

# Understanding the Hurdles in Implementing Family First Prevention

A Qualitative Case Study of Nebraska and Colorado

PRESENTED BY

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# Agenda

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BEHIND THE  
STUDY

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# The story behind the study....



Researcher's passion for evaluation and  
reform

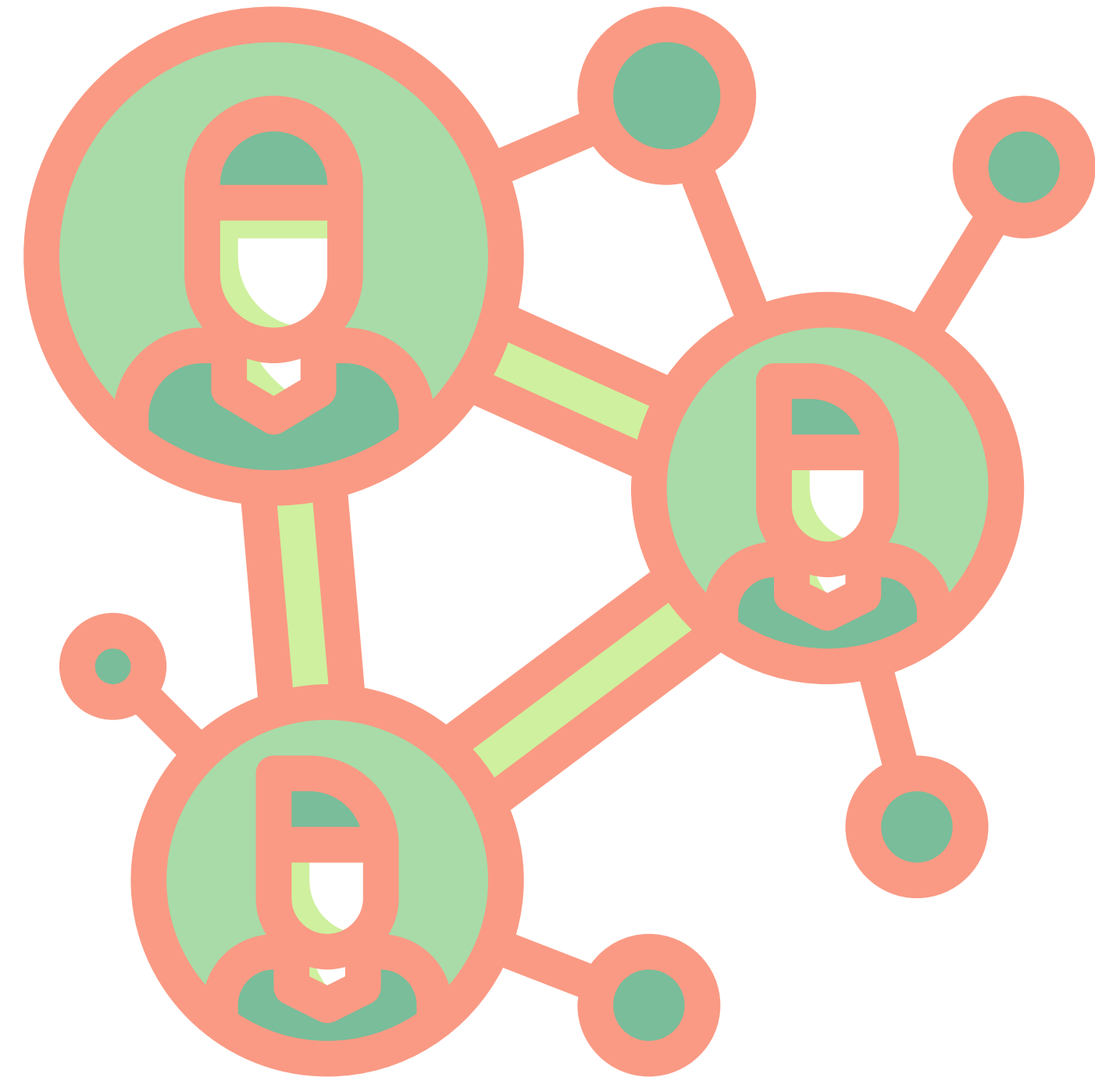
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Doctorate of Law and Policy Dissertation

