

# How a tailored approach might benefit the implementation of an EBI: Qualitative findings from an implementation trial for people living with HIV who inject drugs in Vietnam

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## Introduction

- People who inject drugs (PWID) bear a disproportionate burden of HIV infection. They also lack access to HIV care and have limited skills to navigate complex health care systems
- SNaP is an evidence-based integrated Systems Navigation and Psychosocial Counseling intervention for PWID with HIV. SNaP led to marked improvements in antiretroviral therapy uptake, viral suppression and mortality
- From June 2020 to November 2023, we conducted a hybrid type III implementation trial among 42 HIV testing sites in Vietnam to compare two approaches to SNaP implementation, a standard approach (SA) and a tailored approach (TA)
- Using 24-month qualitative data among the TA sites, we explored the perceptions of HIV testing site staff and the central team on the effectiveness of the TA and how it affected their implementation of SNaP

## Methods and Materials

- HIV testing sites across Vietnam were randomized 1:1 to either the SA or TA arm (n=42)
- Standard approach (SA): A standard package of 15 implementation strategies was created using implementation mapping. This package was implemented by the central team **in both arms**
- Tailored approach (TA): Three additional central-level strategies were implemented by the central team for this arm (Figure 1). Sites also created their own site-level strategies to address site-specific determinants of SNaP implementation
- At 24 months, we purposively sampled 3 high-performing and 3 low-performing sites in the TA arm (based on the outcome of fidelity to SNaP). We conducted in-depth interviews with staff at these clinics (N=24) and held a meeting with three facilitators in the central team to explore their experience with and perceptions of the effectiveness of the TA
- Interviews were coded and analyzed using thematic analysis

