

Research Impact & the Path to Impact

What is research impact?

- ❖ In the context of biomedical research, we define research impact as the benefits or positive influences research has on:
 - a) the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and populations;
 - b) the organization, delivery, and/or financing of healthcare; and/or
 - c) health and healthcare policy.
- ❖ Research impact can be broadly defined as any identifiable benefit/positive influence of research beyond academia (i.e., beyond the benefit of advancing science).

Why is research impact important?

❖ Thinking about research impact early and often will

- a) ensure that the end goal of your research is not lost in the process.
- b) keep you focused on the purpose of your research.
- c) increase the chances that your research will fulfill its intended purpose.
- d) increase the chances that your findings will connect to the right audiences.
- e) increase the chances that your findings will lead to positive change.

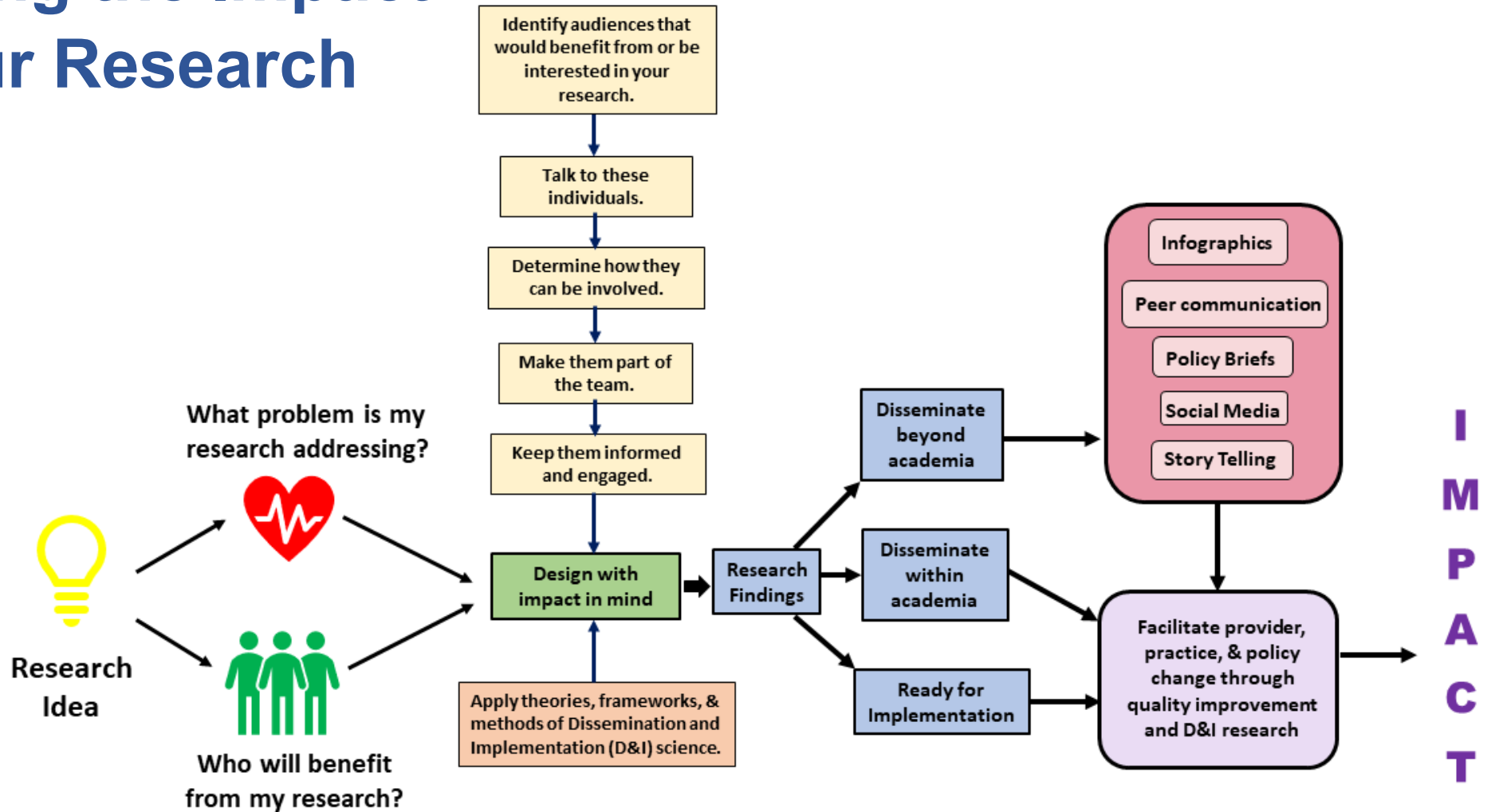
How can I make my research more impactful?

