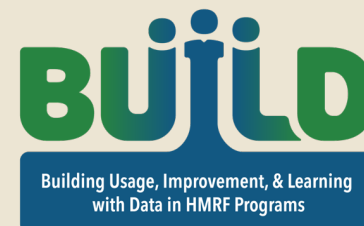


Building A Strong Foundation for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Dibble Institute Webinar

Allon Kalisher, Scott Richman, and Annie Buonaspina

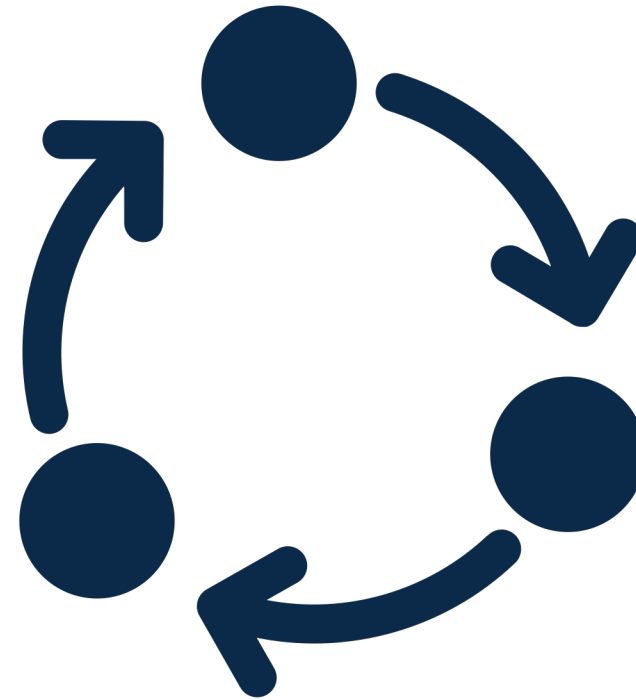
May 10, 2023 | 4:00 – 5:00pm ET





Learning objectives

- / **What CQI is and why it is important**
- / **How to build a strong CQI foundation**
- / **What online resources are available to support your CQI efforts**





What is CQI?

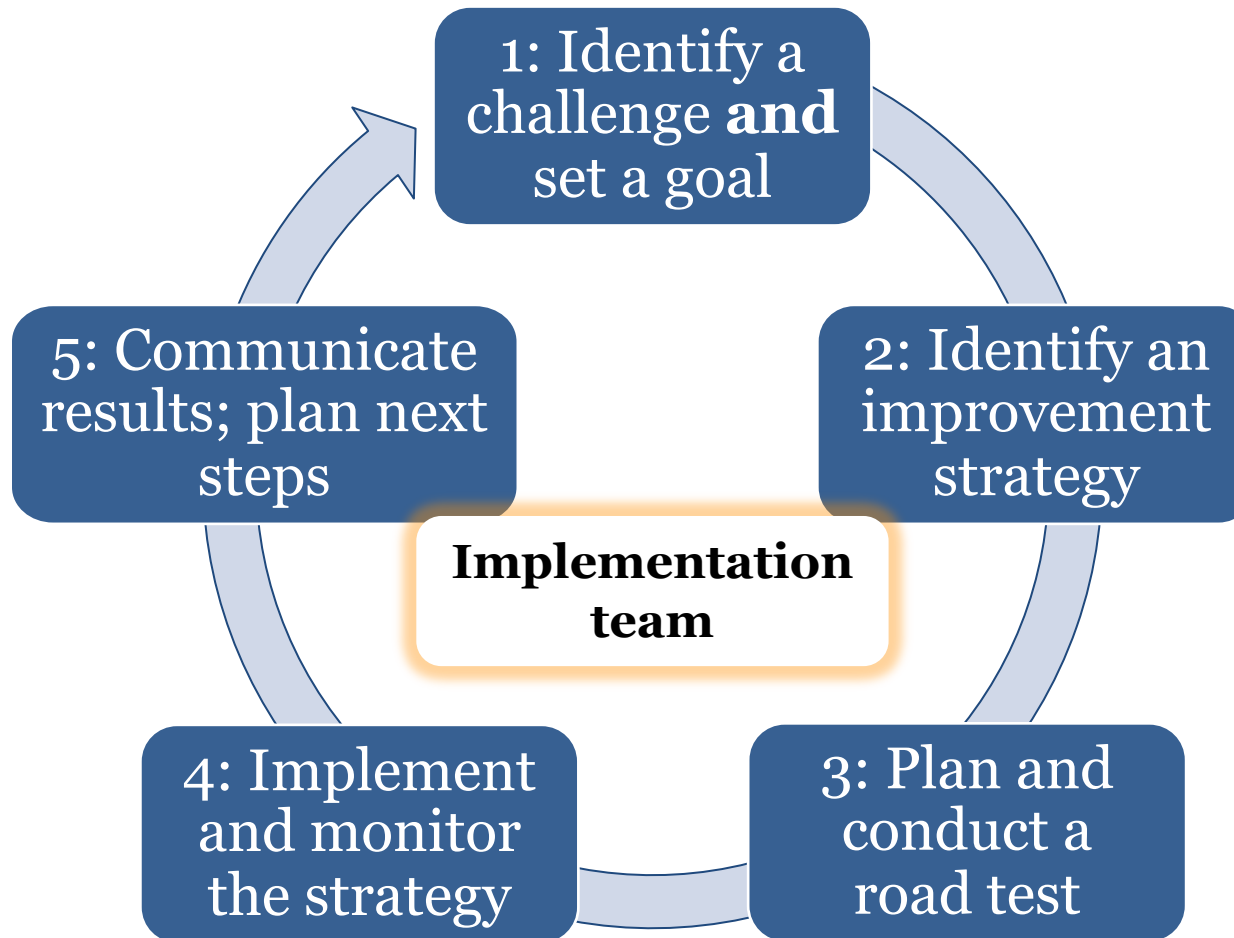
What is CQI?

