Measurement for Improvement Key Points

Why measure?

Measurement plays an important role in answering the question “How do we know that a change is an improvement?” The purpose of measurement is to help you determine how effective your quality improvement efforts are so you can adjust them to your needs and capabilities.

- Key outcome and process measures are required to assess progress toward your team's aim
- Balancing measures are needed to assess whether the system as a whole is being improved
- Data from the system can be used to focus improvement and refine changes
- Specific measures can be used for learning about the changes made during PDSA test cycles

How is measurement for improvement different from research?

It's very different! Measurement for improvement is based on keeping track of a few simple measures to see if the rapid cycle changes in care are working. Its purpose is to help your team and other teams learn from changes. In a collaborative, teams learn from each other, so results and progress are usually transparent and shared among participants. Measurement is for learning, not judging, as improvement is an on-going process -- it's not where you are now, but where you're going. See the chart below for a quick comparison of measurement for improvement and research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spreading Innovation</th>
<th>Publishing Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong> Improvement</td>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong> New knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test observable</td>
<td>Test blinded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable bias</td>
<td>Eliminate bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just enough data</td>
<td>Just in case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation of changes</td>
<td>Fixed hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential tests</td>
<td>One large test</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Guidelines for measurement for improvement

- Keep it simple -- focus on a few measures
- The key measures should clarify the aim and make it tangible
- Seek usefulness, not perfection
- Use a balanced set of measures, including outcome and process measures. The question, "How will we know that a change is an improvement?" usually requires more than one measure. A balanced set of four to seven measures helps assure that you are assessing the entire system.

We use three types of measures:

**Outcome Measures**: Voice of the customer or organization; How is the system performing? What is the result?

**Process Measures**: Voice of the workings of the system; things you can control in your agency; Are the parts / steps in the system performing as planned?

**Balancing Measures**: Looking at a system from different directions/dimensions. What happened to the system as we improved the outcome and process measures?

- Use your databases for measurement
- Integrate measurement activities into your daily routine
- Gather some qualitative data
- Plot data on measures over time

Measurement Plan

For each additional measure consider the following:

- How is it operationally defined?
- What data will be collected?
- On which population?
- How will the data be collected?
- Who will collect the data?
- When?