

Improvement Glossary

Action Period

The period of time after the Learning Session when teams work on improvement in their practice. They are supported by the project team and faculty, and they are connected to other teams.

Aim

A written, measurable, and time sensitive statement of the expected results of an improvement process.

Cycle or PDSA Cycle

A structured trial of a process change. Drawn from the Shewhart cycle, this effort includes:

Plan - a specific planning phase;

Do - a time to try the change and observe what happens;

Study - an analysis of the results of the trial; and

Act - devising next steps based on the analysis.

This PDSA cycle will naturally lead to the Plan component of a subsequent cycle.

Measure

An indicator of change. Key measures should be focused, clarify your team's aim, and be reportable. A measure is used to track the delivery of proven interventions to patients and to monitor progress over time.

Model for Improvement

An approach to process improvement, developed by Associates in Process Improvement, which helps teams accelerate the adoption of proven and effective changes.

PDSA (see "Cycle" above)

Pre-work Period

The time prior to the beginning of the collaborative when teams prepare for their work in the project, including selecting team members, scheduling initial meetings, consulting with senior leaders, preparing their aim, initiating data collection.

Quality Improvement and Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality improvement (QI) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) are interchangeable terms that consist of systematic and continuous actions that lead to measurable improvement in health care services and the health status of targeted patient groups.

Team

The group of individuals, usually from multiple disciplines, that participates in and drives the improvement process.

Test

A small scale trial of a new approach or a new process. A test is designed to learn if the change results in improvement and to fine-tune the change to fit the practice and patients. Tests are carried out using 1 or more PDSA cycles.