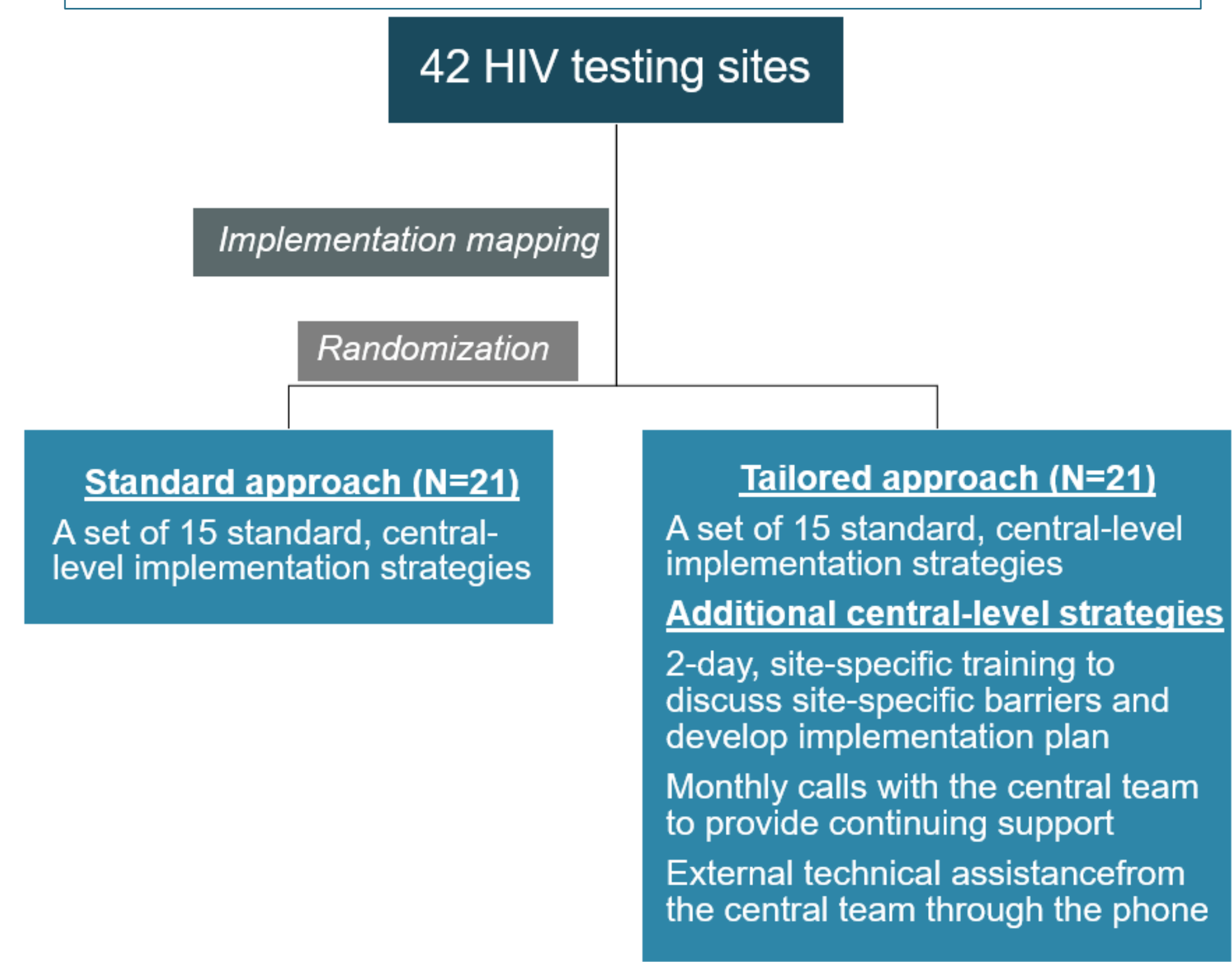


Figure 1. Overview of study design

## Results

- The mean age of site staff participants was 43 years old. Overall, 41.7% were male, and the mean duration of time working in HIV prevention and treatment was 11.8 years.
- Participants were generally positive about the benefits of the TA. Different mechanisms on how this approach might help with better implementation of SNaP emerged through the interviews
- Creating their own implementation plan at the beginning of the study was perceived to not only help site staff anticipate barriers and be more active in the implementation of SNaP, but also made them feel more empowered and motivated
- Site staff emphasized the necessity of having site-level tailored strategies because each site had different barriers and facilitators to SNaP implementation due to their available resources, organizational characteristics and locations
- Monthly meetings and external assistance were perceived as important in improving site staff's knowledge, skills and providing continuous support, monitoring, and reminders to implement SNaP and associated implementation strategies

### Concerns and suggestions for improvement:

- Sites in the same provinces might have similar characteristics, and learning and sharing strategies across sites might be beneficial
- A few site-level strategies were perceived as less helpful than expected because of the lack of resources, overestimation of efficiency, or unanticipated barriers. Monthly meetings might not be as useful for sites with very low recruitment rate
- Some modifications to make this approach more sustainable were suggested, including decreased frequency of meetings based on sites' changing needs and meeting integration with existing site activities

