigating STA's behavioural social-communication intervention.

STA Treatment Fidelity

15 Critical Elements

GENERAL

Adult presents developmentally appropriate activities and/or modified tasks to make them appropriate to the developmental level

Adult recognizes opportunities to teach a skill and/or reinforce previously learned skills.

Multiple Learning Opportunities

Adult teaches the same skills with a variety of materials and teaches different skills with the same materials. Skills are taught in different environments and with different people to increase generalization opportunities.

Trans-Disciplinary Approach

Adult teaches skills from a variety of disciplines and functional learning areas within the same activity.

Modification to Environment and/or Expectations

Adult modifies the environment and/or his/her expectations as necessary to meet the behavioural, sensory, and communicative needs of the child.

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour Plan Adherence

Adult follows an individual's Behaviour Plan or formal behavioural strategies as outlined by a Behavioural Consultant/ Psychologist if one exists.

Proactive Strategies

Adult uses (regardless of effectiveness) individualized proactive strategies, as outlined by a Behavioural Consultant/ Psychologist. Strategies include: use of visual supports, schedules, sensory breaks/modifications, task variation, choices, transition warnings/supports, reinforcement.

Individualized Reinforcement

Adult adjusts level of reinforcement to the individual and activity; ensures the reinforcement used was appropriate to the skill demonstrated; used an individual's current interests; and faded the use of reinforcement that was not part of a Behaviour Plan.

Adult uses the least intrusive prompt based on the situation or the individual's current skill level. Adult moves through the prompt hierarchy, allowing for processing time between prompts, by skipping prompts when necessary to support learning, and fades the use of prompts within activities.

Unrestricted & Neutral Approaches

When necessary, adult uses unrestricted and neutral behavioural approaches and avoids using restricted and prohibited approaches (Behaviour Modification Guidelines, 2010).

COMMUNICATION

Total Communication

Adult uses words, signs, picture/photo symbols and objects to establish a communicative mode. Once a functional communicative mode is established, this area is not scored.

Functional Communication

Communication Initiation

Adult manages echolalia by encouraging initiated communication and prompting for independence. STA Communication Don'ts were not employed.

Adult uses functional strategies, such as waiting, sabotaging the environment, refraining from providing repetitive verbal prompts, and using communicative enticements to encourage initiated communication.

Visual Supports

Adult uses visual supports that are individualized to an individual's current level of functioning for a variety of purposes, such as: as an expressive mode of communication, as a prompt for verbal communication, topic boards in play, transitional objects or photo symbols, to outline behavioural expectations, etc.

SENSORY SUPPORTS

Proactive and/or Embedded Sensory Supports

Adult uses sensory interventions that are individualized to an individual's current needs, such as: having sensory items available for direct client access, modifies environments and/or providing supports to increase participation in environments that cannot be modified, etc.



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