



# Interprofessional Teams Working to Improve Quality Across the System of Care: Understanding Successes and Challenges



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# Learning Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the ways in which Quality Improvement (QI) team dynamics and interprofessional (IP) and intersectoral tensions affect QI and safety efforts.
- Explore challenges and enablers for IP and intersectoral QI teams.
- Consider implications for how QI tools can be an enabler of QI team process and how optimizing team process can enhance QI and safety outcomes.

# Agenda

- What is Quality Improvement (QI)
- Background of project
- Methods
- Challenges/Enablers for IP QI teams
- Results
- Q-TIPS – Tips for Teams
- Conclusion/Summary/References

# What is Quality Improvement?

Quality Improvement is a systematic approach to making changes that lead to better patient outcomes (health), stronger system performance (care) and enhanced professional development. It draws on the combined and continuous efforts of all stakeholders — health care professionals, patients and their families, researchers, planners and educators — to make better and sustained improvements.

**Source:**

Health Quality Ontario - [Quality Improvement page](#)

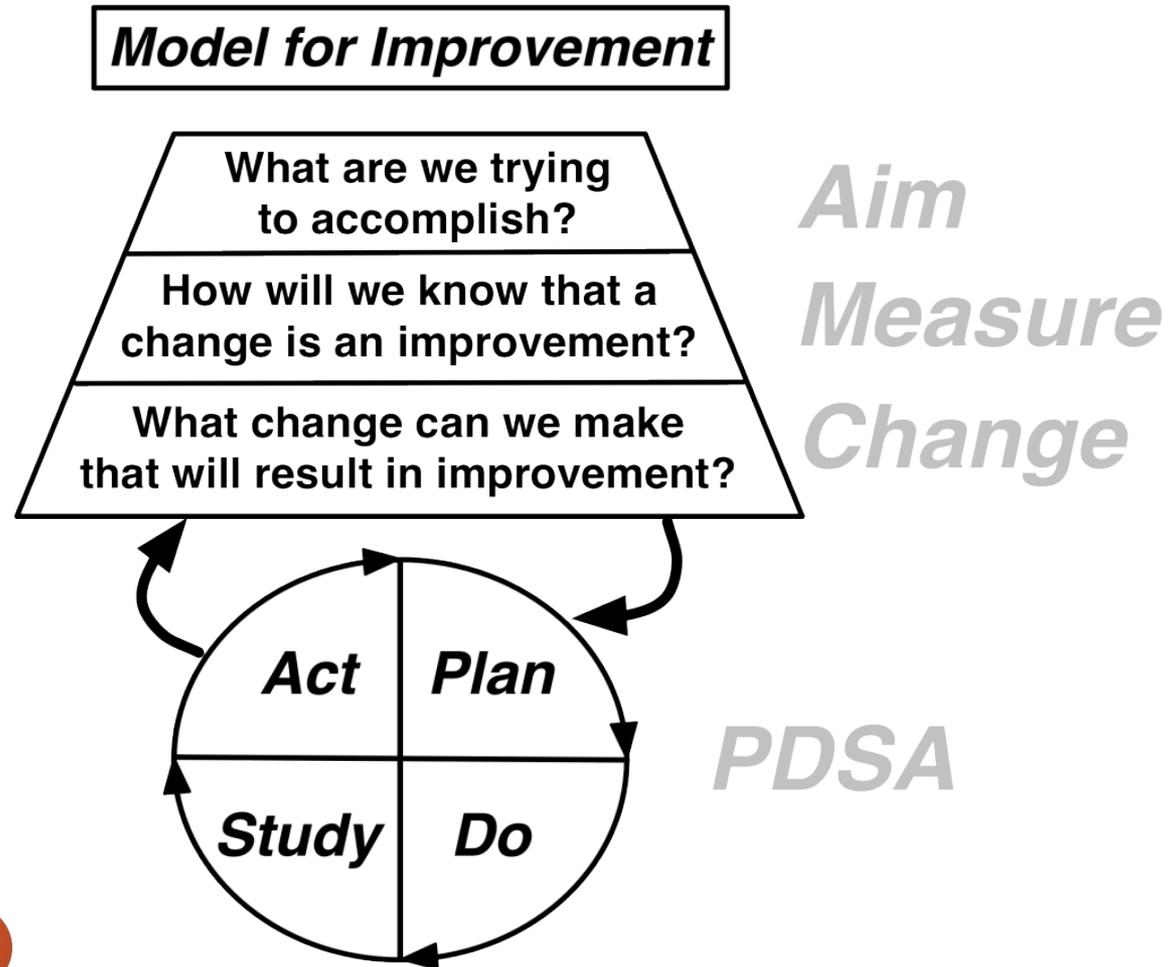
Paul Batalden and Frank Davidoff. What is "quality improvement" and how can it transform healthcare? Qual Saf Health Care. 2007 Feb; 16(1): 2–3. ([PubMed](#))

