TOOLS TO ENHANCE YOUR CQI WORK: APPLYING A CQI APPROACH TO SITE RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

1:00–2:30 p.m. (ET)

Webinar transcript

Jean Knab: This is Jean Knab. I'm the project director for the Evaluation TA contract. Thank you for joining us today. We recognize that a lot of you are not able to continue your programming right now, and you may also have been impacted in terms of site recruitment for either the spring and maybe even the fall. So, we wanted to take this opportunity to help you think about how to use this time productively, thinking about reflecting on your work thus far and planning for when you are able to restart. And we hope that this webinar will be useful for your planning.

So, I'm going to turn things over to Annie Buonaspina and Dan Friend, who are going to talk to you about some tools that will help you apply a continuous quality improvement approach to site recruitment.

Annie?

Annie Buonaspina: Sure. Thanks, Jean. And thank you, everyone, for joining today. My name is Annie Buonaspina, and I am a TA liaison with the TPP19 cohort.

As Jean mentioned, today's workshop is a CQI workshop, and this is a follow-up to a fall webinar that was an introduction to the CQI process. Today, we wanted to delve more deeply into the parts of the CQI process where people can sometimes get stuck. So we're going to be reviewing some tools that you could use, and we also want you to have a chance to practice using these tools on the call. We're going to focus on how you can apply these to a common challenge that teams are having today. And so, for this webinar, that's site recruitment.

Our hope is that everyone is going to feel comfortable sharing with each other during the discussion points of the workshop, both some of the issues you're having, but also some of the strategies that you've tried in the past.

So, as Derek mentioned, you're all muted right now, but we have three different discussion points, and we're going to try a process where you'll raise your hand virtually, and then we'll unmute you so that you can share any thoughts you have when we go through our discussion.

Also, just in general, if, as we're going through the tools, you have any questions about anything or have comments, if you've used any of these tools before, you can feel free, and actually should be encouraged, to use the chat box in the Q&A, and we'll try to respond to you as we go along.

Plan for today's session

But first let's go through the agenda. We're going to start with a brief overview of the CQI process, which, I mentioned, we did cover more extensively in a fall workshop. If you were able to join that workshop, that's great because this session introduces some new tools and is intended to build on that. But I will note that, in our first several slides, we're going to be reviewing just to make sure that everybody is on the same page.

So, the three points in the process that we're going to look more closely at today are understanding your challenge or your problem, developing strategies to address the problem, and then measuring the success of your strategies.

As I mentioned, we'd really like today's call to be interactive because, while we're here to share CQI tools with everyone, you're really the ones who are able to share with each other the different strategies that you've tried related to site recruitment. We wanted everyone to be able to see who they are on the call with. We purposefully kept the call small because we wanted it to feel more like a workshop. So, in terms of who registered, we had 12 grantee teams. It's a mix of evaluators and program leadership, which I was happy to see because I think that will help to have a mix of perspectives for our discussion pieces.

Who is on the call?

[Bar chart, "Who is on the call?", displayed, reading from left to right on the horizontal axis list the categories of participants: Love Notes (6), Positive Prevention PLUS (3), Teen Outreach Program (TOP) (2), Reducing the Risk (1), Other (1)]

As this chart shows, a lot of people implementing the same programs, mostly Love Notes, some Positive Prevention PLUS, and then a mix of other curricula as well. So, we should have a mix of perspectives, but also some similar challenges to talk through.

Poll: How comfortable are you with CQI?

Before we really get into things, we wanted to hear from all of you about your comfort level with CQI, so we're going to do a quick poll. I think Derek spoke to the polls a bit in the housekeeping, but, if you missed it, Derek, if you're able to launch the poll. This should pop up in your right-hand side panel. And so, we just want everyone to choose one response.

And the question is, How comfortable are you with CQI? So, your responses are: (1) What's CQI?; (2) I know of it, but I don't think I'm doing it right; (3) I've led or participated in CQI efforts, but I could use more information; (4) I feel comfortable with it, but it always helps to learn more; or (5) I'm an expert in CQI.

So can we launch the poll?

Webinar producer: Okay. So we'll give everybody some time to fill that out.

Annie Buonaspina: And then, Derek, if seems like most people have responded, we can close it down.

Okay. So, no one hasn't heard of it or feel like they're an expert, but a lot of responses in the middle. But it is clear that some of you are more comfortable with CQI than others, so if you're some of the respondents who felt less comfortable with it, as I mentioned, first we are going to do a review of some of the basic concepts. We're also just hoping that some of the tools that we present today are going to feel really accessible so that you don't really need to be an expert in CQI to be able to engage in this improvement work.

Overview of the CQI Process

[Circular diagram displayed, 5 labels (In clockwise order: Planning, Strategy Development, Testing, Assessing, Implementing) are on the diagram]

Okay. So, what is CQI? Some people look at it simply as a process for monitoring data to drive decisions. But it's really more specific than that. One of the distinctions that was made on the last webinar that I think is worth pointing out again is the difference between program monitoring and CQI. All of you are engaging in program monitoring by tracking your performance measures. And you may be monitoring those to determine whether they're meeting your expectations or certain benchmarks that you set for yourself at the beginning. That's program monitoring. CQI goes a step beyond that because it focuses on what you're doing and what you're going to do if you're not meeting expectations. It's a disciplined approach for identifying and understanding the causes of the challenges that you're having as well as for developing and testing solutions to address them.

And, as this visual shows, it's a cycle. You continue to iterate until you feel you have the strongest possible practices to form the strongest model. As far as the steps in the cycle, we're only going to focus on a few of those steps today. But we will just briefly review all of them. The first step I'm guessing that most of you have done already because we're almost a year into the grant phase, and that's getting your team together. So, ideally, that includes, of course, evaluation and leadership, but also some on-the-ground staff. Then it's the planning step. This involves identifying and understanding the challenges, so we're going to talk a little bit about that today. Developing strategies, which we're going to talk about. Testing strategies. Assessing whether they work, so that's the measurement piece. And we're going to cover that. And then implementing the change.

