Making Continuous Quality Improvement Happen: Beyond the Data Dashboard

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Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is a research and policy center, focused on a mission of improving the well-being of children and youth, families, and their communities.

Chapin Hall provides public and private decision-makers with rigorous data analysis and achievable solutions to support them in improving the lives of society’s most vulnerable children, youth and families.
Objectives

Participants will gain a shared understanding of:

• The strategies embraced by one county to bolster their improvement approach and the emerging transformation

• An educational approach to building the capacity of staff to use data to generate evidence

• The core strategies critical to an effective continuous quality improvement process
Today’s Presenters

Chapin Hall Team:
- **Jennifer Haight**, Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- **Khush Cooper**, Chapin Hall sub-contractor, President & CEO, Khush Cooper and Associates/Implematix
- **Yolanda Rogers**, Senior Policy Analyst, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (facilitator)

Special Guests:
- **Michelle Love**, Director, Children and Family Services, Alameda County Social Services
- **Daniel Webster**, Principal Investigator, Child Welfare Indicators Project, Center for Social Services Research, University of California at Berkeley
The Reasons We Do This Work!
The Alameda County Experience and Partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
The Alameda Experience

• Telling our story
• Ownership of data and program outcomes
• Myth busting, while creating a culture of curiosity
The Approach in Alameda

Desired Results of the Alameda-Chapin Hall Partnership:

• To create an enhanced dashboard to monitor performance on a specific set of priority outcomes & indicators
• To use information from the enhanced dashboard to fuel a new CQI process
The Approach in Alameda

**Capacity Building**

- Engaged staff and Division Directors to explore strengths and barriers of the existing dashboard
- Developed a set of recommendations and co-facilitated dashboard revisions and implementation
- Co-developed a proposal for a new quarterly CQI process using the enhanced dashboard
- Increased the level of engagement and ownership of the data and CQI process by Program Managers
- Leveraged the existing management meetings to have actionable, real time CQI presentations
Tools for Embedding CQI

Surveys & focus groups

Dashboards

Coaching & mentoring

Organizational communication

CQI meeting
What CQI Gets You

1. Understanding of how key processes are performing/trending in service of outcomes
2. Early warning system for deteriorating trends
3. Continually improved performance
4. Drive for excellence
5. A line of sight
What CQI Gets You

• Evolve measurement and reporting  
  ➔ Evolve what is the focus of conversation and aligned effort  
  ➔ Evolve culture
• Measurement and effective reporting of common indicators ➔ organizational alignment
• Aligned organization ➔ achieve goals efficiently
• Establish an “outside looking in view” of performance
• Culture of curiosity grounded in the facts not opinions
Generating Sound Evidence to Fuel CQI
Evidence-based decision making

I observe [an outcome that I want to improve].

I think it’s because [of this reason].

So I plan to [implement this intervention],

which I think will result in [an improved outcome].
What does it mean to use evidence?

**Generate**
Pose a question and analyze quantitative or qualitative data in order to answer it.

**Acquire**
Access evidence generated by someone else.

**Process**
Make meaning of analytic results. Interpret the findings.

**Apply**
Take what you learn and use that evidence to support a claim, decision, or course of action.
What does it mean to use evidence?

Evidence supports your PLAN

• Points to the outcomes that need improvement
• Supports/refutes) your hypothesis about what’s driving the outcome
• Informs the selection of matched interventions

I observe that...

I think it’s because...

So I plan to...
which I think will result in...

Later on in the cycle of CQI, evidence

• Gives you information about whether you’re implementing your intervention according to plan
• Tells you whether your intervention was effective
• Informs your decisions about what to do in light of those results

DO

STUDY

ACT

How Do I Know?

EVIDENCE
Evidence-Based Decision Making is a Behavior
Improving evidence use is a behavioral challenge

Evidence use is a behavior. If you want people to do it well, more often, and at the right time, boost their capability, motivation, and opportunity to do it.