IDEAS Glossary: <http://online.ideasontario.ca/terms/quality-improvement/>



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# Model for Improvement



# What Are Current QI Challenges?

- Quick survey of 12 Ontario quality leaders on current quality improvement challenges
- Two questions:
  - What capabilities are important to success?
  - What is the current status of those capabilities in your organization?



# Survey Key Results

- 5 issues critical to success in quality improvement and where organizations were not performing well:
  - Gathering data to assess current performance and the impact of improvement efforts in close to real time
  - Ensuring effective executive sponsorship of projects
  - **Creating effective interprofessional improvement teams that work well together**
  - Senior leadership support for projects to ensure their sustainability
  - Coordinating improvement across organizational boundaries

# Background of Project

- The IDEAS (Improving and Driving Excellence Across Sectors) program is a multi-partner quality improvement (QI) educational and leadership program across Ontario, Canada.
- QI teams are typically composed of staff from a range of professions and staff groups plus are also often required to have intersectoral (IS) representation.
- Despite the importance of teams to the success of projects, few QI programs focus on the barriers and facilitators to establishing and implementing successful interprofessional (IP) QI team processes.

# Methods

- Qualitative study to explore the ways in which QI team dynamics and IP/IS tensions affect QI and safety efforts, and to understand the strategies and approaches that successful QI teams have used in dealing with barriers to team performance.
- Qualitative semi-structured interviews (n=36) were conducted with IDEAS graduates at the executive sponsor, project leader, advisor and team member levels for 13 project teams.
- Our analytical approach involved a directed content analysis, using competencies described in the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative competencies as sensitizing concepts.

# Common IP Teamwork Challenges and Solutions in QI

*Adapted from National Interprofessional Collaboration and Competencies*

| IP Teamwork              | Challenge  | Solution   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Communication            | Information not delivered across professions, programs, organizations and sectors.   | Communication tools, practices, meetings, documentation.   |
| Role Clarity             | Roles or scope of practice related to quality are not clearly defined or understood. | Use of QI Tools, such as process mapping, to discuss roles. Shadowing and interviewing team members. |
| Team Functioning         | Lack of focus on team processes including debriefing on team outcomes.               | Team rounding structures, defined team rooms with strong facilitators for meetings.                  |
| Collaborative Leadership | Lack of coordinated care planning or shared decision making.                         | Shared decision making models , collaborative solutions with team input.                             |
| Conflict                 | Power or hierarchy with damaged professional relationships.                          | Formal conflict engagement strategies and/or resolution models.                                      |

# Results - Reciprocal Dynamics



- **QI Tools Enables**  **Teamwork** “..go back to those common tools ...the process map that we had developed together to try to promote respect and understanding from each other’s roles....” Team Member
- **Teamwork Enables**  **QI Tools** “Teamwork dynamics... it’s for the future of our health system...want to cooperate and not always be looking inwardly.” Team Member
- **Defining the Team** “..it wasn’t just clinical, there was also the non-clinical piece so housekeeping ... that you sometimes don’t consider ... decision support....” Project Leader

# Results- Collaborative Complexity

- **What's in it for us? Common Strategy** *"They start to put the patients in the middle and see that it's one common patient trajectory.....this is what the patient is experiencing to try to move people past this is my work and your work. This is our work." Team Member*
- **Aim Statement** *"...bring us back to why we're here and what we're doing." Team Member*
- **Interorganizational and Intersectoral Collaboration** *"we tend to see things within our own paradigm, but very few problems actually fit very narrowly within one or other sector's paradigms. The opportunity to work across sectors ..... The development of relationships is going to endure well past this project." Sponsor*