All right, so we have one more poll for everyone today. Many of you joined the workshop today because you identified site recruitment as a challenge for your program. We're interested in hearing from everybody the nature of the challenge that you're having. And I do realize that we asked this at registration. But, for our poll question, we're specifically interested in the setting in which you feel like you're having challenges. And, for this one, you can choose more than one response, so you don't have to feel limited to one of those.

So, Derek, if we could launch the second poll that would be great.

Poll: Where are you having site recruitment challenges?

[Poll options are schools, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, other, and "I'm not having site recruitment challenges. I'm here to contribute expertise!"]

Webinar producer: Sure thing.

Annie Buonaspina: Thanks.

And just to mention, if you're on the Evaluation Team, or if you don't feel as close to the site recruitment challenges, you can also feel free to skip the poll.

Webinar producer: There's less than 10 seconds left remaining in our poll, and then our poll will be closed.

Annie Buonaspina: Okay. So, thanks everyone. It looks like most of them are clustered in schools and community-based organizations. But not necessarily all in one setting, so maybe some of the challenges that we're facing are more general across a lot of the settings.

Let's take a little bit closer look at some of the common challenges that you all provided details about. We asked you to share recruitment challenges you're having in advance of the webinar when you registered. We grouped these, which was actually really easy to do because there were a lot of similarities across the teams. Some of the more common issues that we saw include:

[Bar chart, "Where are the main barriers you've encountered in recruiting partners?", displayed, reading from left to right on the horizontal axis:

Can’t reach decision makers (4), Partner lacks capacity (4), COVID-related (2), District/state restrictions (2), Ideological barriers (2), Other (2)]

> Issues with outreach, i.e., not being able to reach decision makers or having delays in getting a decision from partners.
>
> Partners saying that they don’t have the time or the capacity to implement even if they have an interest in your programming.
>
> Certainly right now, COVID-related challenges.
>
> District or state legislation restrictions causing issues.
>
> And then ideological barriers were another challenge that came up a couple of times.

Developing a specific aim

So, those are the challenges. But now we have to translate those into specific aims. For the purposes of walking through these tools, we chose a sample challenge that we’ll work through. But we hope to return to some of the specific challenges that you shared during the discussion portion as well.

So, our sample challenge is that we’re having trouble getting into schools. And it’s a priority for us to partner with schools so that we can serve more students.

Developing a specific aim is the first step. And your aim needs to be SMART, which is an acronym that a lot of you are probably aware of. But it means Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. So, if it’s not all those things, then you should be sure to refine it because you need to be able to assess whether the strategies that you used were successful at the end.

So, we need to develop an aim, a SMART aim, for our specific challenge. We’ll say that we’re going to develop partnership agreements with at least two school districts. That’s something that we’re saying we feel is achievable, and it’s definitely measurable. In the five-county area, so we’re being specific. In the next six months, so it’s time-bound.

Understanding the problem

[Image of a tree is displayed with the roots of the tress labeled as “Root Cause”, the trunk labeled as “Challenge”, and the leaves labeled as “Effects”]

So, now we're clear on what we're aiming for. Let's go back to the challenges to think about what needs to be addressed in order to achieve that aim. In the fall webinar, we talked a lot about root causes. If you joined that, you might remember this visual. This is a problem tree analysis tool, and this is used to document your root causes. And the reason it's important to identify those is because often your main challenge is too broad or high level to be able to develop a targeted strategy to address it. So, you need to break it down.

But, as you're getting into the root causes, you also need to make sure that you have a thorough understanding of the problem that you're facing. You may be familiar with this cartoon. The overall point, of course, is that nobody really has a full view of the challenge on their own, but everyone brings their own perspective to it. If you are brainstorming root causes, a program director may come to a different conclusion about root causes than a participant.

[Image displayed of elephant standing in grass with various scientists examining different parts of the elephants body, each scientist is provides guesses on what the animal]

A lot of the tools that I'm sharing today are adapted from the Carnegie Foundation's approach for using improvement science in school and youth settings. And that's something that we link to more at the end if you have a specific interest in that. The Carnegie Foundation uses a term called solutionitis, which is the tendency to rush into solutions before you've fully investigated and understood the problem. So, that's the next step after you specify your aims. And we're going to review a few tools that you can use to do that today. And that's the process map, empathy interviews, and then a couple of root-cause analysis tools.

Tool for understanding the problem: Process maps

Diagram displayed (from left to right): oval stating "Decide you want pizza" pointing to a square stating "Decide on a pizza place" pointing a second square stating "Decide on toppings" pointing to a green diamond stating "Agree?" pointing in two directions, one arrow pointing down to circle stating "No" and the other pointing right to a circle stating "Yes". The circle stating "Yes" is pointing to a square stating "Call the pizza place" pointing to a second square stating "Pay for the pizza" pointing to a oval stating "Eat the pizza". The circle stating "No" is pointing downward to a diamond stating "Can you do half and half?" pointing to a circle stating "No" and a circle stating "Yes"; the circle stating "No" is pointing to a oval stating "Abandon the idea" and the circle stating "Yes" is pointing back to the square stating "Call the pizza place]

Let’s start with the process map. CQI is really about improving specific processes. It’s ultimately about improving programs, but the actual work of improvement happens at the process level. Because what you’re doing is working to tweak the refined specific processes. To do that, you need to understand how these processes are carried out by staff.

And the purpose of creating the map is that mapping the process helps you to be clear on how things are currently done. Putting the process on paper helps to highlight potential breakdowns and provides the foundation for discussing improvements. One point to keep in mind if you are going to create a process map is that it needs to describe how things actually happen as opposed to how someone thinks they happen or how they feel like they should happen.

This is just a generic example to illustrate the tool. But it shows how you would map the process of ordering a pizza with someone else. So, first you decide on the place. You decide on toppings. And here you have a decision point because you either agree on toppings or you don’t. If you do, you can continue on. If you don’t, you have to decide whether you can do half and half. If you can’t do that, maybe you abandon the idea. If you can, then you can continue on with your process.

We’ll imagine that you’ve gone through this process five times, and you’ve never actually gotten to the point of eating the pizza. You know that, at some point in this process, something’s not going right. But the map is a method for figuring out at which step are you getting hung up, and what can you do to strengthen that step.