- Talking to the end users (i.e., the people who will directly benefit from your research) and other interested parties (e.g., clinicians who will be delivering the intervention).
- Designing your research with impact in mind (i.e., keeping a focus on the ultimate goal of your research program and the people it is intended to help)
 - Engaging end users/interested parties throughout the research process.
 - Talking to end users to see if you are asking the right question.
 - Talking to end users to get their input on intervention development (e.g., Is it acceptable? Is it feasible in the real world? Do you see potential problems with the design?)
 - Having clinicians and patients on your research team.
 - Taking the time to understand the context of where your intervention will be delivered (e.g., observing workflows, shadowing clinicians who would deliver your intervention.)

How can I make my research more impactful? (cont.)

- ❖ Gaining familiarity with the theories, frameworks, and methods of **Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) Science** (regardless of where your work falls on the translational continuum).
 - ❖ **Dissemination research** is the scientific study of targeted distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific public health, clinical practice, or policy audience. The intent is to understand how best to communicate and integrate knowledge on evidence-based interventions.
 - ❖ **Implementation research** is the scientific study of the development and use of strategies to promote the uptake of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in clinical and community settings in order to improve individual outcomes and benefit population health.
- ❖ Having a plan for disseminating your findings beyond academia.
- ❖ When research findings are ready for implementation, facilitating uptake through quality improvement and/or D&I research.

Increasing the Impact of your Research



THE PATH TO IMPACT

- Even after we have envisioned how a research finding will impact society, we often run into barriers and delays when attempting to move it into the real world.
- The path to real-world impact becomes easier when researchers keep the steps necessary to reach it in view.
- Advance to the next slide to learn more about the path from a research question (Step 1) to Impact (Step 9).





1 Develop New Research Question

- What is the specific health problem motivating your research?
- Start with a problem from within the places where you want to create change – rather than a solution from within your own research community.

2 Commit to Impact

- Consider impact regardless of where your research lies on the translational continuum.

3 Explore the Perspective of Interested Parties

- Consider the end users (e.g., healthcare providers, patients and their families, and others) to get a 360° view of a problem.
- How will your team engage these individuals and ensure research reciprocity?
 - *Would it be possible or beneficial to integrate them into the research design, conduct, analysis/interpretation, or dissemination process?*
- Who will be affected directly or indirectly, positively or negatively, by your research?
 - *This may include those in your research community, those who will be offered or who will receive a related healthcare intervention, those who will deliver such an intervention, and/or systems that support the intervention or cause blockages.*



4

Design & Conduct Study

- What are the implications of your study design for how patients, providers, and policymakers will act on your findings in the real world?
 - *Are there alternative research designs that would produce more actionable findings?*
- Whose expertise could help strengthen your study design?
 - *Look across geographic regions and disciplines, both inside and outside academia, and include target audiences and end users.*
- What outcomes will be important in determining how far you have succeeded in making an impact?
 - *How can you measure these outcomes?*
- Where does your research lie on the translational continuum?
 - *Does your research question most directly address basic science, efficacy, effectiveness, dissemination or implementation?*

5

Evaluate Current/Future Impact

- Does your research point towards a solution to the specific health problem you started with?
 - *Are there contextual factors to consider to make your solution work in the real world, or that limit its applicability?*

6

Disseminate within Academia

- Who can conduct further research to build on your findings?
 - *This may include researchers in other disciplines and may involve moving forward or backward on the translational continuum.*



7 Disseminate Beyond Academia

- How will your findings reach the people and communities they might help?
- Are your findings ready for implementation?

8 Facilitate Provider, Practice, and Policy Change

- If you have produced actionable findings, how can you help promote the use of these findings?

9 Improve Community and Population Health

- Achieving Impact!
- Facilitating positive change in the real world.