/ CQI is identifying, describing, and analyzing problems, and then implementing, testing, learning from, revising, and scaling solutions

/ Characteristics of CQI

- It is continuous
- Its goal is improvement
- It helps assess whether strategies were well implemented AND whether strategies are promising

How do I do it? 5 key steps



Some of these steps are familiar!

/ Many programs routinely modify their processes to make improvements

/ What's different about using a CQI approach?

- Systematic process for collecting and using information to learn about the implementation and promise of strategies and inform decision making
- Emphasis on starting small before scaling up

How is CQI different from program monitoring?

- / **Program monitoring documents what is happening and helps your team flag areas for improvement**
- / **CQI is a process for improving those areas once you identify them**



Data-driven

Requires high quality data



Ongoing

Involves regular meetings



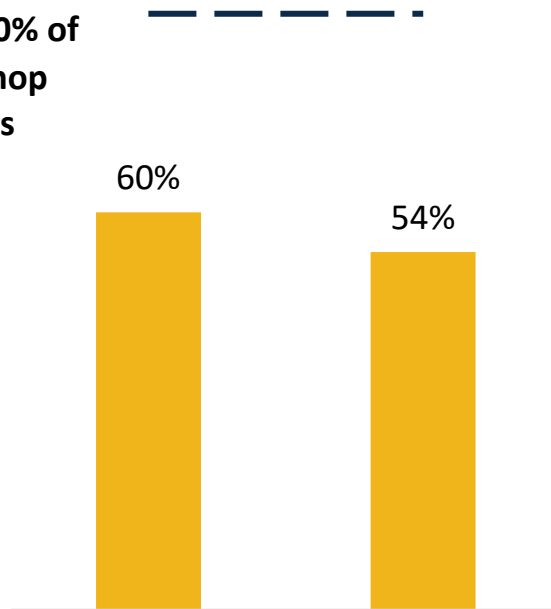
Iterative

Uses what is learned to improve

A systematic process to address challenges

Program monitoring: *Identify the challenge*

Target: Clients
attend 90% of
workshop
hours



*How do we
improve?*



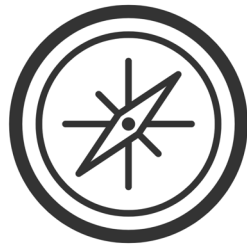
CQI: *Develop and test the solution*

- **Identified challenge: Low and declining workshop participation**
- **What strategy can we try to increase workshop participation?**
- **What data should we collect to determine whether our strategy is working?**
- **How well did the strategy work? What are our next steps?**

How will CQI benefit my program?