This example itself is a little bit silly because it’s not something you would need to map in order to figure out where you’re having an issue. But if you have a more complex problem, then this can be a really useful exercise to go through with your staff to try to figure out where you need to strengthen.

We are going to look at a more relevant example on the next slide, but, before we do that, I wanted to make a couple of general points about process maps.

The first is that, in terms of design, you don’t need to get hung up on creating something that’s technically accurate or fancy in terms of the shapes you use. You probably noticed if you look at this map that there’s different shapes that represent different things. If you’re not familiar with process maps and you’re interested in learning more about that, we link to a resource at the end of this presentation that you can explore. But it’s also just as easy to create a process map with your team using Post-it notes that you can move around for different steps. And as everyone is currently working remotely, you can still do that because there are a lot of great online collaborative programs like Mural or Miro, which, again, we link to at the end, which allow you to use virtual Post-it notes.

The second point that I wanted to make before we move on is that it’s important to think about who should be at the table when you create the map. Because when you have the perspective from those people who are on the ground doing the work and actually carrying out the processes, you’re able to create an accurate map and one with more detailed steps.

I’ve actually used process maps before with program staff when I worked at a youth organization. I found that, in addition to using this for improvement work in figuring out where to strengthen, it’s also a good exercise for learning about whether staff are doing things in the same way. It’s possible that you have three different people [doing] site outreach, and maybe everybody is doing their own thing. But there might be one approach that’s more effective than the others. This is a good opportunity to get everyone on the same page about the approach that your program will use for a specific process.

Okay. So, now we’ll look at a real example, or a more relevant example.

Process Map: Process for initial outreach to partners

[Diagram displayed from left to right: Oval stating “Assemble your recruitment team” with an arrow pointing to a square labeled “Conduct research to develop a list of schools, CBOs, health offices, faith-based sites, and so on” with an arrow pointing to a rectangle labeled “Initial contact: Send an introductory letter about your program, attend an event/meeting and distribute materials”, with an arrow pointing to a square labeled “Follow up with primary contact in one week”, which is pointing to diamond labeled “Interested?”, which is pointing to two circles: one labeled “Yes” and then “No”. The circle labeled “Yes” with an arrow point to a oval labeled “Set meeting to discuss details”; the circle labeled “No” with an arrow point to a oval labeled “Gather feedback”.]

In the challenge that we shared at the beginning, we were having trouble getting into schools. This shows the current process that we could map, which is, how are we right now doing outreach to schools? This is a very high-level process map. If you were to create your own, you could probably add more details and more steps. But just using this as an example, we would start by researching potential partners. We would make our initial contact, either in person at an event, or we would send our introductory letter. Within a week, we do follow-up with our primary contact. If they’re interested, we would move forward in setting up a meeting. If not, maybe we do our best to try to get feedback about why not.

Then, on the next slide, we show some questions that you could ask at each step if you are investigating this and figuring out how to strengthen this process.

So, as the first step, are we reaching out to all potential partners or just focusing on a subset? Maybe we've really focused our efforts on public high schools, but there might be opportunities in charter schools that we haven't investigated as much for initial contact. There are a lot of questions that you could ask here, which probably means that we could unpack this step. But, just for some example questions, we could ask, Does our pitch explain how their students will benefit? Are we using effective messaging? Are we reaching the right person? Are we reaching the person who is responsible for making decisions about curricula?

As follow up, let's say we're having trouble reaching the person or they're not getting back to us. Have we considered whether there are other stakeholders at the school who might be able to help. Or are we reaching out at a convenient time when the principal, or the superintendent, or whoever we're trying to reach might be most available?

If it doesn't work, are we getting feedback to inform the program to figure out what we could do differently next time? So that's the overall idea of a process map. It lays out the process, and then your team is really supposed to dig into each step and try to think about what you could do differently.

We're going to move on to our next tool, but, again, if you have any questions about process maps, or any experience if you've used them, please do feel free to use the chat box.

Tool for understanding the problem: Empathy interviews

[Image displayed of a toothbrushes]

Okay. A second tool that we wanted to cover today is empathy interviews. And these can be really useful tools as well for understanding the nature of the challenge that you're dealing with.

This is a tool that comes from the design thinking world. And these are intended to help you understand the challenge from the perspective of your users. Users being a term from product design, but, in our case, this would be participants. Especially for participants, this can be a really effective tool. But also parents, community members. In our example, probably our site partners.

So, what makes an empathy interview different from a traditional interview is that you're not necessarily interviewing to gather opinions or feedback, but you're trying to understand the needs of the person that you're interviewing. So, if you think of it in terms of product design, if you're tasked with designing a more effective toothbrush, you wouldn't just want to ask your users how they would improve the toothbrush, but rather you would want to probe about their experiences brushing their teeth and any particular struggles that they might face on a day-to-day basis. And then you would use those stories to inform your conclusions about how to improve.

In terms of whom to interview, if you do ever explore empathy interviews more and you look up how they're used in product designs, they often talk about the importance of interviewing users on the extremes. And that's because, if you understand the needs of those on the extremes, it's easier to design something that works for everyone.

For our site recruitment example, I think that means that, of course, you want to understand the needs and the concerns of partners that you're struggling to partner with. But, it might also be helpful to interview those with whom you already have a strong or longstanding relationship because you can understand what's working and how you might inform your approach with that information.

For the partners that you're struggling with, it might not be that easy to set up an interview with a principal or an administrator who's not returning your phone calls. But there could be others at the school who could help to inform your improvement work, like parents or teachers who could help you understand the needs of the school and how your program may not fit into that.

In terms of preparing for the interview, so, empathy interviews aren't intended to be formal interviews. You're not necessarily going to create a question guide for that. But it is a good idea to have some questions prepared in advance. And so we link here, and again in the resource section that we have at the end, to a template from Stanford's Design School, which I thought did a really nice job of walking you through the different steps of preparing–both understanding what this is, and then also preparing for an empathy interview. So, that's a good tool if you feel like you need extra support.

