



## Putting it all together

### STAGE 1: PLAN

[Download a copy of the PDSA template](#)

The purpose of this stage is to investigate the current situation, fully understand the nature of the problem/s to be solved, and to develop potential solutions to the problem that will be tested.

Step one:

- Recruiting a team - Consider the strengths each team member could bring—look for engaged, forward-thinking team members that have knowledge of the problem or opportunity for improvement. Teams work best with a max of 10 people. Staff not on the PDSA team should receive regular updates on the progress of the initiative.
- Consider the following checklist
  1. Do we have a representative from each discipline that touches this work?
  2. Have we included non-clinical staff who support this work?
  3. Should we have an external stakeholder on the team?
  4. Do we have someone with the QI skills required to facilitate this process?
- Identify roles and responsibilities, set timelines, and schedule your first meeting.

Step two:

- Identify and prioritise quality improvement opportunities - consider:
  1. Where does your service need to improve service user care?
  2. Where is your practice less efficient than it should be?
  3. What about the day frustrates your team/service users the most?
- During the investigation period, teams will usually find there is more than one problem or improvement opportunities – if this occurs, a prioritisation matrix may be helpful to assist with determining what to select.

Step three:

- Once you have decided on the problem or opportunity, it's time to come up with your aim statement

An aim statement is an explicit description of a team's desired outcomes, which is expressed in a measurable and time-specific way. The characteristics of a good aim statement should be clear, flexible and provide real value.



- When developing your aim statement, answer the three fundamental questions
  1. What are we seeking to accomplish?
  
  2. How will we know that a change is an improvement? What measures of success will we use?
  
  3. What changes can we make that will result in an improvement? ( the change concepts to be tested)

Example aim statements:

What?	
For whom?	
By when?	
How much?	
<b>Full statement</b>	

*We will improve waiting time to first activity for new clients in our CAHMS team. By December 2018, we aim to decrease the current wait time of XX to below XX.*

*We will improve access to training for CAHMS staff. By Feb 2019, 100% of our CAHMS staff will have completed the Real skill plus training.*

The aim statement will need to be revisited and revised as you move through the planning process.



#### Step Four:

- Describe the current process surrounding the problem or area for improvement – start by asking these questions:
  1. What are we doing now?
  2. What are the major steps in the process?
  3. How do we do it?
  4. Who is involved?
  5. What do they do?
  6. What is done well?
  7. What could we be doing better?

Teams may find it helpful to construct a process map and or stream map to visually describe the process. If your team runs into road blocks, you might discover where the problem is occurring or identify a need to bring in additional help with a missing step.

### Stage 2: DO

In this stage, your team will carry out the plan and collect the data.

1. Implement the improvement
2. Collect and document the data

This stage also includes documenting experiences, unexpected problems and wins as well as general observations. Be sure to collect the data as you go as this will help with the evaluating stage of your plan in stage 3. These tools may be helpful to use to capture data and occurrences. Check sheets, Run charts and Swim lane mapping.

### Stage 3: STUDY

This stage (also referred to as a check phase) involves analysing the effect of the intervention from the test cycle (stage 2) and reflecting on what has been learnt. This requires comparing results with the predictions and drawing conclusions from the collected data to determine if the improvement was achieved.

- Did the plan result in an improvement – if so by how much or how little?
- Was this worth the investment?
- Are there trends?
- What were the unintended effects?

Your team can use a Run Chart to visually review and evaluate.



## Stage 4: ACT

The purpose of this stage is to act upon what has been learnt; teams now decide if there are refinements or modifications needed. Your team now has three options: adopt, adapt or abandon.

### Adopt:

If the measurable objective of the aim statement has been met, it is now time to standardise the improvement and begin to use it regularly. It is however necessary to return to stage one planning again in the future to re-examine the process to determine if the process can be improved further.

### Adapt:

Based on your analysis, the team may decide to repeat the test, revise the intervention or gather different data if the plan is not achieving the desired results. In defining the failings in the plan, there can be many reasons issues arose; insufficient data collected, circumstances (e.g. policy, environmental or staffing changes). Once you have defined and documented these findings, set about making your next set of corrections then repeat **stages 2-4**.

### Abandon:

If the planned change did not result in an improvement, consider the lessons learnt and return to the plan stage to either overhaul the existing plan or develop an entirely new plan by going back to **stage 1**.

## Remember:

- No PDSA is too small
- Rapid results are achievable
- Keep it simple
- Follow all the stages
- Celebrate improvements and lessons learnt
- Communicate your wins and losses to all staff
- Testing change is an ongoing process. Ensure you make long term plans for additional improvements