- Build skills
- Demonstrate the value of evidence use
- Access to evidence and a supportive environment

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Capability: Role-specific training

- **Length/Intensity**
  - 1-2 days
  - 4-5 days
  - Long-term/Fellowship

- **Participants**
  - Analysts
  - Program managers
  - Executive leadership

- **Content**
  - Generating evidence
  - Mixed
  - Interpreting/Applying evidence
Advanced Analytics: A three-day session that combines lectures, exercises, and individual, and group work to:
- Expose participants to *priority concepts* that are fundamental to the principles of CQI and good measurement;
- Direct them to resources they can access that manifest best practices in evidence development;
- Encourage them to practice asking and answering questions that relate to the core outcomes in their systems

Data Slam: Follows Advanced Analytics; participants review the priority concepts and then are coached in the development of a brief presentation of a county outcome about which they have made an observation and developed a hypothesis.
Fundamentals in Evidence-based Decision Making is a newer opportunity in CA. Modeled after EDGE, this program expands on Advanced Analytics and the Data Slam to:

- Support county leaders and analysts in articulating an observation and a hypothesis about an outcome common to all of them, but for which they have specific challenges;
- Coach them in the development of research plan to test their specific hypothesis, which involves the generation of both quantitative and qualitative evidence;
- Advise them in the development of logic model that offers a defensible remedy to the problem their hypothesis addresses;
- Coach them in the development of a thoughtful implementation plan.
Strategies for Building Organizational CQI Capacity
1. Identify and focus on measurable priority outcomes

**Priority Outcomes**
- Increase family stability
- Safely reduce entries into foster care and decrease the entry rate
- Increase timely permanency
- Increase placement stability

- Consent Decree
- Title IV-E Waiver
- Family First Prevention Services Act
- Child & Family Services Review PIP

Strategic Plan
1. Identify and focus on measurable priority outcomes

Develop a performance monitoring plan

- **Reporting Process**: “How will progress be communicated to key stakeholders?”
- **Target Metrics**: “How much change are you aiming for?” Have baselines & interim benchmarks/targets been established?
- **Data Sources**: “What data will you use to monitor progress toward the desired changes?”
- **Strategies & Initiatives**: “What activities will you engage in to impact/influence/support the desired changes?”
- **Performance Measures**: “How will you know change is occurring?”
- **Priority Outcomes**: “What overall changes do you want to make?”
- **Strategic Priorities**: “What are the requirements and priorities informing the agency’s strategic direction?”
2. Establish an organization-wide and transparent governance structure that embodies CQI processes

- Initiate requests for analysis of performance issues. Authorize changes to programs, policy, practice, and resource allocation.
- Closely track & monitor progress toward priority outcomes & performance indicators, delegate issues for deeper analysis & planning.
- Conduct deeper analysis of data to identify root causes; engage the field and systems leaders in developing improvement strategies.
- Implement identified improvement strategies, monitor strategy implementation and ongoing performance on key practices.

Key Data Sources:
- Provide evidence on outcomes & improvement strategies
- Make recommendations for change
- Report strengths & barriers related to achieving outcomes and identified targets
- Report progress on developing &/or implementing improvement strategies
- Share progress on strategy implementation and progress on improving performance
- Recommend practice, policy &/or capacity investments needed to support performance improvement

Data Use & Evidence Informed Communication

CQI Staff and Data Analysts

Executive Leadership Team

Senior Management Team

Priority Specific Workgroups

Organizational Leaders within Regions & Divisions & the Provider Community

Front Line Staff & Stakeholders, including youth, parents, caregivers, etc.
3. Build CQI capacity and skills to ensure CQI processes are operating at all organizational levels

**Build capacity for staff to have a strong and actionable understanding of the core principles of CQI:**

- Develop or enhance training curricula, learning modules and exercises for the development of applied knowledge of CQI.

- Develop tools that facilitate communication within the governance structure.

- Develop tools to facilitate each step in the improvement cycle.

- Model and promote the value of using data and evidence to understand issues and monitor progress.

- Coach and mentor all levels of staff to participate in the CQI process.
4. Engage in the Cycle of Improvement

**Data:**
- Administrative
- Case review
- Surveys, focus groups

**PLAN**
- Use the data to make observations about performance
- Explore root causes with key stakeholders
- Design/implement solutions
- Identify benchmarks & targets to be achieved

**DO**
- Implement solution
- Monitor implementation

**ACT**
- Determine the extent to which the problems still exist
- Make decisions to continue, modify, or discontinue solutions

**STUDY**
- Review ongoing data
- Talk to stakeholders and decision-makers about progress and impact

QUESTIONS?

OR

**What will you do now?**
Think about one CQI activity you will take back to your agency for additional discussion and/or action.
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Resources


• National Implementation Research Network (NIRN): http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation (Improvement cycles and Practice-Policy Communication Loops)