As a final point, if you do a few interviews, it's important to make sure you pull out your key insights at the end of each interview while it's still fresh in your mind. You could even put each insight on a Post-it note, and then when you're done, you have the opportunity to review all of them together and think about how that informs your understanding of the challenge.

Okay. So the two tools that we covered are useful for understanding your problem. But, when we started, we were talking about root causes. So I also wanted to share a few tools to help–specifically for identifying root causes and facilitating conversations with your staff to do that.

Understanding the problem: A few other tools

[Fishbone diagram displayed(Between “Lack of buy-in to Curriculum,” and “Can’t get into schools” reads “differing priorities” and “don’t’ feel program meets needs.” Between “Can’t get into schools and “lack of trust, credibility” are “School leadership don’t know us” and “school had failed partners in past.”)

The first is called the fishbone diagram, and it looks like this. So, it gets its name because when it’s fully completed, which this one is not completed, but when it is, it looks like the body of a fish. What you do is put the challenge at the head. So we’re having trouble getting into schools. And then at each of these major offshoots, you identify the causes of that challenge. And then the fishbone asks you to further break down those causes into subcauses.

So, if we think lack of buy-in to the curriculum is one of our challenges, then you would probe your staff to further break that down about why we think there might be a lack of buy-in. Maybe it’s differing priorities between you and the school that you’re trying to reach out to. Maybe the leadership doesn’t feel like the program meets the needs of the students. So, you continue to probe until you identify all the various root causes.

This is another tool that I’ve used with program staff. And I found it to be very useful for providing structure to the process of brainstorming root causes, which can otherwise be a little bit all over the place.

[List displayed:

The 5 Whys
Problem: Can’t get in schools
Why: Lack buy-in, Don’t feel it meets needs, Leadership aren’t aware of extent of problem, We haven’t communicated the extent of the need, and add another if you need to go deeper]

And then the second tool is called the Five Whys document. This is very similar to the fishbone, so you really don’t need to use both. It’s just whichever one you feel more comfortable with. But this is exactly what it sounds like. It just prompts your team to keep digging down to reach root causes. So, if you can’t get into schools, you ask, Why? Well, because there’s a lack of buy-in. Why? And you continue to probe until you feel like you’ve gotten to the core root causes. And the idea of this is that it allows you to develop more targeted strategies to address that issue.

So, those are the tools that we wanted to cover for understanding the problem, but now we were interested in hearing from all of you. So, I'm going to turn it over to Dan, and we're going to walk through a discussion related to some of the tools that we just covered and what–how you might use these.

So, Dan, I'll go to the next slide. Dan? I think Dan might be–Dan, are you muted?

Daniel Friend: Oh.

Annie Buonaspina: I can hear you now.

Daniel Friend: Oh, you can hear me. Sorry, I was muted in the WebEx and not on my phone. There we go. Great. Thank you for kicking it over to me, Annie.

We just wanted to present all of you with some scenarios, and hear which of the tools you just heard about and hear your perspective on which of the tools we just heard about might be useful for addressing this particular challenge.

Discussion: Choose a tool

[Scenario #1: Statistics on teen pregnancy rates in your county demonstrate a need for teen pregnancy prevention programming. However, the prevailing attitude in the county is that you don't talk about issues like teen pregnancy. What's a tool we covered that you could use to inform improvement strategies?]

Our first scenario is stats on teen pregnancy in your county demonstrated meaningful pregnancy prevention programming. But the attitude in the county is you don't talk about issues like teen pregnancy.

Raise your hand or type in the chat box what some of the tools you might use to understand or get at some of the root causes of this problem.

Let's see, are we seeing anything in the chat here? Any hands raised? Great. It looks like Gail Brown. Can we unmute Gail really quick? Gail said empathy interviews. Gail, tell us more about why you think empathy interviews would be good.

Gail Brown: Learning a little bit about the interviews, I come from a journalism background, and, just based on what you all just said, I see where that can be a good possibility of something that we can use and actually try to understand the needs of the person or at least determine why, you know, why–our challenge is not so much with the school, it's more with the parents of students, getting them to, you know, sign consent forms, or–

Daniel Friend: Yeah, getting that buy-in.

Gail Brown: Right. So, the district itself, you know, from the administrative end of it, they're working really well. But it's mostly the parents of some of the students here that are not, so perhaps maybe that we could reach out, you know, to the parents and kind of do some interviews and talk to them a little bit more about the program, maybe it will help them understand, you know, the need.

Daniel Friend: Yeah. That's a really good idea. And you could actually do two different types of empathy interviews. Because you want to understand, you know, who gave consent and why, right? Because that can really be helpful. And then, who didn't. That latter group is probably hard to get a hold of sometimes, but both sets could potentially help you with your parental buy-in and consent issue. So that's a really good idea.

Gail Brown: Okay, thank you.

Daniel Friend: Great. Let's go to the next scenario, Annie. Okay.

[Scenario #2: Your team has trouble establishing partnerships. What tool might you use to strengthen your approach?]

So, your team has trouble establishing partnerships. Pretty general. But what could you use? Which of these tools could you use to understand the root causes, or drivers, of your partnership problem? Raise your hand or– give us a chat.

So, let's think about it a bit more. I'll give you guys a little bit more. Maybe that will whet your appetite here. So, you got a big list of leads. You've identified a ton of community organizations. But you just can't close the deal. What could you use? What could you use to understand how you're not converting someone from potential to an actual partner?

Ah, let's see. I got a chat from Beverly Harris, who said the Five Whys. Can you unmute, Beverly?

Beverly, if you're unmuted, tell us more how you think you could use the Five Whys in this scenario.

Beverly Harris: I was thinking with the Five Whys to help get to the root cause of why we're not establishing partnerships. Having the team just go through different questions because that will kind of uncover what techniques you've already used. So, you've called partners, and so then what happened next? Why did that not work? And then, that partner didn't return your call, so maybe why did that not work? Is there another person you can reach out to? So, just constantly asking those questions to kind of find out the real root cause of why you're not able to establish partners, whether it's how you're presenting the material, who you're contacting, or the method that you're using to contact.