# Results - Beyond Role Clarity

- **Seeking Role Understanding** *“..long term (care) staff going into the acute care sector to see, actually see, what they were doing with this part of our change...an understanding of roles, and that eliminated some of the conflict.” Team Member*
- **Checking Role Assumptions** *“..major knowledge deficits in that everybody knew their job really well, nobody knew the other person’s job... do site visits where they actually walked and shadowed the other professions...a significant changing, turning point.” Sponsor*
- **Negotiating Role Responsibilities** *“We defined who was doing what...at the beginning.... we had that role clarity it helped define... what everybody’s role was to do.” Sponsor*

# Results- Influence of Leadership



- **Strategic Influence** *“..skills for influencing ...change management behaviours... manage when they do not come from a position of power, e.g. a physician, or from a position of sheer numbers, e.g. nursing...would strategically position them to be much more successful.” Sponsor*
- **Managing Power & Hierarchy** *“..part of the tension, initially, had a lot to do with, ...the perceived hierarchy of who should be leading...versus that...collaborative team environment.” Team Member*
- **Interprofessional Accountability** *“You had a physician administrator... spectrum of healthcare providers...where it fell down...the inability of the team to identify who was going to hold that accountability and get it done.” Sponsor*

# Discussion



- Collaborative (IP, interorganizational, intersectoral) complexity challenges QI teams' performance.
- Greater emphasis on teamwork may improve QI teams' results; and QI tools can enable enhanced team processes.
- Collaborative leadership and support are key to successful QI team performance and engagement
- Interprofessional frameworks and activities (e.g. job shadowing) can be beneficial to QI projects.

# Challenges for IP/Intersectoral QI teams

- Defining, engaging and leading teams which include different professions and care sectors
- Power, hierarchy and negotiating IP accountability for successful team functioning and communication
- Engaging in collaborative learning, applying QI tools (e.g. process mapping, driver and fishbone diagrams) and collecting data within and across teams.

# Enablers for IP/Intersectoral QI teams

- Optimizing the learning from QI tools and their effect on team dynamics
- Focusing on role understanding, checking role assumptions and negotiating role responsibilities across professions and care sectors enabled successful QI implementation across professions and sectors
- Support from executive sponsors, change management skills, leadership at the point of care and patient engagement.

# Q-TIPS

*Q-TIPS = Quality Improvement Teamwork Interprofessional Performance Success*

- Effective QI teams appreciate the value of high functioning teams and collaboration. They build into their work timely ways and means to gather feedback on their effort and relationship.
- Effective QI Project Teams need to be reflective about their interactions and not just reactive to situations.



# Q-TIPS – Tips for Teams

- Ensure that staff who are closest to the patients/clients (i.e. point of care) are included in the QI Project.
- Review aim statement and data together regularly and consider expertise in data collection and evaluation. Revisit team roles, leadership, workload and accountability.
- Consider not just the tool but *how* the team is working through the QI tool use and contribution of each member.
- High functioning teams establish team norms, processes, roles and revisit them frequently (i.e. strong value of socialization and face-to-face site visits/shadowing).



# Conclusions of Project



- QI can be a key enabler of team process for IP and intersectoral collaborations, allowing team members to develop a common definition of the “problem” using common tools to find common goals. This QI focus can promote understanding of roles, team functioning and systems of care.
- Teamwork is fostered by engagement in QI, particularly for collaborative learning across professions and sectors.
- QI tools and projects can contribute to team formation through the mechanisms of problem definition and seeking feasible solutions using common QI methods. Likewise, QI teams that focus on team processes, support and leadership are more effective in their QI efforts.

# Summary: Teamwork in QI

Creating effective IP improvement teams that work well together has been identified as a critical factor to success in quality improvement.

Communication, role clarity and teamwork need to be considered at all phases of QI project development and implementation.

**Recommendation:** Team concepts and tools be integrated and applied throughout QI projects to maximize success.



# References – QI and Teamwork

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