The Purpose of this qualitative evaluation research was to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Family First Prevention Service Act's requirement for evidence-based practice use is affecting the implementation of the law.	
Nebraska	Colorado
Comprehensive prevention efforts	Comprehensive prevention efforts
1% of minor population in foster care	< 1% of minor population in foster care
State administered child welfare	State supervised child welfare administered by 64 counties
FFPSA Five-Year Prevention Plan was approved before study	FFPSA Five-Year Prevention Plan had been submitted but not yet approved during study

# Who it matters to....

- STATE CHILD WELFARE LEADERS
- IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
- YOUTH AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF  
GOING INTO FOSTER CARE
- FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR  
PREVENTION SERVICES
- PRACTICE MODEL DESIGNERS
- EVALUATORS
- FUNDERS





# Why it matters....





# How did the evidence-based practice criteria affect the implementation of Family First in Nebraska and Colorado?



## Evaluation Research

What is and is not working within system reform.

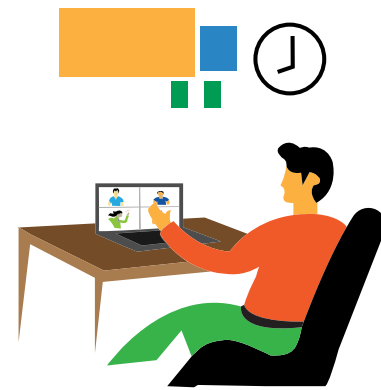
## Qualitative

Used to gain a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon/experience.

## Comparative Case Study

Analysis of the similarities, differences, and patterns across multiple cases.

# How the study was done....



Semi-Structured Interviews  
4 EBP Agency Execs Nebraska  
4 EBP Agency Execs Colorado



Semi-Structured Interviews  
2 Nebraska CW Leaders  
2 Colorado CW Leaders



Title IV-E  
5 Year  
Prevention  
Plan Review



Literature Review

Qualitative  
Case Study

Data  
Collection



# Participants

## Participant Selection

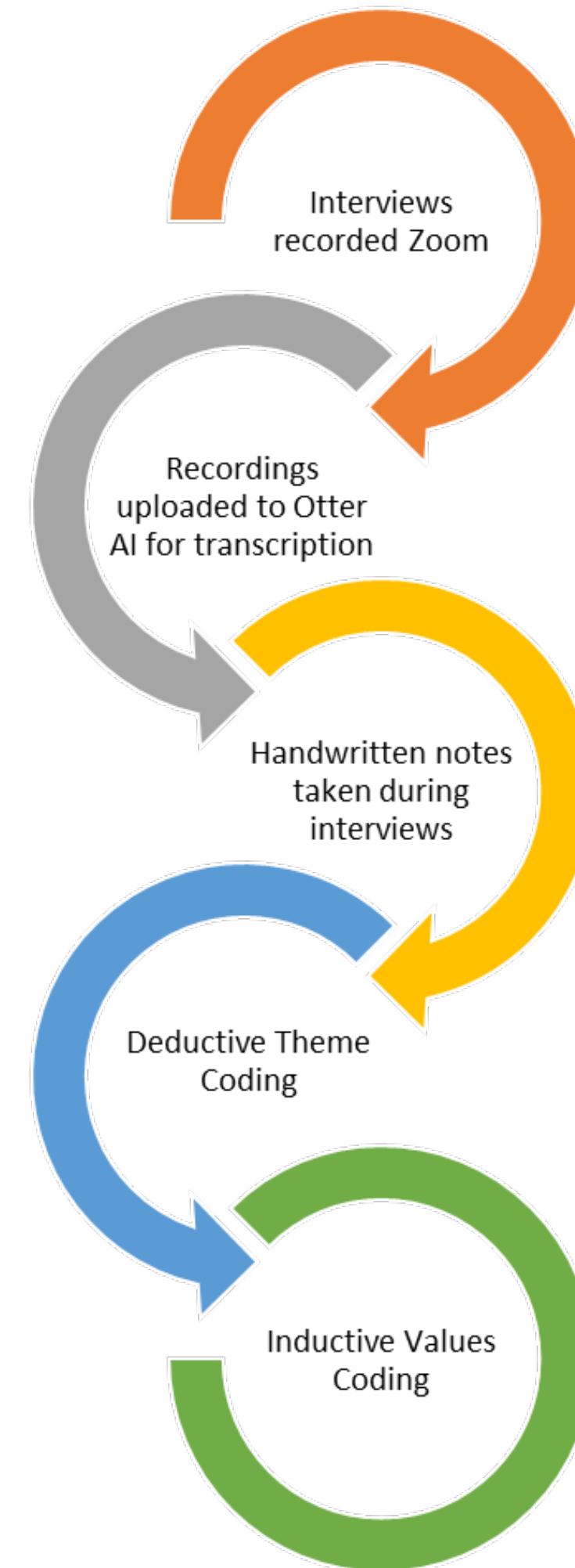
- Child welfare professional
- Over age 18
- Knowledge/Experience with FFPSA planning and EBP selection
- Nebraska
- 2 State child welfare agency leaders
- 4 EBP agency executives
- Colorado
- 2 State child welfare agency leaders
- 4 EBP agency executives