Daniel Friend: Yeah, that's right. Keep drilling down. Keep asking that those recruiters or that frontline staff, Why? Where's the issue lying, right?

Beverly Harris: Yes.

Daniel Friend: Get right to that real problem area.

Let's see, the last chat I got was from Kristen Shinn. Can we unmute Kristin really quick? Kristin, you said process mapping. Tell me a little bit more about that. How could that help this situation here?

Kristen Shinn: I think just figuring out, you know, what the process looks like currently. In the past, we've had luck similar to like what the last participant just said in regards to finding out who is the person that we're connecting with. In our area, we've had better luck connecting with like our social workers or our health teachers first before we're able to connect with like a principal or even a superintendent. So, just figuring out what that process looks like. And recognizing that, for each of the different programs, the process might need to be tweaked a little bit for that specific approach.

Daniel Friend: Great. Okay, we also had Ty Elimon said a process map as well or the – the problem tree.

So, those are all good answers, you know. These are really good applications that you guys are anchoring these in.

So, we'll have more opportunities to discuss if people have other suggestions later on.

So, I'm going to turn it back over to Annie to take us through our next activities here.

Annie Buonaspina: Thanks, Dan. And, yeah, thank you, everyone, for sharing.

Developing strategies: Driver diagrams

Discussion: Practice developing drivers

[Branching diagram displayed beginning with the category, "Specific Aim: Develop agreement to deliver programming in two school districts" branching to "Primary drivers: Trust and credibility, buy-in for specific programming, program flexible enough to adapt to partner's circumstances". The "Trust and credibility" branches to "Familiarity with organization and experiences" and "Common vision" labels, under the category “Secondary drivers”. The far right category, “Strategies/changes ideas” with no branching or additional labels.]

So, next we want to turn to the process of developing strategies to address your problem. So, say you have a persistent challenge. Sometimes it’s helpful to develop a map to help guide your improvement efforts, and so that’s what you’re seeing on this slide. This is called a driver diagram. And a driver diagram is a way to organize what you know about a problem to start mapping a theory of how you’re going to improve.

This is a really useful tool, as I mentioned, when you have a high-level or persistent problem that will likely take several strategies to make progress on. So, for example, if you’ve been struggling for a long time with site recruitment, or maybe you’re having issues with participant recruitment, or some retention issues. You’re not necessarily going to create a visual like this for every challenge you encounter in your program. But, so, for example, if you had a problem that is more straightforward, then you might not need to create a whole map for it. But, for a complex problem, especially when you’re working with a team, this can be a helpful tool because every time your team comes back together, you can use the driver diagram to ensure that, as you’re brainstorming new strategies, that you’re brainstorming strategies that are aligned with your theory about what you think it’s going to take to achieve improvement.

We don’t have anything here, but let’s take a look as we start building it out. The idea is that you break your overarching aim into smaller chunks that are easier to address directly. So, if you take a look at what we started, you want to first put your aim in the front box. And so our challenge was that we’re struggling with schools. And so our aim is to remember to develop agreements to deliver programming in two school districts.

The next column of boxes are the primary drivers. So, these are the things that you believe you need to influence in order to achieve that aim.

So, we’re going to list the primary drivers as trust and credibility.

> Establishing trust with the partner.
>
> Building buy-in for the program.
>
> Making it logistically feasible for your partner, so being flexible enough.
>
> And then also delivering an effective message. Having a strong outreach approach.

So, now you’re developing strategies for these four items. So, rather than generally trying to develop a strategy to partner with schools, you’re focused specifically, for example, on what it takes to build buy-in for the program that you chose. Because you know that that's a driver of successful partnerships.

So, what you're really doing here is specifying the root causes. And then the driver diagram just gives you a way to organize these and maintain focus on what you need to do to achieve your aims.

So, if it's a really complex problem that you're dealing with, you also have the option of including secondary drivers. These further break down your primary drivers. So, for instance, if you feel like trust and credibility is still too high level, you can break that down. So, maybe to establish trust and credibility, we feel like the partner needs to have some familiarity with your organization or at least be familiar with some of the past successes of your organization. Maybe we feel like you and the partner need to have a common vision for what you're trying to achieve. So, those are a few. Those are a few things that you feel like you need to influence in order to build trust and credibility. So, that's an option if you want to add those to your–to your map.

In general, though, primary drivers, these are supposed to be the best guess about what will bring change and help you to achieve your aim.

If you need help coming up with these drivers, you can think about what you learned during your investigation of the problem. So, for example, if you created a fishbone diagram as you were trying to understand the challenge better, you could look at some of those first-tier challenges that you listed. So, one of the challenges that we listed was that there is a lack of buy-in for the program. So, you just need to translate this into a driver. So, what we need is buy-in for the specific programming.

So, that's one way to come up with drivers. You can also look to the literature if you're not sure. If it's an issue that's been well covered, you don't have to try to recreate insights, so you might be able to find a lot there.

We do have some search tips on the next slide for searching Google Scholar if you feel like you need support for that.

And then, in general, it may also just be a good approach to brainstorm drivers with your staff. So, you can start by asking a really high-level question like, to achieve our aim, the things we need to change are. . . . And then group together similar ideas to generate themes, and those form your primary drivers.

One final point about driver diagrams. So, you can use them by starting with the aim and working backwards to inform your strategies, which is what we just talked about. Or maybe you have a strategy idea already, and you can use your driver diagram to see if that strategy fits in with your theory of improvement.

So, for example, you might decide you're not having success with the schools in the counties that you're currently serving, so you're going to expand out to additional counties.

So, that's a strategy that might work, but if you look at what you mapped out here, it doesn't influence any of your primary drivers. You would just be using the same approach with a larger set of partners. If you think there's a problem with your approach, then that solution doesn't fit with your theory about what it's going to take to improve your practice.

That said, these also aren't intended to remain static, so as you go along, if you learn more about your challenge, you can always refine or tweak some of the drivers that you listed.

You'll notice that we haven't yet completed the final column, which is the strategies or change ideas. That's partly because we wanted to talk about these more as a group. But, also before we do that, I wanted to share a few tips about finding ideas for strategies.

