

Intertwining Social and Behavioral Sciences within IMPAACT's HIV treatment and prevention clinical research initiatives

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BACKGROUND

- **Inception:** The Social Behavioral Scientific Core (SBSC) within the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) Network formed in January 2019.
- **SBSC members:** experienced in conduct of multi-site clinical trials (CTs) in HIV prevention and care, retention, community engagement, adherence, and social determinants of CT outcomes.
- **Achievements:** the SBSC established and promoted interdisciplinary connections within the IMPAACT Network through:
 - ✓ conducting proposal reviews;
 - ✓ collaborations with social scientists, epidemiologists, SBS advocates, and HIV specialists within IMPAACT;
 - ✓ consultations on SBS study design and measurement development; and internship support to create SBS resources.

The SBSC increases collaborative growth by 1) creating a database to harmonize tools across studies and 2) designing a series of interdisciplinary talks encompassing varying SBS topics providing space for questions, learning, communication, and connection around SBS.

DESIGN

To **connect the dots across interdisciplinary collaborators on processes, agendas, and measurement tools**, SBSC members joined IMPAACT's protocol review group and committees (Tuberculosis, HIV Cure, HIV Treatment, Complications & Co-morbidities).

This **collaborative model connects clinical research stakeholders to accomplish social behavioral science focused outcomes**, such as:

- 1) **Conducting SBS-focused reviews** of research proposals from each IMPAACT committees early in development to identify gaps or improvements for social behavioral study designs, research objectives and outcomes, measures, and/or tools to enhance the scientific rigor of the study.
- 2) **Providing expert input** to IMPAACT committees to ensure proposals approved for protocol development include appropriate social behavioral components.
- 3) **Delivering ad hoc consultations** for study teams on protocols in development and throughout IMPAACT review processes which provide technical guidance on design, recommendations of existing tools or creating new tools for adherence, preferences, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes towards the product or study implementation.

RESULTS

The SBSC provided collaborative input towards IMPAACT's HIV research through:

- **Guidance** on study implementation and relevant SBS components
- **Monitoring approvals** of SBS work
- Hosting an **internship** for collaboration, tools development, and mentorship
- **Identification, recommendation, development, and monitoring measurements** of:
 - ✓ adherence objectives
 - ✓ SBS determinants, mediators, and moderators to advance understanding of trial outcomes
 - ✓ participant, caregiver, and health worker preferences, behaviors, and attitudes
 - ✓ acceptability and palatability assessments

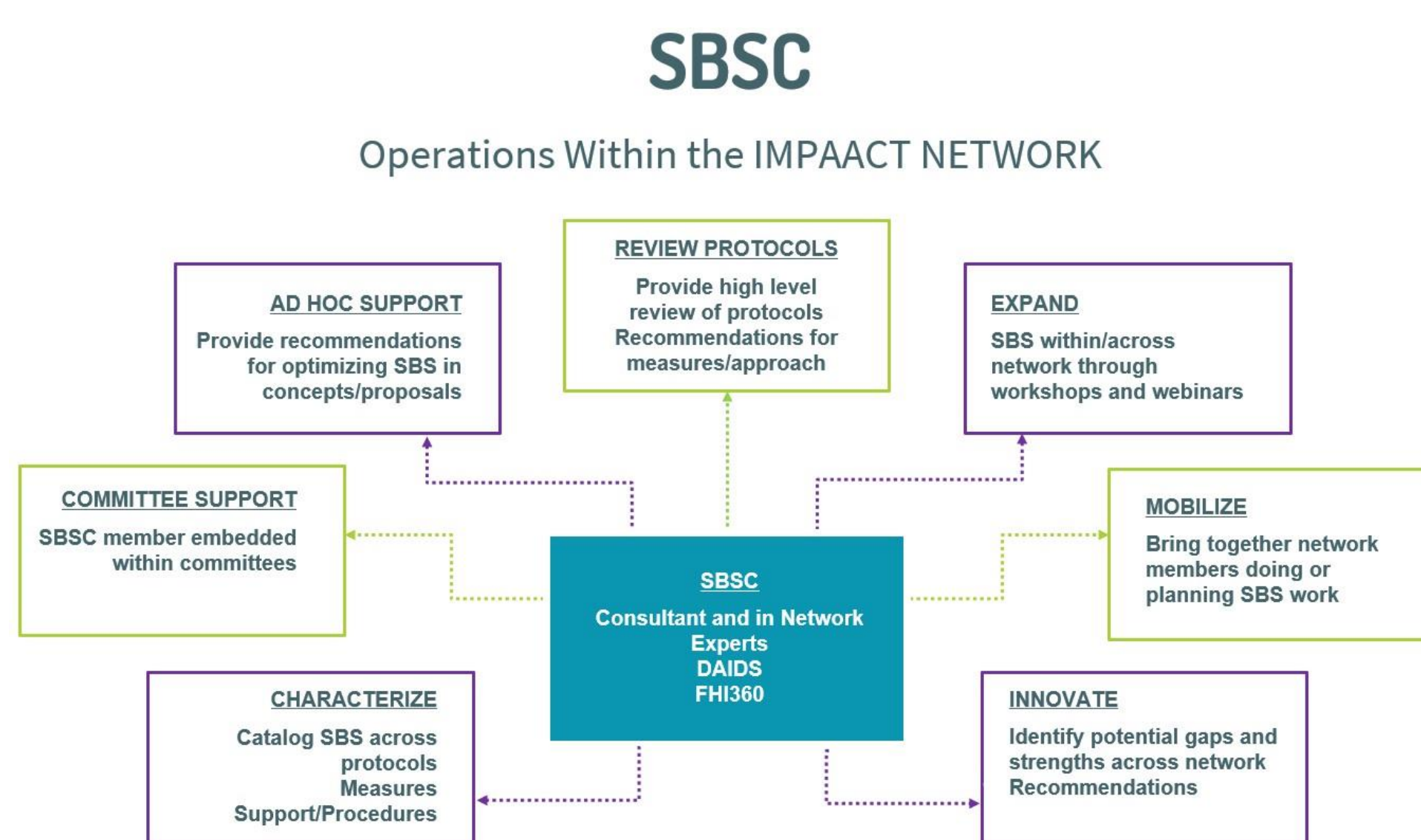
DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

A collaborative model provides positive impact at a micro and macro-level.

Micro-level

- ✓ SBSC members on committees and as ad hoc consultants provides: 1) effective and impactful communication through protocol development and 2) ways for interdisciplinary scientific collaboration across the SBSC, committees, and study teams
- ✓ May reduce siloed effects of constricted-scoped study designs by promoting diverse perspectives to co-exist for broader impact to best incorporation strategies

Enhancing collaborations with grassroots efforts and leadership engagement are key to meet in the middle and influence greater change.



LESSONS LEARNED
Areas of SBS could impact outcomes, and ultimately regulatory approvals
Networks could advance SBS more efficiently if compendiums of SBS measures are created for easy search and identification of tools
RECOMMENDATIONS
To operationalize SBS work within CT's:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed SBSC members in proposal reviews for early and targeted engagement for highest impact • Incorporate SBS components early in protocol development • Maximize study staff training and capacity building, and • Utilize community input on appropriateness of assessment questions and identifying gaps

Macro-level

- ✓ Ease and value of incorporating SBS into clinical research for others to adopt efficiently for long-lasting positive effects on research outcomes and real-world implications
- ✓ Influences interventions globally through enhanced collaborations and early SBS integration for successful retention and care

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