## Participant Recruitment

- Selective sampling
- Confidential
- Zoom recorded interviews
- 45 potential participants emailed
- 12 participated in total (the planned amount)
- 6 Nebraska participants
- 6 Colorado participants

HOW THE STUDY WAS  
DONE....

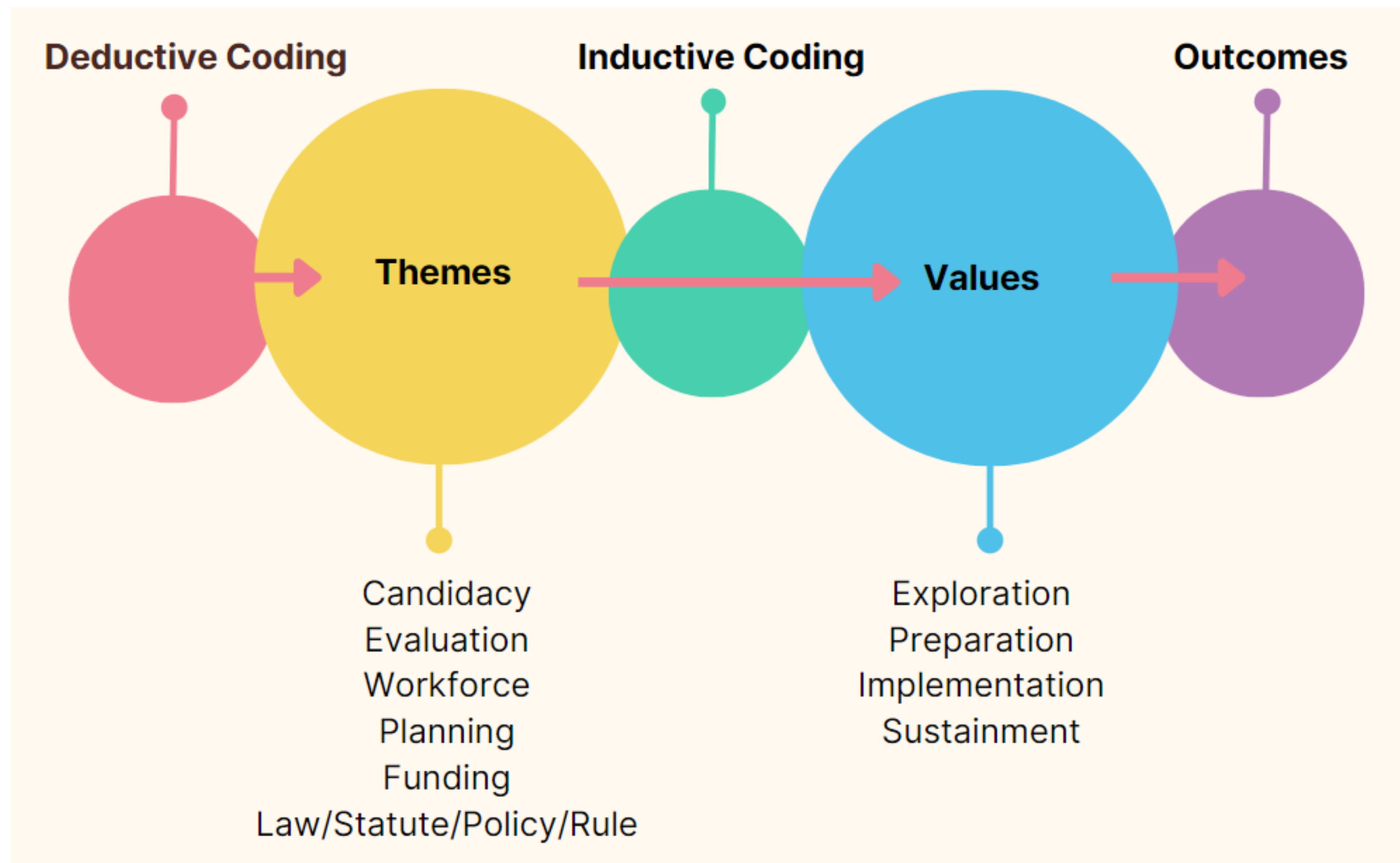
# Data Analysis



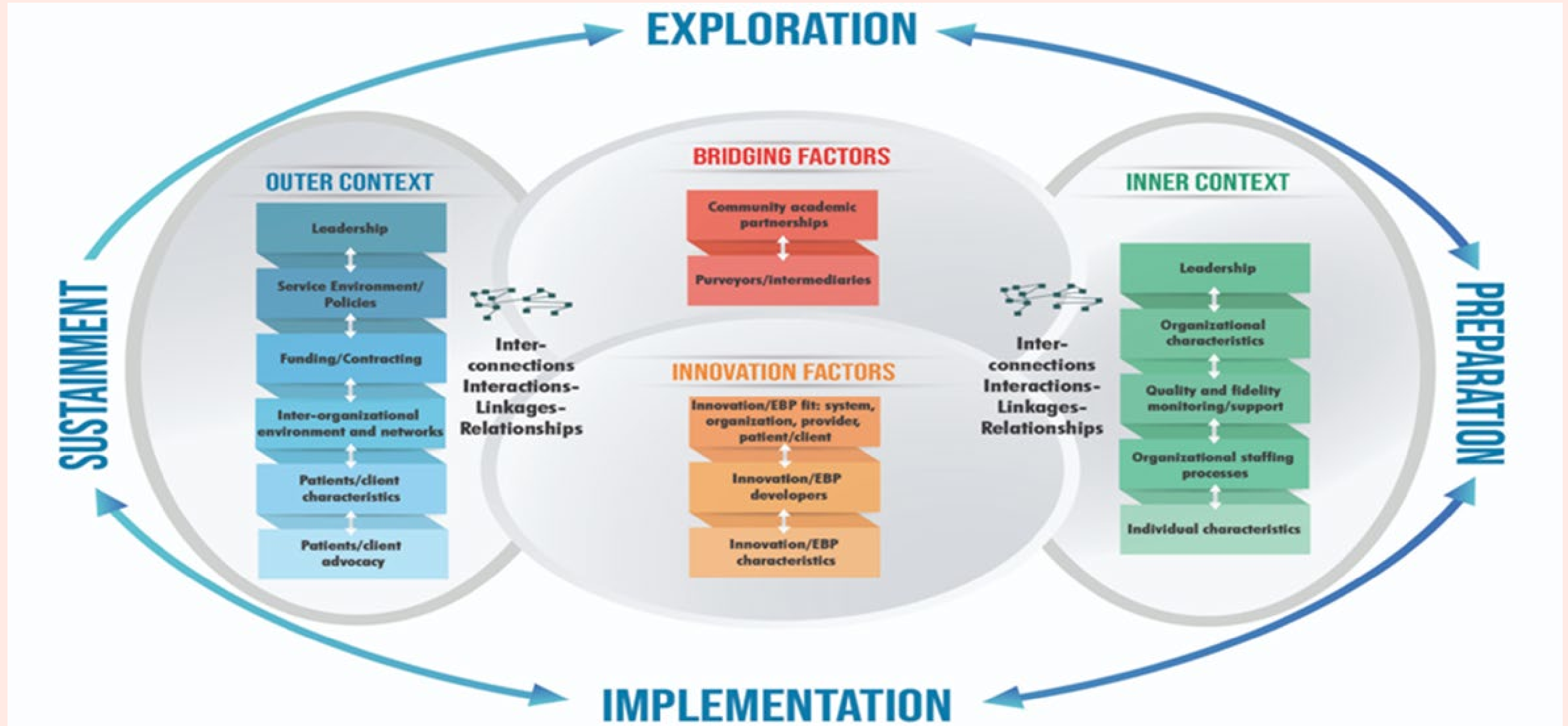




- Deductive coding on 5-Year Plans for theme comparison
- Inductive coding on interview transcripts for contextual values



