

The Continuum of the Diffusion of an Innovation

The conceptual model in Figure 1, developed by the Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network, illustrates the continuum of diffusion of an innovation (an idea, technology, treatment or method) from creation through implementation. First, during development, the innovation is designed and initially evaluated. Next, during translation, the essential elements and relevance of the innovation are explained and the innovation is packaged to facilitate its spread. In dissemination, awareness about the innovation is promoted with the goal of encouraging its adoption. Adoption is not a single decision but a process of deciding to use the innovation. Finally, during implementation, the innovation is incorporated into routine practice in “real world” settings. Across the continuum, bidirectional communication is a critical component and is represented by a continuous feedback loop.

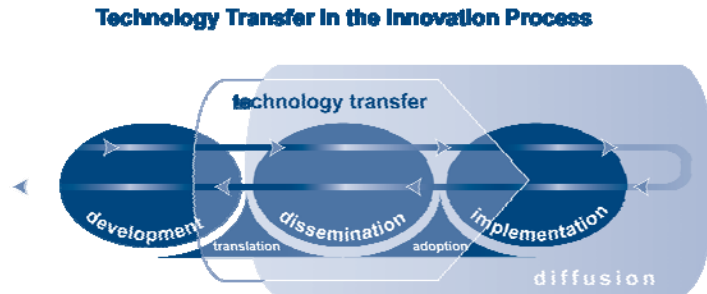


Figure 1

Adoption is not a single decision but a process of deciding to use the innovation. Finally, during implementation, the innovation is incorporated into routine practice in “real world” settings. Across the continuum, bidirectional communication is a critical component and is represented by a continuous feedback loop.

Highlighted within the conceptual model is *technology transfer*, a multidimensional process that intentionally promotes the use of an innovation. Technology transfer begins during development, continues through dissemination, and extends into early implementation. This process requires multiple stakeholders and resources, and involves activities related to translation and adoption. Technology transfer is designed to accelerate the diffusion of an innovation.

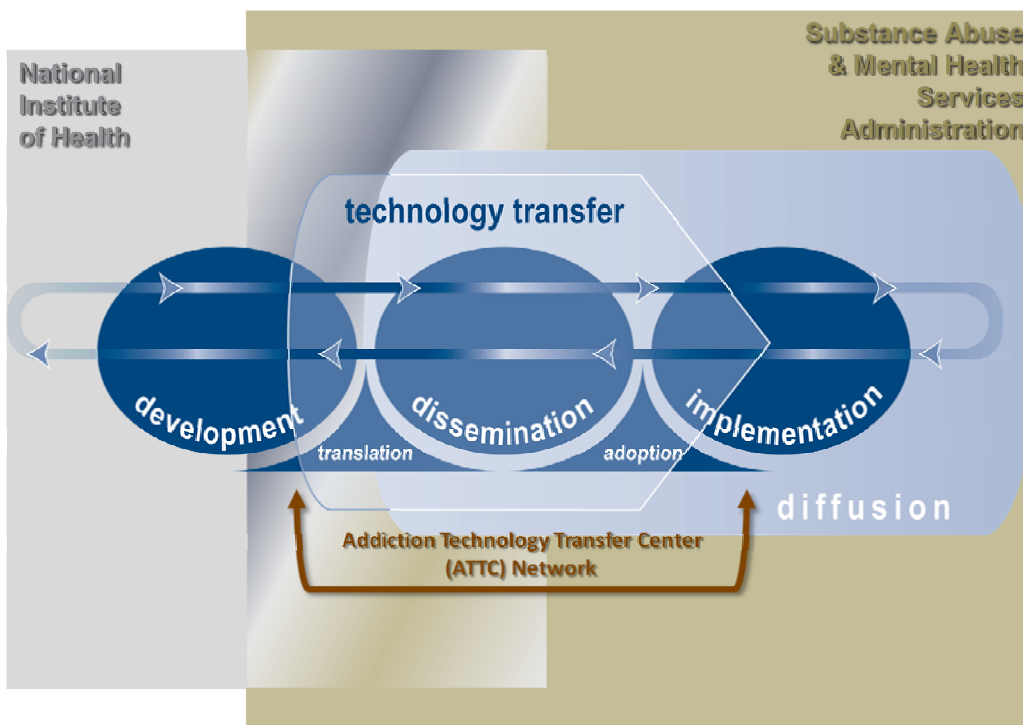


Figure 2

Figure 2 places the work of SAMHSA’s ATTC Network within the conceptual model. The ATTC Network provides a range of activities including product development, training, coaching and technical assistance, marketing, and systems change initiatives.

©Copyright ATTC Network. All Rights Reserved.

Key Terms Related to the Conceptual Model

Technology transfer - A multidimensional process that intentionally promotes the use of an innovation. Technology transfer begins during the development of an innovation, continues through its dissemination, and extends into its early implementation. This process requires multiple stakeholders and resources, and involves activities related to the translation and adoption of an innovation. Technology transfer is designed to accelerate the diffusion of an innovation.

Development – Creating and initially evaluating an innovation. An innovation can be an idea, technology, treatment or method.

Translation – Explaining the essential elements and relevance of an innovation, then packaging it to facilitate dissemination.

Dissemination - Promoting awareness of an innovation with the goal of facilitating adoption and implementation. Dissemination strategies include raising awareness, building knowledge, and distributing materials.

Adoption - The process of deciding whether to use an innovation. Adoption may or may not lead to implementation.

Implementation – Incorporating an innovation into routine practice. Implementation ideally includes a range of strategies designed to address individual, organizational, and systemic characteristics (e.g., skills training, administrative buy-in, and policy changes).

Diffusion – The planned or spontaneous spread of an innovation.