SRAENE
Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
National Evaluation

November 2022

Supplemental material

Continuous Quality Improvement Series

Tips and considerations for data collection to support improvement work

This supplement is part of a series of guidance resources and tools on continuous quality improvement (CQI) developed as part of the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education National Evaluation (SRAENE). The series includes a template to guide CQI work, a set of modules providing detailed information on the steps included in CQI, a tool programs can use to assess their CQI practices and processes, and a brief describing the development process used for the series and lessons learned from a set of Sexual Risk Avoidance Education grant recipients that used the tools during a pilot. For all resources in this series, as well as other resources developed as part of SRAENE, please visit the SRAENE website.

For more products, visit the CQI page on the SRAENE website.

Data collection for improvement differs from data collection for research, as the goal is to learn and inform next steps rather than to conduct a comprehensive assessment (Institute for Healthcare Improvement 2004). The idea is to collect just enough data to respond to your key learning questions while limiting burden, so instruments for CQI learning cycles are often brief. Considerations for developing and administering instruments to support learning cycles follow.

Design considerations

- **Keep it short.** Surveys, for example, might be only one to five questions.
- **Think first about your purpose**. This will help your team to develop a concise instrument (e.g., survey or interview protocol). Are you trying to understand how a process was implemented? Get feedback on how a new process went? Keep your questions focused on your purpose and resist the temptation to ask additional questions out of curiosity alone.
- **Match the question form to the method.** For interviews and focus groups, develop open-ended questions; don't ask yes or no questions, as you want to elicit nuanced responses. Surveys can contain open- or closed-ended questions, though open-ended questions on a survey can be more time consuming for youth to complete and for your team to analyze.
- **Use probes.** In focus groups and interviews, use probes to move beyond superficial responses. Probes can be as simple as asking "Can you elaborate on that?" or "What did you mean when you said ___?"

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Administration considerations

- **Interviews are typically conducted with a subset of participants.** You can test a new strategy with a group of 20 participants but interview only 3 or 4 of them. When selecting participants, **create selection criteria in advance.** For example, for an attendance outreach strategy, we might want to interview a mix of high and low attenders to understand the strategy. Stating key criteria in advance protects against selection based solely on who is most available for the interview.
- **Focus groups often work better when homogenous.** For example, if you're gathering thoughts from staff on program challenges, don't mix facilitators and one group with supervisors.
- **Be clear with respondents about your goal.** For instance, when introducing a focus group or survey, be clear that your goal is to improve the program and their honest feedback is valuable.
- **For observations focused on improvement:**
  - **Have a good understanding of the rationale for the strategy.** For example, why do we think the strategy will help achieve our improvement goal? Observe implementation and note: Was the strategy implemented as intended? Does what you observed support the rationale for the strategy? What surprised you? What was a success or not?
  - **Be a silent listener**. Make objective notes about what you observe (What did you see? What did you hear?). Note insights that emerge from the observation.

For more tips on observations, see this practice brief on FYSB's The Exchange website.

Title: Continuous Quality Improvement Training Modules

November 2022

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Contract Number: HHSP233201500035I/HHSP23337031T

Suggested citation: Buonaspina, Annie, and Brittany Tabora. "Continuous Quality Improvement Training Modules." Washington DC, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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