So, if you have a problem and you're struggling to develop strategies, there are a lot of places to look. We just wanted to cover that in this slide.

Again, as we mentioned earlier, the literature is always a useful place. We can try searching Google Scholar for what's already out there related to issues. So, for instance, you might be able to find some good implementation reports. One of the challenges that we saw in the registration data that came up a few times is that you're facing resistance to programming from partners because of a lack of comfort discussing these issues. So, that's something you could search the literature for. You could look at some of these implementation reports to see how programs have addressed that issue in the past.

OPA also as a TPP resource site that's helpful. There's the TPP19 toolkit that's on Macs. That's organized by topic area, so that can be a really useful resource.

And then, as I mentioned, we have a link here to a tip sheet for effective Google Scholar searches, which is intended to be helpful to get more effective searches.

And then your staff are also a great resource, as I'm sure a lot of you know already, because they're on the ground doing the work every day.

And then, lastly, are just other practitioners and TPP grantees.

So, you may already be aware, but there's a listserv on Max.gov that you can use to pose questions to peers in your TPP19 cohort, so that's a great place to get strategies of what others have tried who are likely to face similar challenges.

That's what we wanted to cover related to strategy development, and now I'm going to turn it back to Dan because we wanted to have a deeper discussion about drivers and strategies.

Daniel Friend: Yeah. Let's go to the next slide here.

So, we want to focus on a specific one we heard is a challenge for many of you, and that's building buy-in for your specific program.

[Diagram displayed with three categories: Primary drivers, secondary drivers, and strategies/change ideas listed across the top with "Buy-in for specific programming" listed beneath "Primary drivers"]

So, that's our primary driver. Let's take a couple minutes here on what could be some secondary drivers from this? What could be causing your lack of buy-in? Go ahead and raise your hand or chat, and let's identify some secondary drivers.

Another way to think about this is, What are some challenges or barriers to building buy-in? Or, Why doesn't your program have buy-in at a specific organization?

All right. Let's hear from Ty Elimon. Let's unmute him.

Ty, you said conservative values not wanting comprehensive sex education. I think that's a really good one. That's a really good secondary driver. What might be a strategy you could use to address that?

Ty Elimon: I think the last thing you said with some of the literature reviews might be a way to kind of show that not that values are right or wrong, but evidence out in the literature shows that providing the comprehensive version of sex ed versus the more sex-avoidance curriculums bear positive results. And so I think it's informing.

Daniel Friend: Yes.

Ty Elimon: Trying to inform the barrier that you're running up against with a principal or a superintendent. You may have teachers and social workers that are for it, but sometimes we then run into a superintendent that says no way.

Daniel Friend: I like that, too, you're taking the value-based judgment out of it and rooting it in some evidence of some kind and saying, you know, that this is actually the reason that you want right here. Right?

Ty Elimon: Yeah.

Daniel Friend: How about others? We have Gail Brown. I think she had a suggestion. Gail? Let's unmute Gail. So, you said communication barriers. So, tell me a little bit more about that. What kind of communication barriers get in the way of buy-in?

Gail Brown: Well, actually, what I'm referencing to is we're kind of back to the (inaudible) form. We found that a lot of the students were not actually taking them home. When we started probing a little bit, some of them were still in their book bag, a parent had not even seen, you know, the information about the program. So, we started trying to put more out on the social media platform about the program to see if that helped. And then to see if, you know, parents would see that and then want to call us to get more details. But that was one of the communication challenges that we had, you know. Then some students just told us, well we just forgot to take it out of our book bag, you know, and stuff like that. So that was, to me that was a communication barrier because the information didn't get to the parents.

Daniel Friend: Right, right, right. A flow issue. And so how would others, or how did you solve that?

Gail Brown: Well, we're actually still working on it. Like I said, we're doing a lot more social media. We're actually doing a lot of word of mouth.

Some of the parents of the children that we're targeting, we're actually talking to them to talk to the parents. And one of the things that we're finding since COVID is that it does take a lot of word of mouth with, you know, trying to reach, you know, a parent, you know. For example, I might know someone, and somebody else may know another person. So, if that person, if we, in turn, that person is that person that they know, then we can kind of like start a chain reaction. So, that's what we're working on trying to do more word of mouth based on who people know.

Daniel Friend: Yeah. Diversifying your outreach strategies, right. So, social media, word of mouth. Not just relying on kids to bring things home. Those are all very good suggestions.

Gail Brown: Great.

Daniel Friend: Well, let's keep going, and we can always come back to any of these at the end, too.

Annie Buonaspina: Sounds good. Thanks, Dan.

We're going to turn to the last piece of our webinar, which is focusing on measurements.

I did want to acknowledge before we jump in to measures that we're skipping a step in the process. If you remembered, we covered the six steps. There's a really important step that happens in between developing strategies and measuring, which is developing a plan for implementing your strategy. And this is a really important piece, but because it's not the focus of our webinar today, we did link to a worksheet which some of you may have used in the past. It's a PDSA worksheet. And it's a really useful tool for walking you through the process of planning for implementing one of your strategies and also thinking about how you might measure it.

Measuring success: The four types of measures

But, today, we wanted to focus more on the measurement. Because there are often a lot of questions about what type of data you need to collect to assess your strategy. A lot of times, teams will jump right in to one type of measure that we list here, which are outcome measures. And I think that may be because these are often tracked already for accountability purposes. But measuring from improvement is different than measuring from accountability because it's important to track, first, throughout the process so you understand not just what happens, but how it's happening. But, also, these don't need to strictly be quantitative outcomes because this is really just information that you're collecting for yourself and for your own benefit to understand what's happening and whether it was successful or not.

	What they tell you	When to track	Walking through an example: Develop tailored talking points
Process measures	Was the strategy implemented?	While implementing your strategy	# of site meetings in which staff came prepare with site-specific talking points
Primary driver measures	Are the process changes linked to interim outcomes?	Immediately after implementing strategy	# of schools in which the team has cultivated at least one supporter/champion
Outcomes measures	Are we reaching our ultimate aim?	Post-strategy	# of MOUs developed with school partners
Balancing measures	Did the strate lead to any unintended impacts?	While implementing post-strategy	Interviews to reveal that creating talking points tailored to each site is labor intensive and takes

			aware from other tasks

So, let's take a look at some of the other important measures that we wanted to cover today.