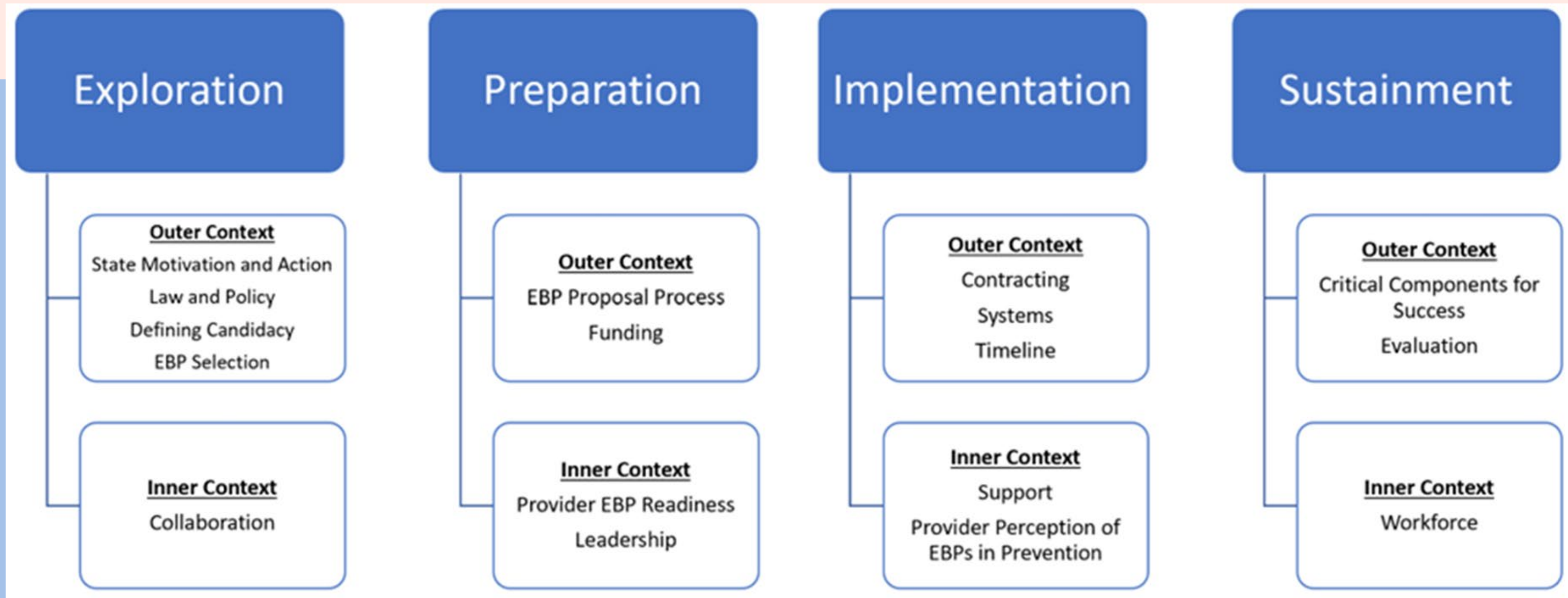
# Framework



Note: An illustration of the EPIS Implementation Framework components and their intersections taken from [www.EPISframework.com](http://www.EPISframework.com)

