

Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit

A Resource for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees

Module 5: The PDSA Cycle—Step by Step

PLAN

Step 1: Identify area for improvement.

- Identify the area, problem, or opportunity for improvement.
- Estimate and commit the needed resources.

Step 2: Assemble a team.

- Identify and assemble team members.
- Specify team member roles and responsibilities.
- Specify meeting frequency and structure.
- Develop a SMART aim.

Step 3: Identify current process.

- Examine the current approach or process flow.
- Obtain existing baseline data or create a plan to obtain needed baseline data.
- Obtain input from stakeholders.
- Determine root causes of the problem.

Step 4: Identify potential change strategies.

- Identify all potential change strategies based on root causes.
- Select change strategy (or strategies) most likely to achieve the SMART aim.

Step 5: Identify improvement theory.

- Develop a theory of change for the change strategy.
- Develop a strategy to test the theory on a small scale (small number of participants).
- What is the strategy? Who will apply it? How will it be measured? What is success?

DO

Step 6: Test the theory.

- Carry out the test on a small scale.
- Collect, chart, and display data to determine the effectiveness of the change strategy.
- Monitor fidelity of implementation of the change strategy; document problems, unexpected observations, and unintended side effects.

STUDY

Step 7: Study the results.

- Was the improvement successful on a small scale?
- Did the results match the theory/prediction?
- Were there any unintended consequences?
- Describe and report what you learned.

ACT

Step 8: Scale up implementation.

- Scale up successful change strategies and continue testing until improvement is achieved.
- Develop and test new theories for unsuccessful changes.
- Standardize successful improvements.

Step 9: Establish future plans.

- Repeat the PDSA cycle, when needed.
- Take steps to preserve gains and sustain successes.
- Make long-term plan for additional improvements.
- Celebrate your successes.

Adapted from: Tews, D. S., Heany, J., Jones, J., VanDerMoere, R., & Madamala, K. (2012). *Embracing quality in public health: A practitioner's quality improvement handbook*. Michigan Public Health Institute