Discussion: Process measures

The first is process measures. And these are measures that a lot of you are probably familiar with because you're tracking these already for your overall evaluation. But they're also very important to track for the individual strategies that you decide to implement.

So, if you don't track process measures, and your strategy doesn't really work, you don't know whether it's because it wasn't implemented properly or whether because it just, well, maybe it didn't work, or was–or whether it just needs to be tweaked or refined in some way to work better.

And then if you do want to tweak or refine it, it's important to have a record of what you did the first time so that you can build from that.

So, if you remember our challenge, we were saying that we were having trouble getting into schools. And one of our primary drivers was that we felt like we needed to build buy-in in order to do that. So we're going to try, as a strategy, to develop tailored talking points for each school that speak to how the program will benefit the specific needs of that school. And that's going to be our strategy.

So, if we were tracking that strategy, or we were tracking process measures for that, we could track the number of site meetings in which staff came prepared with tailored talking points. We could potentially do a qualitative assessment of the talking points to determine the extent to which they were tailored to the school.

So, those are just a few options, but overall the idea is that you're trying to understand what happened.

Discussion: Primary driver measures

The next type of measure is primary driver measures. And these are measures that aim to assess how well the strategy influenced the primary driver. So, in our example, this is building buy-in for the program.

And one point that I wanted to make about primary driver measures is they often require new data collection beyond what you may already be collecting for performance measures or for other program tracking.

Because they need to be really well aligned with the specific strategy that you're implementing. But it doesn't have to be onerous data collection.

So, I wanted to share a tool that I have used a lot in the past that isn't really related to our site recruitment example. But these are–these are a tool called exit tickets, and they're used often by teachers at the end of lessons to assess whether students retain key concepts or engage with the lesson. They're basically three- to four-question surveys that you would hand out at the end of a session to measure or to understand something about the lesson. So, if, for example, you're trying to build belonging in your cohort, and that's the driver you're trying to influence, for example, let's say that you were trying to implement an icebreaker activity to try to build belonging. You could give an exit ticket out to students at the end of the session to get their feedback immediately about how they felt about the icebreaker, whether they feel more connected to other people in the group. And so that's an opportunity to immediately collect this primary driver data to understand whether you were building belonging.

So, that's an unrelated example, but just wanted to highlight that. And then we actually link to a primer on exit tickets at the end because I find it to be a really useful tool for getting quick feedback.

But, for our site recruitment example, the example that I thought of for primary driver measures is that you could potentially track the number of schools in which you were able to cultivate a champion or a supporter for your program. Or the number of champions that you were able to cultivate in an individual school. Whether that's an administrator, or a teacher, or a parent. It doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to lead to a partnership agreement, it's a measure of whether you're making progress on building buy-in.

Discussion: Outcome measures

We talked about outcome measures already, so this is looking at whether or not you achieved your specific aim. And so that aim that we said at the beginning was whether or not we developed partnership agreements with two new school districts.

Discussion: Balancing measures

And then the final type of measure is balancing measures. So, these are intended to look at unintended impacts. Because before you decide whether to adopt or abandon a strategy, you need to know not only whether it helps you to achieve your aim, but also at what cost. Because that's what really allows you to make a comprehensive assessment about whether you should adopt the strategy or whether you need to refine it, or whether it just didn't work.

In this case, let's say in this case that we were making buy-in, or we've noticed that we're building champions in the schools and we feel like we're making progress. Then you talk to your staff and you get qualitative feedback. And they tell you that it was a very labor-intensive process for them to do to develop these tailored talking points, and they felt like it pulled them away from other things that were important.

This doesn't mean that you don't implement it, but it's just another piece of information to take into account, and maybe you refine the strategy or try to resolve that issue in some way.

That's the point of tracking balancing measures. Those are four measures, and we're going to turn it back to Dan because we wanted to have one more discussion point where we think about a couple of sample strategies that we developed and some measures that you might track for those.

So, Dan, I'll go to the next slide.

Resources: CQI tools

[Slide displays the following:

The overall process

- Though focused on education, this free coursefrom the University of Michigan and the Carnegie Foundation is broadly applicable and goes more deeply into improvement science techniques

Investigating the problem

- Empathy interviews
- Process maps: An overview
- More on design thinking (e.g., additional useful activities for brainstorming strategies and facilitating conversations about root causes):
- Fishbone diagram template
- 5 Whys template]

Daniel Friend: Yeah. Similar to our previous discussions, we've got some challenges and strategies, and then we'll think through together how we might track some of these measures. Our challenge is potential partners lack openness to the idea of teen pregnancy prevention programming. Our strategy is to record our former participants speaking to how they benefitted from the program and share the video as part of your outreach materials. So, the driver: we're building buy-in. And we're looking to come up with a really good process measure for this. Again, a process measure is measuring, Is this strategy being implemented as intended? So, how might we know that? What are some suggestions for a good process measure to measure this strategy?

Raise your hand or type in the chat box. What can we track here? I can give us an example to get us started here. So, I might say that I need to send this to all of my potential partners, right? I need to record this and send this out to everyone I'm looking to approach. One easy way could be the number of partners that I've sent this out to. My goal is to send it out to 100 percent. It's only been sent out to 60. That's a pretty good process measure. I know right where I'm at.

Anybody else have one? Annie, do you have any good examples of what a good process measure might be?

Annie Buonaspina: Yeah, I think one of the other examples that I came up with is a lot of times if you have a video that is on your site, then you can see how many people view the video. This gives you a good idea about whether partners are actually engaging with the video and seeing it because sometimes you just send it out not sure. If you're able to track that, then that's a good thing to understand as well.

Daniel Friend: Yeah. We'll move on to the next one here. I just got a chat, though, that someone suggested reaction to videos, which could actually be a very good thing to measure, too. It might be a good idea that you could actually do that for your balancing measures, too, right? You want positive reactions to the videos, and if you're getting negative reactions, that's a good way to make sure you're not having any unintended consequences. So, I really like that suggestion.