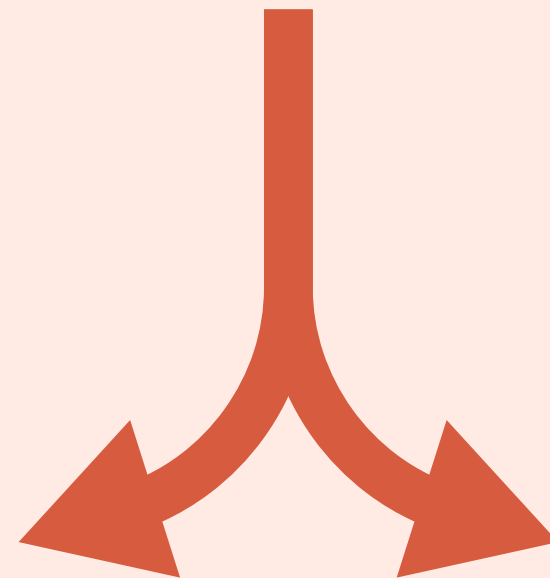


# Themes revealed through the EPIS Implementation Framework



# The "Why" and "How" of Family First Implementation

**Practice  
Themes**



**Policy  
Implications**





# Exploration Phase

Practice Theme: Leading With Certainty	Policy Implication: EBP Rating and Usage Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for pursuing FFPSA implementation</li><li>• Candidacy definitions</li><li>• EBP gap vs. supply</li><li>• EBP Provider Contracting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title IV-E Clearinghouse</li><li>• Lack of eligible culturally tailored EBPS</li><li>• Timeline for EBP use</li></ul>
<p>Recommendation #1 – Extended timelines for EBP adoption percentages with a tiered reimbursement rate (reduces implementation abandonment and provides time for more evaluation and EBP approval)</p> <p>Recommendation #2 - Non-Title IV-E Direct Tribal agencies should receive 50% reimbursement on ANY EBP regardless of rating until more culturally adaptable models are approved</p>	





EPIS FRAMEWORK

# Preparation Phase

Practice Theme: Influence of EBP Cost	Practice Theme: Influence of Funding Complexities	Policy Implication: EBP Service Fee Minimums
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expensive</li><li>• Financial planning for EBPs is difficult</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FFPSA is payor of last resort</li><li>• Braided funding</li><li>• Lack of funding expertise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guidance is needed</li></ul>

Recommendation #1 – Establish fee standard formulas and minimum funding guidance

Recommendation #2 – Calculations and guidance should be provided to Clearinghouse and made public



# Implementation Phase

<p>Practice Theme: The Intersection Between Policy and Practitioner Attitudes</p>	<p>Policy Implication: Safety and Reporting Requirements in Prevention Services</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confidence in using EBPs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety assessments</li><li>• Prevention case plan and monitoring</li><li>• Unintended consequence of adding families to foster care</li></ul>
<p>Recommendation #1 –Federal funding for primary preventions</p> <p>Recommendation #2 -Remove the requirements for safety assessments and tracking</p>	



# Sustainment Phase



Practice Theme: Disproportionate Return on Investment	Policy Implication: The Burden of Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where is the carrot?</li><li>• Will it pay off?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State systems are not designed to evaluate EBP fidelity and effectiveness</li><li>• Outsourcing the evaluation is costly</li></ul>
Recommendation #1 –The evaluation waiver should be extended to supported EBPs until more rated well-supported	

# Research Limitations

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Small Case Comparison

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Partial Analysis of the FFPSA

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Researcher Influence on Participants

