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# Using Data to Start Strong

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# Objectives

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- **Encourage use of continuous quality improvement (CQI) principles as a key to program success and excellence**
- **Provide an overview of CQI principles**
- **Share practical examples of how to use your logic model to guide CQI activities**
- **Explore the concept of program benchmarks by setting the stage for meeting program enrollment goals**

# Purpose of discussion: Achieving excellence

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- Create a clear vision of what excellence looks like
- Use logic models to anchor teams to a program structure designed to produce outcomes
- Use a range of data sources and inputs to drive decision-making

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# Continuous Quality Improvement

# Definition

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- **Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is defined as:**
  - Identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems
  - Testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions
  
- **It's ongoing and uses data to make program improvement**

# Benefits

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- **Helps you to better understand your program**
- **Supports evidence building**
- **Pinpoints when quick corrections or adjustments are needed**

# Fostering a learning culture

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- **Create an organizational culture that is open to ongoing learning and improvement**
- **Embed improvement processes into daily operations**
- **Designate a person or team to lead program improvement**

# CQI general principles

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- **Start with program goals**
- **Identify the problem using data**
- **Hypothesize possible solutions**
- **Choose a solution to implement and test**
- **Identify data indicators**
- **Collect and analyze the data, assess whether progress has been made, and make decisions**



# Data sources

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- Performance data
- Surveys or interviews
- Observational data
- Focus groups
- Informal staff input
- Evaluation data

# Types of questions that can be answered

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- **Implementation**
  - Inputs
  - Activities
  - Outputs
- **Outcomes**
- **Goals**

# Questions about inputs and activities

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- **Inputs:**
  - Is there buy-in from the school community (principals, teachers) to support continuous implementation of the program?
  - Are staff trained in the program?... to deliver the curriculum?
- **Activities:**
  - **Fidelity:** Is the program delivered as intended (all of the curriculum content, mode, order of sessions, length of time, trained facilitator, setting)?
  - **Dosage:** How many sessions are participants receiving? Are they receiving the core components of the program?
  - **Quality:** What is the quality of implementation for each facilitator (learned through assessments such as observations, feedback from participants)?

# Questions about outputs

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- **Program delivery:**
  - Are schools delivering the curriculum?
  - Are schools meeting their targets for delivery?
- **Referrals and enrollment:**
  - Are referral sources providing enough youth?
  - Are these referred youth in the target population?
  - Are these referred youth enrolling?
- **Satisfaction:**
  - Which youth (e.g., age, gender) are responding positively to the program?
  - Do youth feel the program is providing a safe environment for sexual risk avoidance discussions?

# Questions about outcomes and goals

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- **Outcomes:**
  - **Baseline:** What strengths and needs do youth have at the start of the program?
  - **Follow-up:** How has the program affected key expected outcomes?
- **Goals:**
  - Have you achieved your goals of implementing with fidelity?
  - Are you serving the number of youth expected annually?
  - Are school attendance and graduation rates among high school age youth improving?
  - Are indicators of adolescent risk taking behaviors improving?

# Reflection

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**What questions about implementation, outcomes, goals will you ask?**

# CQI general principles

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# Principles: Start with program goals and identify the problem

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- **Goal:** Each year, serve at least 250 youth aged 14 to 16 living in the target area
- **Data:** Track recruitment, enrollment, and retention
- **Identified problem:** Enrolled youth are not attending
- **Additional data:** Survey youth and referral sources, interview program staff

Example Retention Tracking Tool

Name	Enrollment (Date)	Session 1 (Date)	Session 2 (Date)	Session 3 (Date)	Session 4 (Date)	Session 5 (Date)	Session 6 (Date)
Youth A	9/1/14	9/15/14	Did not attend	9/25/14	9/30/14	Did not attend	10/10/14
Youth B	9/1/14	9/25/14	9/30/14	Did not attend	10/10/14	10/15/14	
Youth C	9/1/14	10/10/14	10/15/14				
Youth D	9/1/14	10/25/14					



# **Principles: Hypothesize solutions and choose solution(s) to test**

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- **Identified problem: Transportation is needed**
- **Hypothesize solutions: Work with youth, partners, and referral sources to identify and test possible solutions**
- **Potential solutions:**
  - **Change location**
  - **Provide transportation assistance**
  - **Provide incentives**
  - **Change mode of delivery**

