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

- Identify audiences that would benefit from or be interested in your research.
  - Talk to these individuals.
  - Determine how they can be involved.
  - Make them part of the team.
  - Keep them informed and engaged.

- Design with impact in mind
  - Apply theories, frameworks, & methods of Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) science.

- Research Findings
  - Disseminate within academia
  - Disseminate beyond academia

- Facilitate provider, practice, & policy change through quality improvement and D&I research
  - Infographics
  - Peer communication
  - Policy Briefs
  - Social Media
  - Story Telling

Research Idea

- What problem is my research addressing?
- Who will benefit from my research?
• 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.
**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?

**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?

**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.
Disseminate Beyond Academia
- How will your findings reach the people and communities they might help?
- Are your findings ready for implementation?

Facilitate Provider, Practice, and Policy Change
- If you have produced actionable findings, how can you help promote the use of these findings?

Improve Community and Population Health
- Achieving Impact!
- Facilitating positive change in the real world.