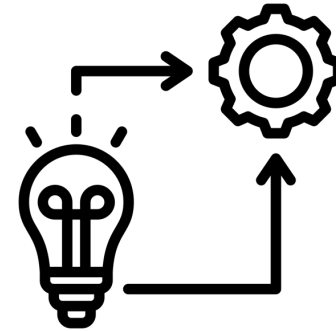
**Reduces change
fatigue**



**Helps the team
head in the right
direction**



Increases buy-in



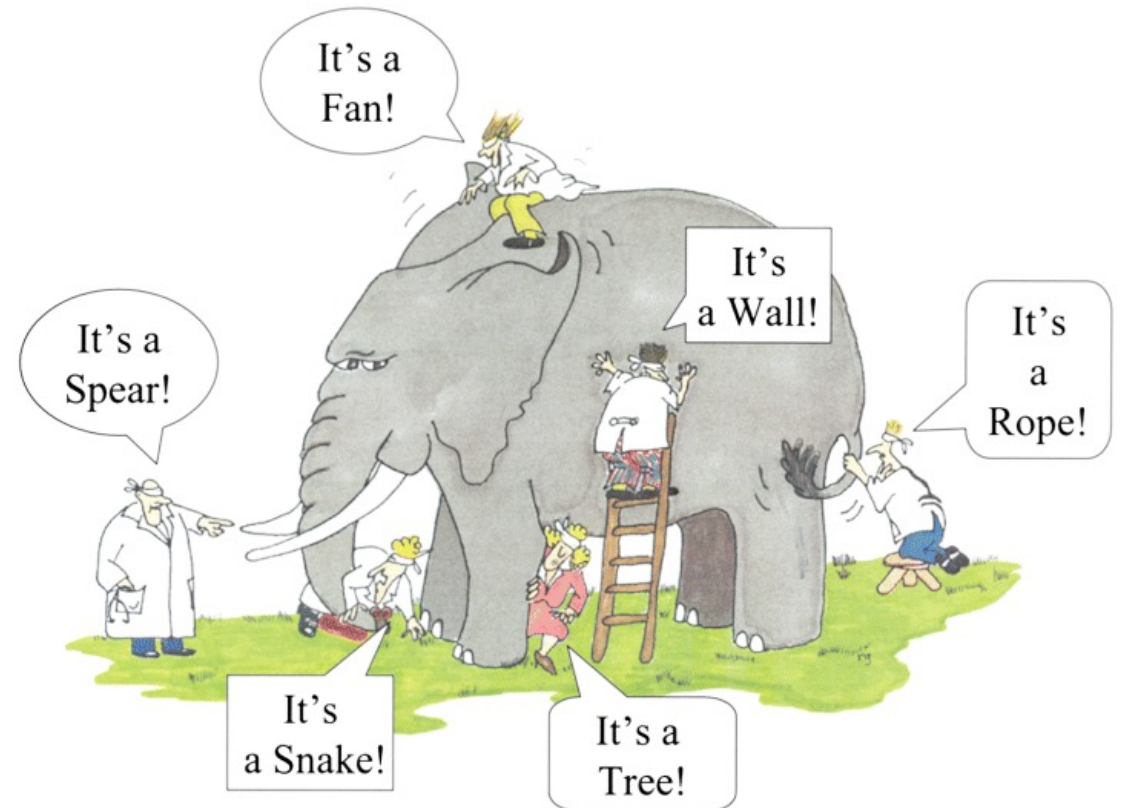
**Improves
implementation**

Who should be involved in CQI?

/ Ideally, everyone!

- All staff – not just data/evaluation staff – can contribute insights to the CQI process
- CQI is strongest when informed by multiple perspectives, including leadership, frontline staff, clients (and program data!)

/ A designated CQI team can guide the work





Menti: Share with us

/ To what extent are you doing CQI already?

- We're just starting out
- We have some program improvement practices but need help pulling it all together
- We have a solid CQI approach and practices to support it, but we're open to learning more!