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Researcher Bias

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Social Desirability Bias

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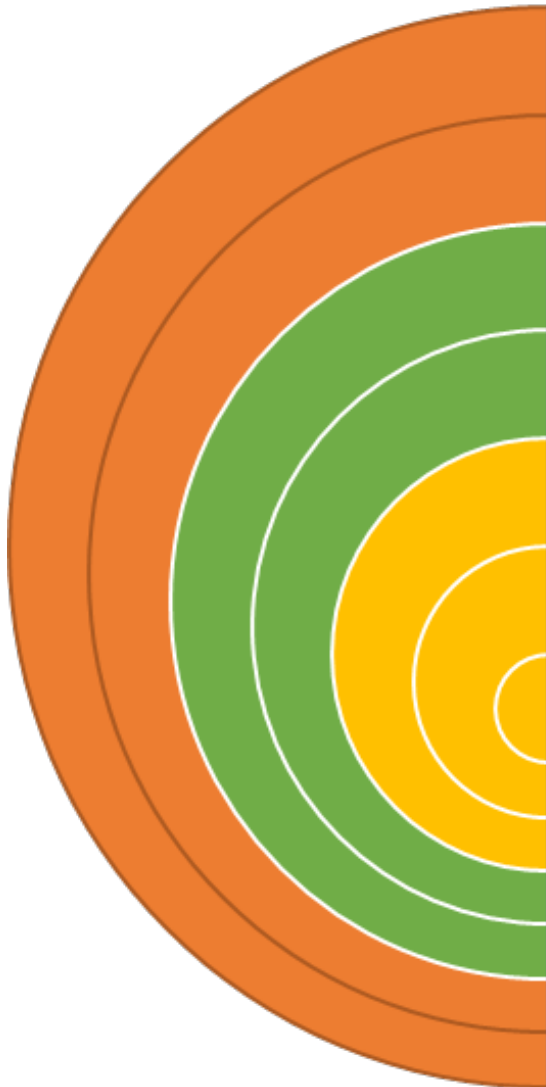
Inability to Generalize



# Case Study Conclusions

## Nebraska

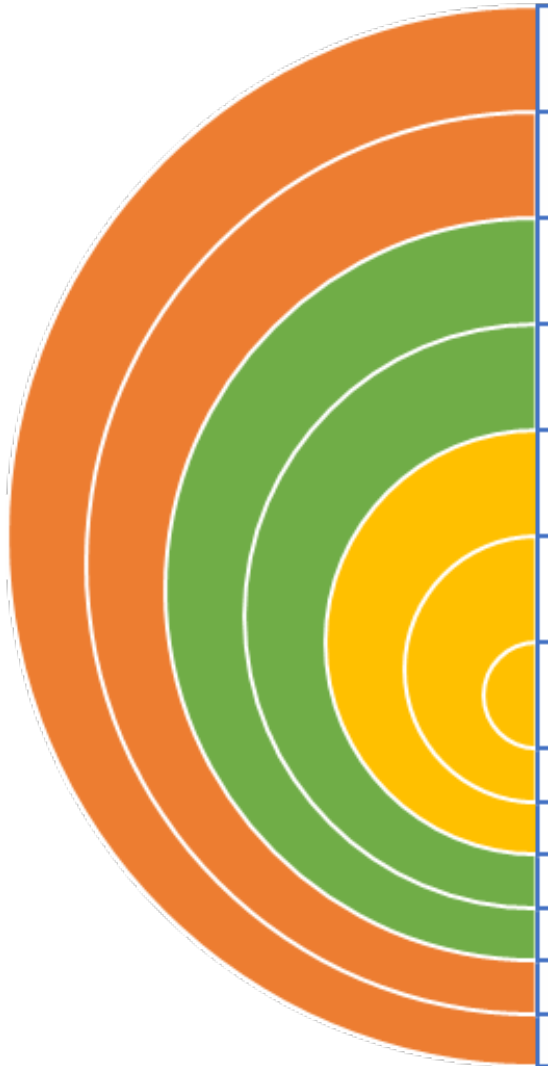
"We depend on the FFPSA's guidance and funding."



Has a robust community-led prevention network
External prevention approach
EBP network is not yet established
State leadership uncertainty
Narrow "candidate" eligibility
Funding uncertainty
Direct EBP oversight

## Colorado

"We will implement the FFPSA if it fits within our vision of prevention."