Let's go on to the next one here.

Okay. Let's think of a primary driver measure. Your challenge is that partners lack openness. Same thing–oh, is that the same one? No, we want to go to the next one, right?

Annie Buonaspina: Uh, so, we–yes, the same challenge.

Daniel Friend: Oh, sorry, we're doing the same challenge. I apologize. I jumped ahead there for a second.

So, what could be a good primary driver measure for this same challenge, so recording former participants? What could you use here?

So, has this strategy helped us make progress, right? How do we know that this is being successful? How do we know that this video is successfully building partners? What could we track?

Is there any key data that you guys can think of? Key metric?

So, one thing that Annie touched on earlier is, you know, going back to your supporters or champions. You could measure the number of supporters or champions that you have after they're watching that video.

You could track how quickly you receive emails of interest after receiving the video. So, if you emailed it out to your big potential partners list, you could track and see how quickly people are following up with you.

There we go. We have something from Ty. Log the number of calls that led to appointments. Yep, same principle there.

Sure. And let's go to the final one then. Do we have time for two more? We do.

So, let's think of an outcome measure here. So, potential partners say they're interested but don't have the time. Your strategy is to shorten the length of the sessions but increase the total number of hours to implement to better fit that partner's availability.

What would be a good outcome measure that we're looking at? I know these measures are hard to think about. So, we've got one here about fidelity. Are all the sessions covered with fidelity in the longer time frame? That would be a good one.

Annie, did you have any good ones for this one?

Annie Buonaspina: I think that in some ways this one is kind of a trick question because if you specified your aim really well at the beginning, then that's your outcome measure. So, we said our aim here was that we're trying to develop new partnerships, so that's what we would want to track. And so, Ty, I think you're jumping ahead in thinking about some potential balancing measures as well as you could track some unintended impacts to this strategy.

Daniel Friend: Yeah, let's go to that last one. So, same strategy here, right where now we're thinking of those balancing measures, those unintended consequences. So, you've shortened the length of the session. You're implementing it in a slightly different format. What might you look at? What might you look at to make sure you're not having any unintended consequences?

So, fidelity is a good one if people are having trouble sticking to the fidelity of the curriculum; that would be an unintended consequence.

Who else could you talk to, or what else could you look at?

So, Ty touched on fidelity, right, that has to do with the facilitators. You might think about getting more feedback from facilitators. Do they enjoy the format? Although it's implemented with fidelity, are they facilitating well with that–that shorter format? Are they–is it having any impact on the students' engagements in terms with how they're interacting with the content?

And Ty says, for new partners, if we offered more sessions, did they buy in and agree to implementation? Did this offer help get them to buy in?

Annie, any other balancing measures you'd consider?

Annie Buonaspina: Just in thinking about what everyone is collecting already. You could potentially look at the satisfaction surveys that you're collecting from young people. You wouldn't necessarily be asking them about this new session, but you could compare satisfaction results for the shorter sessions to when you were doing the longer sessions and see if there is some sort of systematic difference in how you feel about the program.

And I think we got another response, too, Dan.

Daniel Friend: Yes. Measuring student retention of topics from week to week. Right. Are those shorter sessions influencing that? Um hmm. Those are all good ideas.

All right. Well, that is our final discussion activity. Did anyone have questions or things they wanted to revisit from any of our previous activities?

Okay. Annie, do you want to close us out then?

Annie Buonaspina: Sure.

Resources: Site recruitment

[Image displayed of two flyers titled, "Evaluation Technical Assistance Brief for OAH & ACYF Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Grantees]

That's all we have for you today. I did just want to quickly go through the resources because we covered a lot of different tools that you can use, and if you have an interest in exploring any of them more because we really just briefly touched on all of them, I just wanted to link to where you could find more information about any of them.

This first one is just really about the overall process. I mentioned that a lot of these tools come from the Carnegie Foundation's approach. If you were interested in learning more about improvement science or their approach, this is a really great course. Because they have a lot of different modules, so you're not required to do the whole thing. You can kind of jump around, and it's free. And then we link to an empathy interview. An overview of process maps. A little bit more on design thinking, if you want some help facilitating conversations about root causes. Some templates for fishbones or the Five Whys documents that you can print out and use with your staff. A driver diagram template as well as some more information about how you would use driver diagrams. I mentioned the exit tickets, which I think is a really great tool. So, there's a primer on that. And then the PDSA worksheet, which is really helpful for thinking through how you're going to implement. And then lastly, because we are focused on site recruitment, we wanted to include a few resources that were specific to site recruitment. These are both focused on recruiting in schools, but, having read through them, I think some of the insights are actually useful, you know, regardless of whether you're trying to do site recruitment with schools or–or community organizations.

Tools: Online facilitation and process maps

[Text displayed on slide:
Facilitation:

- Mural
- Miro

Process maps

- PowerPoint, Creatly, Lucid Chart]

And then, I referenced this earlier on, but because everyone is working remotely right now, there are a lot of great tools for doing this work. If you still wanted to do some of this improvement work with your team while everyone is virtual, then Mural and Miro both have extended free trials right now and are (inaudible) programs. And there's also some programs specifically for a process map if you're feeling really ambitious and wanted to create a technical process map.

And if you have any more questions, please feel free to reach out to me or Dan, and we can get back to you, we can share any resources. And I see that there are some questions, is this on Max.gov?

Daniel Friend: So, I'm not sure if we'll be posting to Max.gov today. We are recording the session, and can post [the slides] to Max.gov. We need to make sure they're 508-compliant first. In the short term, if you'd like a copy, you can email Annie and she can get those to you.

[Slide displays the following contact information of presenters:
Annie Buonaspina: abuonaspina@mathematica-mpr.com
Daniel Friend: dfriend@mathematica-mpr.com]

Sure. So, Ty and Tiara, I can actually just email both of you the slides after our session today.

Annie Buonaspina: Okay. So if there are no further questions, that's it for the day. We really appreciate everyone coming on and hope everyone has a great afternoon.