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**How can I build my program's
capacity to conduct CQI?**



What's your starting place?

/ Think about how you responded; there are different sets of resources to help your program based on your starting place

We're just starting out

We have some program improvement practices but need help pulling it all together

We have a solid CQI approach and practices to support it, but we're open to learning more!



We're just starting out



Just starting out: Start with your team

/ If you are new to CQI, building a CQI team is a great place to start

/ CQI team responsibilities

- Oversee CQI work
- Monitor program data and ongoing feedback to identify challenges; co-create strategies with staff; and test strategies
- Foster a culture of learning (e.g., through promoting an inclusive CQI approach and sharing data and insights)





Characteristics of the CQI team

- / **Ideal size is 3 to 5 people but can include more**
 - Some small programs might involve their whole team
- / **Should be distinct from other programmatic teams**
 - Hold CQI team meetings that are dedicated to discussing improvement, rather than tacking CQI issues onto regular team meetings
- / **May meet monthly or more frequently (weekly) when testing a strategy**





Who should be on the CQI team?

/ **A team should represent diverse perspectives**

/ **Key roles to fill**

- CQI lead: Leads the team and oversees CQI processes
- Data manager: Compiles and analyzes program data for the team and oversees new data collection
- Improvement advisors: Contribute on-the-ground insights about challenges and strategies
- Training/TA supervisors: Supervise implementation of new strategies during road testing



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- [Introduction to CQI teams](#)

 CQI Best Practices Series 

OPRE report #2022-190

Building a strong foundation for program improvement through CQI implementation teams

The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) implementation team oversees improvement efforts within your program. The team is responsible for monitoring program data to identify and prioritize challenges, identifying strategies to address challenges, and testing strategies to learn how to improve as a program.

Why have a CQI implementation team?

While quality improvement is a responsibility for everyone involved with your program, it is important to have an implementation team to manage your program's CQI efforts to ensure improvement tasks are prioritized among other responsibilities. Conducting CQI as a team promotes a diversity of perspectives and a shared sense of responsibility for program improvement.

How many people should be on the team and what are their roles?

Teams typically have 3 to 5 core people who meet regularly but more members may join on a less frequent or as needed basis. The aim is to ensure that you designate people to fill key roles, which include a team lead, CQI plan lead, improvement advisor(s), data manager, and training/TA supervisor(s). While one person could fill several of these roles, you should be careful not to overburden anyone and strive to include diverse perspectives. For example, if you plan to include the project director, internal evaluator, and a supervisor on your team, fill the improvement advisor role with frontline staff, partners, or program participants in order to include an on-the-ground perspective.

How often should the CQI team meet?

A CQI team should meet frequently enough to ensure timely planning and follow-up. For example, during startup or when conducting road tests, the team may meet weekly. A monthly cadence may be enough at other times. Also factor in how your team will communicate between meetings and ensure that assigned tasks are completed. Your team might decide, for example, to use team "huddles" (brief 5-10-minute check-ins) to keep everyone informed between meetings and to maintain focus and accountability for completing tasks on schedule. Regardless of how frequently your team meets, be sure to schedule regularly occurring meetings that are exclusively focused on your CQI work (rather than scheduling ad hoc meetings or including CQI only as an agenda item for other meetings).

 ***Grantee tip:** One grantee shared that their program discusses CQI in weekly team meetings and also has a larger quarterly CQI committee meeting that includes community members and program partners. This is one strategy for bringing in multiple perspectives, while honoring the time of external partners.

CQI team roles

Team lead: Oversees the CQI process

CQI plan lead: Documents and updates the CQI plan

Improvement advisors: Contribute insights about challenges and promising strategies

Data manager: Oversees data collection and presents findings

Training/TA supervisors: Support implementation of new strategies



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM AGREEMENT WORKSHEET

This worksheet provides a template that implementation teams can use to define core team agreements. Questions are provided in each section to guide the development of a team agreement with a focus on CQI.

Implementation teams are responsible for actively supporting implementation of the program. Team members should have detailed knowledge of the program. An implementation team is not an advisory group, but rather a team that is actively and regularly involved in program implementation.

