

## A MODEL FOR IMPROVEMENT

This worksheet walks you through the process of testing changes for improvement in your practice. Discuss and jot down ideas for each of the four questions and use the tips to guide you through each discussion.

Discussion questions	Discussion tips
Aim setting: What are we focusing on now, and what is our goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aims from the point of view of your patients (i.e., what would they want you to work on?).</li> <li>• Set your aims high (“stretch goal”) – even halfway there would be a substantial improvement.</li> <li>• Look to make substantial progress in a matter of weeks.</li> </ul>
Measurement: How will we know if we are making it better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback on performance and change using data.</li> <li>• Collect data pre- and post-change.</li> <li>• Avoid long baseline studies that postpone getting to the change.</li> <li>• Keep it simple.</li> <li>• Choose practical measurement over perfect measurement.</li> <li>• Keep the time between intervention (action) and measurement to a minimum.</li> </ul>
Idea generation: What changes do we think will make it better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about the rules and mental constructs that underlie the current way of doing things. This is the “box” that our current thinking is in. Get outside the box by asking: “Does it have to be that way?” “What would it be like if we were prohibited from following that rule?” “If we broke those rules, would that be so bad after all?”</li> <li>• Turn needed behavioral changes into specific techniques that people can learn. For example, instead of “listen to the patients’ concerns,” try “ask the patient if there is anything else, make eye contact and silently count to 10 before you say anything more.”</li> <li>• Always generate multiple ideas for change. There may be legitimate reasons why a certain idea cannot be tested. If that is your only idea, then momentum is stopped.</li> </ul>
Testing: How will we carry out progressive trials of our ideas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are more likely to go along with a test of change if they are involved in the planning of it.</li> <li>• Don’t get attached to any one way of implementing an idea. Stay at the change-concept level, and allow others the joy of developing the specifics to fit their situation.</li> <li>• Start small and work initially with those willing to work with you. Use the success of these few to approach others.</li> <li>• Improvement is always a “work in progress”; it is not a one-time event. Work to keep the momentum going. Take the biggest step you can take, but don’t worry that you are not doing it all. One step can lead to another, and so on.</li> <li>• Be sure to allocate time to reflect on the results of every test of change and its implications for the next test.</li> <li>• Integrate improvement into regular work. For example, allocate office meeting time for this. Always be testing a change and letting everyone know about it.</li> <li>• Anticipate the impact of the change on other players in the system. Keep them informed – no surprises. Don’t let the unwilling stop you from testing a change with those who are willing, but don’t do anything behind anyone’s back.</li> <li>• Communicate, communicate, communicate ... repeat.</li> <li>• Don’t lose sight of the whole system as you work on a small piece of it. Don’t let analysis interfere with synthesis.</li> </ul>



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