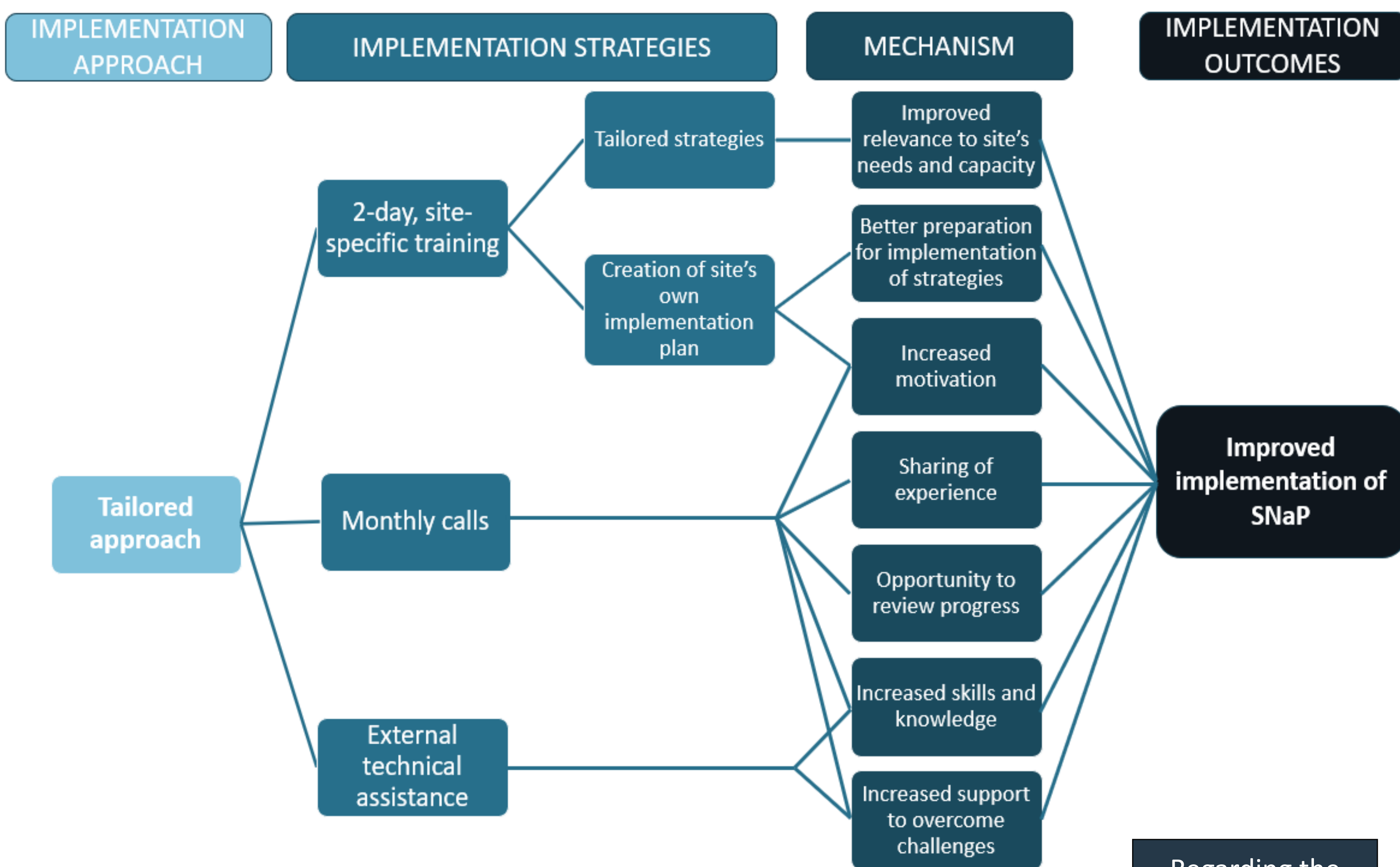
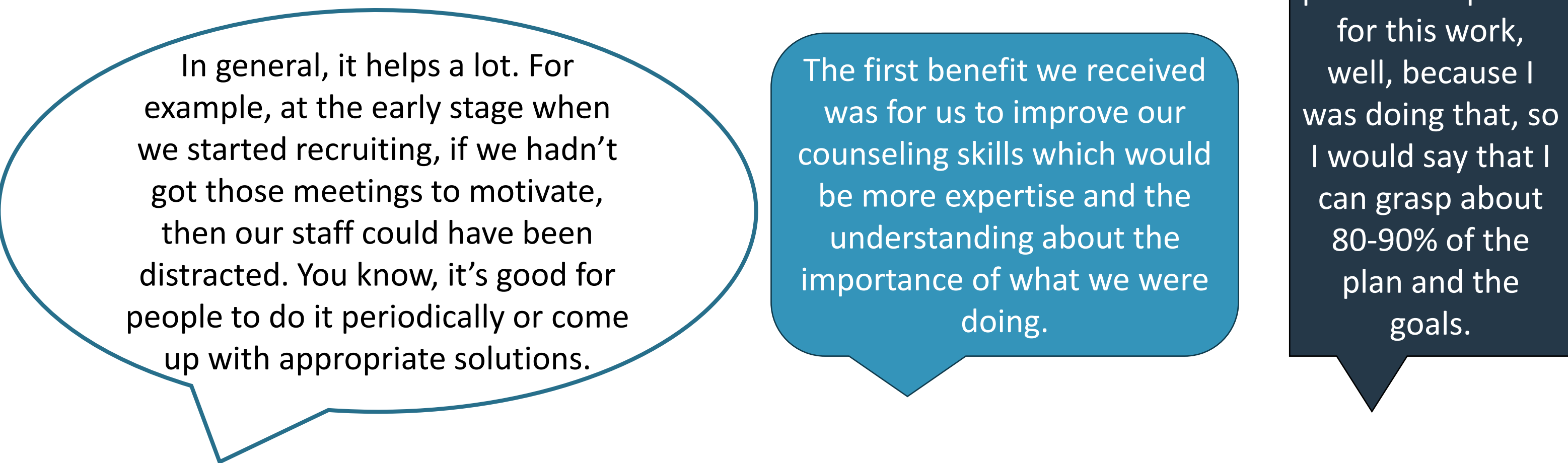


Figure 2. Mechanisms of how implementation strategies in the TA worked



## Conclusions

- The tailored approach was considered important and useful for the implementation of the SNaP intervention for PWID with HIV through various mechanisms, such as better match with sites' specific needs and capacity, improved knowledge and skills, increased motivation and increased support to overcome challenges
- Some modifications to this tailored approach might be necessary to make it more feasible and acceptable when being used in other low-resource settings

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