COMPONENT	GUIDING QUESTIONS	RESPONSES AND NOTES
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the overarching vision for the team? How does the vision emphasize CQI?• Does this align with the organization's vision?	
Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the main purposes of the team related to CQI?• What are the team's goals for using data to inform decision-making and improvement?	
Roles, Responsibilities and Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who participates and in what roles?• What are the team's responsibilities?• How do team members share accountability for CQI? (For example, who will be responsible for gathering data and information?)• How does the IT communicate or work with other groups (like an evaluation team, or outside partner/group)?	
Communication Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does this team communicate internally?• How do team members gather and share information outside the team and feedback related to CQI efforts?• When improvement decisions are made, how are they communicated?• Who communicates team activities and decisions and how often?	
Resources available to the group or project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What resources are available to support the implementation team's work? Specifically, what resources are available to support CQI?• What resources are important to document in this agreement?	
Authority and Influence and Decision-Making Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What authority does the team have in making CQI improvement decisions?• How does the team make decisions?• What are the limits of the team's authority?	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are expected deliverables (and anticipated timing) of the team and its members?	



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement
- Team decision making techniques

CQI Best Practices Series HMRF
HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Two Decision-Making Models OPRE report #2022-193

Although your team may have an established and documented process for decision-making in your team agreement ([previously distributed](#)), some issues or decisions might require a different model of decision-making.

To help you select the best decision-making strategy for your current issue, an interactive tool is available at <https://thedecider.app/>. For the purposes of this resource we highlighted two strategies often used by implementation teams in the table below. The table includes when each model works well and what steps they entail¹ to help your team pick the best strategy for each decision.

DECISION-MAKING MODEL	THIS MODEL WORKS WELL WHEN:	PROCESS
CONSENSUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The decision is not urgent• The risk is high because there is wide-impact and consequences are irreversible• Expertise is dispersed• All team members are able to share their thoughts and diverse opinions are respected	<p>The entire team shapes the decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Define the problem or opportunity in writing where people can see it2. Brainstorm all possible options: write them down, cluster similar ideas3. Take an initial non-binding vote to gauge the feelings of the team4. Have people make a case for options they feel strongly about5. Take another non-binding vote6. Negotiate with holdouts: "What would it take to get you on board?"7. Repeat steps 4-7 until everyone agrees with the decision
DEMOCRATIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is wide impact• Information is readily available• Options are well-defined	<p>The entire team votes on a decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assess the situation and develop your options2. Call a meeting for voting3. Designate an advocate for each option4. Hold a timed debate between the advocates5. Vote (yes, no, abstain)6. Count the votes and continue voting if a stalemate exists



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement
- Team decision making techniques
- Team meeting sample agenda

GRANTEE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA [FOR USE BY HMRP GRANTEES]

Implementation Team Agenda Sample Template

A core function of implementation teams is to routinely review, analyze, and synthesize data. The draft agenda template below provides a framework for how implementation teams can review and analyze data to inform decision-making using the W³ (What, So What, Now What?) strategy.¹ At each meeting, the team should review relevant data and revisit previous improvement actions and goals.

Date and Time:
Phone Meeting or Meeting Location:

Attendees:
Regrets:

Facilitator: _____ Time Keeper: _____
Note Taker: _____

- Objectives for Meeting:
- Use the W³ strategy to identify and prioritize implementation strengths and challenges from the data and to identify patterns and trends in the data.
 - Discuss the data patterns and opportunities for improvement, co-create concrete strategies and responsibilities for improvement, and identify next steps to improve implementation.



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement
- Team decision making techniques
- Team meeting sample agenda
- [Team meeting facilitation strategies](#)

Facilitation Strategies for Fostering Discussion and Consensus

OPRE report #2022-194

A high-quality continuous quality improvement (CQI) process needs curiosity and consensus building to identify and prioritize critical questions and solutions. At its best, CQI includes a variety of perspectives and experiences. But how do we make sure all voices are heard and everyone agrees on the way ahead? The following facilitation strategies¹ are examples of equitable processes to incorporate diverse perspectives, guide question development, and gain consensus and buy-in on prioritized areas for CQI.