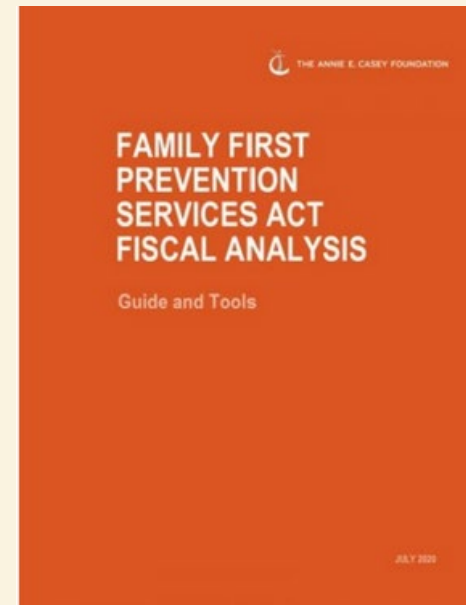
Has a robust community-led prevention network
Internal prevention approach
EBP network is successful and sustained
State Leadership certainty
Broad "candidate" eligibility
Funding certainty
Contracted EBP oversight



## Future Study Recommendations

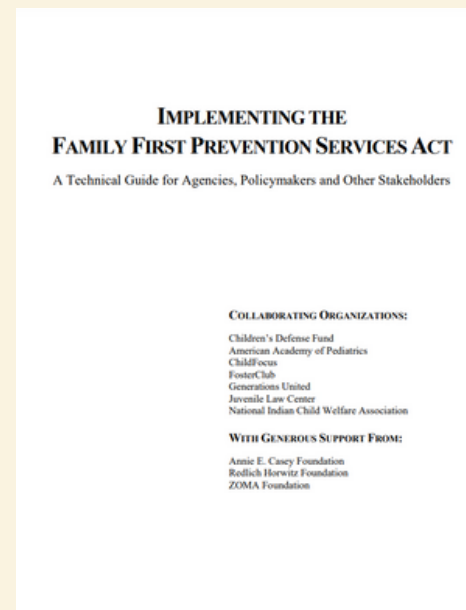
- Longitudinal study of the FFPSA in Nebraska and Colorado
- Qualitative case studies of other states
- Quantitative studies on wellbeing outcomes once data is available
- Quantitative studies on EBP use once data is available

# Resource Page



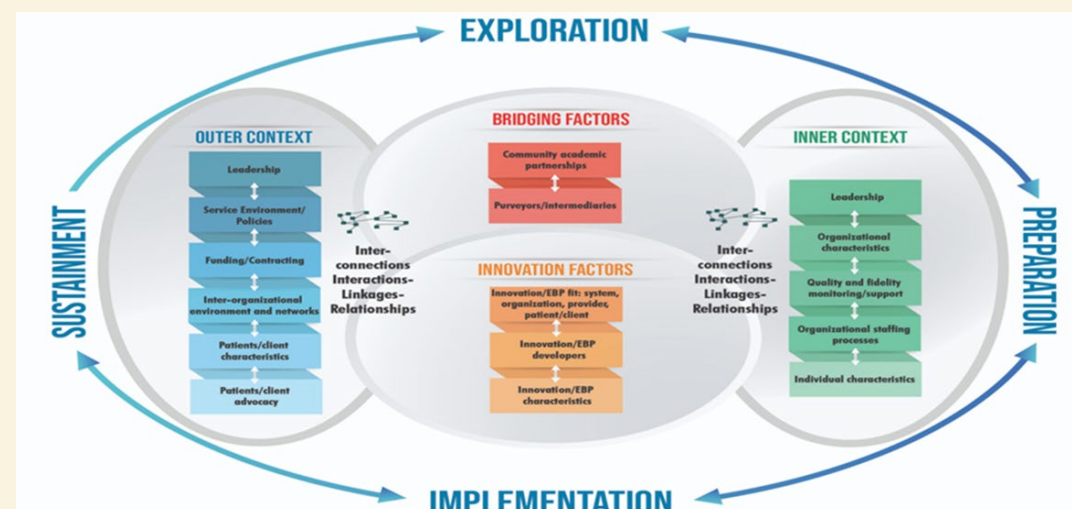
Annie E. Casey Family First Prevention Services Act  
Fiscal Analysis

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/family-first-prevention-services-act-fiscal-analysis>



IMPLEMENTING THE FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES  
ACT A Technical Guide for Agencies, Policymakers and Other  
Stakeholders

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FFPSA-Guide.pdf>



EPIS Implementation Framework  
Resources and Measures

<https://episframework.com/measures>

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- <https://episframework.com>



# Questions or Contact

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