# **Principles: Identify indicators, collect and analyze data, assess progress, make decisions**

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- **Collect data to see if you are moving in the right direction**
- **Make adjustments as needed**

# Who and what might be needed to conduct these activities?

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- **Staff:**
  - Tasked to collect, review, analyze, and report these data (can be internal or external)
  - Responsible for using these data to make decisions about how to improve program implementation
- **Data management:**
  - “System” to capture and report the information
  - Important for the different sources of data to link to each other

# Key points review

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- CQI is ongoing
- CQI uses a range of data and inputs to drive decision-making and make program improvements
- CQI can be used to answer several types of questions

# Reflection

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**What experience have you had with some or all aspects of CQI?**



# BENCHMARKS

# Benchmarks – What Is That and Why Use Them?

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First, let's agree on the definitions for a few terms:

- **Benchmark:** A point of reference from which measurements can be made
- **Benchmarking:** The process of setting interim checkpoints to goal achievement

Second, why use them?

A benchmark answers the question,

*“Are we where we should be at this point in time?”*

**Benchmarks can help improve program performance by highlighting places where changes should be made.**

# Benchmarking – A Tool For Strategic Leaders

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- **Allows leaders to create a culture of success by recognizing interim gains**
- **Helps teams deal with small problems before they become big ones**
- **Encourages planning processes to account for known environmental factors that will affect outputs**
- **Keeps teams anchored in outputs, while challenging magical thinking**

**Use smaller interim goals to make it easier to reach larger goals.**



# What Makes a Good Program Benchmark?

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- **It's quantifiable**
- **Measureable against some standard or goal**
- **Includes defined time period(s)**
- **It's achievable, realistic**
- **Relatively easy to collect and assess**
- **Allows for course corrections along the way**
- **Important and transparent, shared with and agreed to by the team**
- **Team can affect the measure**

# Tips for Setting Benchmarks

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- Anchor benchmarks to established goals, outputs and/or outcomes
- Make some reasoned assumptions
- Test assumptions against other programmatic goals
- Start with an end goal and work backwards to set interim benchmarks
- Avoid the 100% trap (100% of clients that do X will also do Y)
- Be prepared to reset benchmarks to not have to reset goals
- Let data inform your benchmark adjustment strategies to keep goal achievement as reasonable as possible

# Program Benchmark Examples

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- **Program outputs:** Workshops/classes offered, youth participation, workshops completed
- **Staff performance:** Youth recruited, in-office/home visits, assessments completed, referrals, incentive payments
- **Partner outputs:** Youth referred to program by partner, youth referred to partner for other services
- **Outputs to assess:** Youth completing 70% of workshops, youth participating within 30 days of enrollment, youth completing within 60 days of participation, youth who participated in 2 program components

# Benchmark Examples – Other

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## States and Other Contract Management Perspectives

- Build benchmarking into contracts to monitor performance
- Create benchmarks for contract management practices

## School-Based Services

- Schools engaged

## Evaluation

- Prospect list, consent forms/study enrollment

# Making Benchmarks Useful

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- **Measure something you care about**
- **Have access to data that allows you to assess the benchmark**
- **Review benchmarks regularly**
- **Share with the people involved in their success and make sure they understand them**
- **Use the information to make real-time program improvements when needed**
- **Keep them dynamic and responsive to actual performance**

# Benchmarks – A Management Tool

Enrollment Goal 220; Benchmark Goal 240

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>Benchmark</b>	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	30	30	10	10	240
<b>Youth Enrolled</b>	18	15	13	21.55	21.55	21.55	21.55	21.55	31.55	31.55	11.55	11.55	239.95
<b>Cumulative Enrolled</b>	18	33	46										
<b>+/-</b>	-2	-7	-14										
<b>% Goal</b>	7.5%	13.8%	19.0%										

# Benchmarks In Action – A Group Activity

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**Set benchmarks to assess your progress in reaching enrollment goal(s)**

- **Include numerical goals**
- **Include assumptions**
- **Include progress to date if known**

# Contact Information

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