FACILITATION STRATEGY	KEY POINTS	CONSIDERATIONS
CONVERSATION CAFE²	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State the theme of the conversation, usually in the form of a question. For example, "What are we curious about related to our program implementation? What would we like to learn more about from data?" (These become your "guiding questions.")• Explain there will be four rounds of conversation at every table: two rounds using the guided questions, a third round as open conversation, and a final round with the guiding questions.• Distribute talking objects (e.g., talking stick, pen, etc.)• Read the six Conversation Café agreements. See link provided.• Establish a volunteer host at each table. The host is a full participant whose role is to gently intervene only when a participant visibly fails to observe one of the six agreements, most frequently talking more than their share.• First round with the guiding questions (1 minute per person): each person shares what he or she is thinking, feeling, or doing about the theme or topic.• Second round with the guiding questions (1 minute per person): each person shares their thoughts and feelings after having listened to everybody at the table.• Third round (20 to 40 minutes): open conversation (option to use guiding questions).• Fourth round with the guiding questions (5 to 10 minutes): each member shares "takeaways."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpful in facilitating listening• Helpful in sharing ideas in a safe space• Everyone is included; everyone can participate

¹Adapted from Liberating Structures. Retrieved at: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>



²Conversation Café: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/17-conversation-cafe/>



What resources are available?


/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement
- Team decision making techniques
- Team meeting sample agenda
- Team meeting facilitation strategies
- [Team communication processes](#)


 CQI Best Practices Series 

Communication Protocol Worksheet OPRE report #2022-200


Communication is essential to continuous quality improvement (CQI). Implementation teams should have clear protocols that identify everyone with whom the team should communicate (including but not limited to other program teams, policymakers, and community members), the circumstances in which the team should communicate, the type of information that is shared, and specific methods of communication.

 **Purposes of Communication Protocols**

- Intentionally engage key parties (e.g., youth, families, or clients)
- Communicate progress and celebrate success throughout the CQI process
- Report barriers that are preventing or hindering implementation and should be explored and resolved by the team
- Report on actions taken to resolve or address past issues
- Revisit past decisions and agreements periodically to ensure that solutions are still appropriate

 **Structured Communication Protocols**

- A common communication misstep occurs when teams seek feedback from community members but do not share findings with the community.
- Structured communication protocols can help avoid such missteps by documenting how information will flow back to the community.

 **Best Practices Related to Implementation Team Communication**

- Communication should flow in both directions so that information is received and shared. Including and honoring feedback and perspectives from others are key elements of successful communication.
- Teams should communicate at every phase of implementation about what is working, what is not working, and how those conclusions were drawn.
- To be most effective, the implementation team should be responsible for the development and use of the communication protocol(s) and ensure that the team communicates with each person, group, or organization in the communication protocol. For example, your communication protocol could describe how your organization will communicate around key CQI items and also how external partners, policymakers, and community members will be included to ensure that everyone is informed/in the loop.



What resources are available?

/ Foundational resources and tools

- Introduction to CQI teams
- Team agreement
- Team decision making techniques
- Team meeting sample agenda
- Team meeting facilitation strategies
- Team communication processes
- Team composition

CQI Best Practices Series **HMRP**
HEALTH MANAGEMENT & RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAM
OPRE report #2022-196

Including a Diversity of Perspectives in Interpreting Data and Decision-Making¹

Program staff, clients, and community partners play important roles in continuous quality improvement (CQI), including understanding and using data to identify challenges, likely causes, and solutions. These individuals, particularly those who reflect the people you serve, should both participate in the implementation team and be informed about CQI progress. This means that your team should include a diverse range of perspectives and have a formal process for engaging community partners, including sharing CQI efforts, gathering community partners' feedback, and providing updates. This resource helps you "map" the characteristics of your implementation team members to understand the team's strengths and gaps in perspectives and experience. Use this diagram to help your implementation team think through how to include a diversity of perspectives in data analysis, interpretation, and decision-making.

Before you begin, discuss as an implementation team:

- Why is it important to include program staff, clients, community partners, and other relevant collaborators into your CQI efforts? How will this contribute to results?
- Do you have the right mix of actors involved to understand and interpret the data?
- What gaps exist on your team? What steps could you take to correct for them?

Issue Experience
How many on your team have been directly impacted by the issue?

Demographic Relevance
How many on your team demographically reflect the focus population?

Direct Engagement
How many on your team work directly with the focus population? How many work indirectly?

Community Relevance
How many on your team grew up in or live in the community you are serving?

Focus population, issue, and neighborhood

Labels in the diagram include: No direct life experience with issue, Family directly experienced issue, Personal lived experience with issue, Directly work with focus population, Do not work with focus population, Not from historically marginalized group, Represent another historically marginalized group, Similar to focus population, Community member from the focus neighborhood, Have previously been a member of the community, and Not from the community.



Menti: Share with us

/ Do you have a dedicated team for CQI?

- Yes, we have a team dedicated to CQI
- No, but we talk about CQI in our team meetings
- No, but we'll consider it!

/ If you have a CQI team, who is on it?



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**We have some program
improvement practices in place
but could use help pulling it all
together**

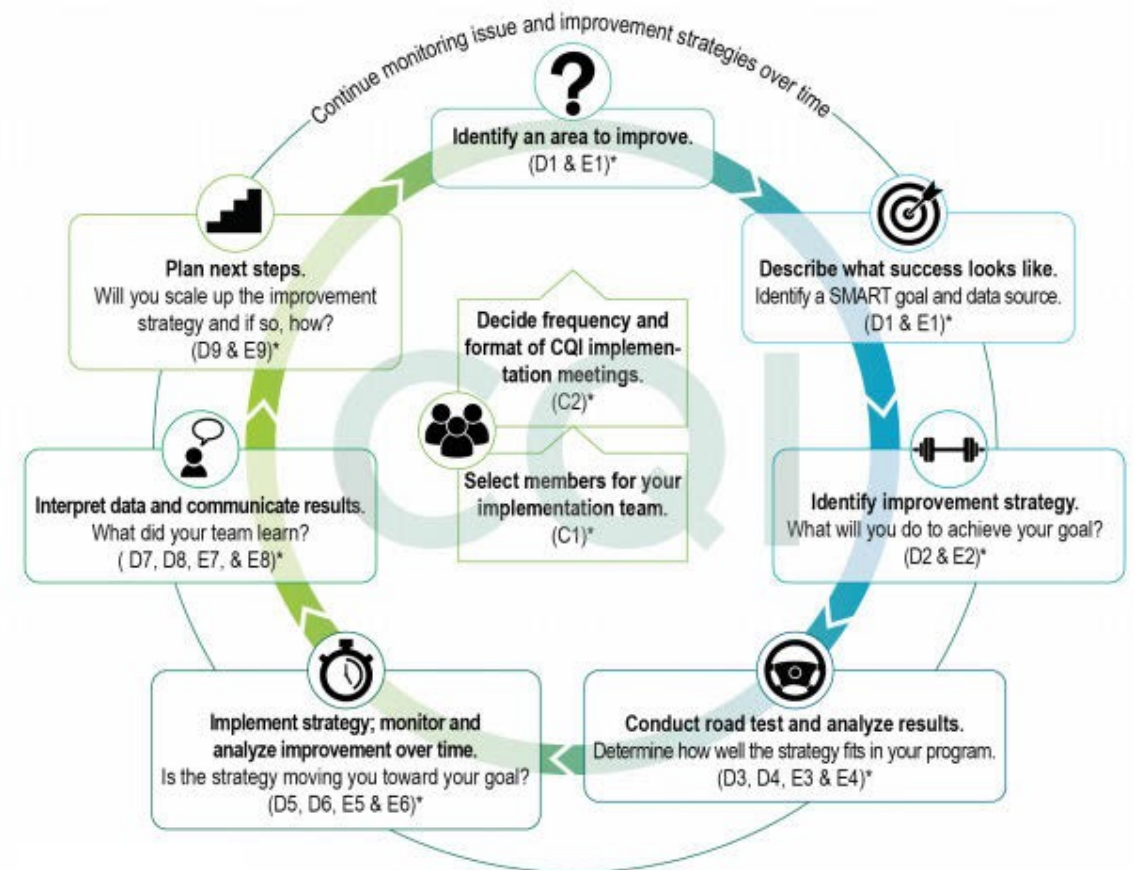
Benefits of a coordinated approach to CQI

- / **A clear and comprehensive improvement approach helps to set expectations for staff about CQI and supports a culture of learning**
- / **A CQI plan can help your team to organize improvement efforts, stay focused, and capture key insights**



Improvement efforts should be intentional

- / Having a designated approach enhances intentionality in improvement efforts, which can support success
- / The CQI plan template outlines one approach to organize your efforts and document learning



*= Template section

Sections of the CQI plan template

- / D1. Identify an area to improve
- / D2. Identify a strategy
- / D3. Conduct a road test
- / D4. Analyze results from a road test
- / D5. Monitor improvement over time
- / D6. – D8. Plan next steps and communicate

D5. Monitoring improvement over time
 In addition to understanding whether a strategy is feasible, you must assess whether it seems to be improving the underlying issue and helping your program achieve its goals. After road testing shows the strategy working, you will monitor progress toward the SMART goal with a small number of staff.

Please note that this does not all improve. Other factors might be useful for determining whether the strategy is working.

For your SMART goal (Section D2), describe how you will monitor progress toward the goal.

D6. Analyzing improvement over time: Did we make progress toward our SMART goal?

After you have collected data as planned, the next step is analyzing the data. Answer the questions below.

a. What data source did your team use to assess improvement (either from nEQRM or developed by the program), and what questions did you use in the analysis? Generally, the data source was the one listed in Table 3 above, but if a change was needed, describe the change.

b. When did your team collect data? For example, you might have collected data for three months: January 2019 to March 2019.

D7. Interpreting Data
 Discuss your data with your Implementation Team, and, as a team, decide on key findings. Begin each statement with the phrase: *We learned that...*

D8. Communication
 Please describe how you will communicate the CQI efforts to staff. Such efforts include the general use of CQI, soliciting feedback on issues to address, informing staff of changes being tested, and results.

D9. Action(s)
 With your Implementation Team, decide on next steps based on what you learned. If the strategy is a good fit and has shown intended improvements, you may decide to extend this strategy to other parts of your program, or to the whole program; this is sometimes called "scale-up." But programs should still continue assessing improvement after scale-up to determine if the strategy is working as intended.

Once a road test leads you to decide to implement the strategy, either with a...

SMART goal (from Section D1)	Strategy for improvement (from Table D2)	Data source(s) to assess progress toward goal	Frequency of monitoring	Staff responsibilities
Example: Increase attendance	Call each family the day before the	nEQRM service data	Monthly for three months before testing	- Facilitators enter workshop participation data in nEQRM. - Site administrator will

Opportunities to strengthen CQI processes

/ Consider ways to engage your CQI team

- Keep improvement work on the radar

/ Pause to learn about challenges before developing strategies

- Be sure you are solving for the right problem

/ Set goals to define success

- Give your team a benchmark to gauge success

/ Road test strategy ideas before taking them to scale

- Pilot your strategy on a small scale and collect data and feedback to understand how to make the strategy work better

/ Be intentional about communicating program changes

- Make a plan to enhance buy-in for change



Menti: Share with us

/ **Do you typically road test or pilot an improvement idea before committing to it?**

- Yes, for all significant program changes
- Yes, when we're not sure how the change is going to work
- No, we haven't tried this approach yet





**We have a solid CQI approach
and practices to support it,
but we're open to learning
more!**

Explore the range of HMRF CQI resources for ideas to strengthen practices

/ **Steps to assess current processes and practices**

- Review the CQI plan template to identify steps in your CQI processes you could enhance
- Assess whether your team includes diverse perspectives
- Create a team charter or use a sample agenda to strengthen your team approach
- Use templates to gather clear and consistent feedback

/ **Tip sheets to enhance existing processes**

- Be more intentional in communication about CQI efforts
- Learn about new facilitation techniques to enhance your team meetings
- Get ideas for supporting more inclusive decision making



Menti: Share with us

/ Based on what you learned today, what's one thing you might try or do differently related to your CQI processes?



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Announcements

/ **To explore the resources:**

- <https://hmrfggrantresources.info/continuous-quality-improvement>
- Stay tuned for a link to the resources on OPRE's website!

/ **Reach out with questions!**

- hmrfcqi@mathematica-mpr.com



Thank you!