The Mental Health Access Improvement Support Team (MHAIST) supports NHS Scotland boards to improve the quality and accessibility of Psychological Therapy (PT) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS).

MHAIST have developed these resources that can be used to identify enablers and barriers in your services, which in turn can help identify improvement opportunities.

We have developed the following handy guides:

1. Handy guide to calculating new to follow-up ratios
2. Handy guide to Measurement for Improvement
3. Handy guide to mental health waste spotters
4. Handy guide to process mapping
5. Handy guide to the Model for Improvement
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What is the Model for Improvement?

The Model for Improvement is a framework for supporting and accelerating improvement. The model is based on three fundamental questions:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we know that a change is an improvement?
- What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

Any effort to improve something should provide the answers to these three questions. The answers could be answered in any order. These three questions combined with the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle form the model.

Langley et al 2009. Pg 42
How to use it

Firstly begin with using the three questions:

1. **What are we trying to accomplish?**
   Set an aim for your piece of work which should be time specific and measurable for example:
   - By December 2017 reduce the percentage of cannot attends (CNAs) per month to 10% among ASD service users.
   - By June 2018 increase the percentage of service users completing a full course of treatment for depression by 20%

   There should be no ambiguity about what you are trying to accomplish.

2. **How will we know that a change is an improvement?**
   Establish the measures that will determine whether a specific change leads to an improvement. (See ‘Handy guide to Measurement for Improvement’ for more information.)
   - Ensure you have a suite of measures which track process as well as outcome. For example, if you are doing a piece of work around decreasing CNAs you may want to measure the reliability of the process you have established to support this – the percentage of patients receiving reminder emails before their appointment.

3. **What changes can we make that will result in improvement?**
   This is an opportunity for the team to develop ideas for testing. If there is a clear evidence base then you need to use this. For example if the evidence indicates that for a specific condition service users should receive six or more one hour therapy sessions then this should be what the team is aiming for. However, in cases where this does not exist then you can use creative thinking techniques to generate ideas for testing. For example, if your hunch is that sending a reminder text 48 hours before an appointment reduces the potential for service users to DNA, this might be a good thing to try out.

   Once you have a clear idea of what you would like to test out as a team use **PDSA cycles**, which allow you to test the change in the workplace setting.
Using PDSA cycles

Plan

Plan what needs done, list the tasks needed to set up the test of change, predict what will happen when the test is carried out, determine who will run the test.

- If it takes a week to set up a test you are trying to do too much. In many instances you should be able to run multiple tests in one day if you are seeing lots of service users. Don’t laminate documents or run off multiple copies: through your testing there will be many changes before you arrive at the most effective version.

Do

Run the test, document what happened when you ran the test, describe problems and observations.

- If the test does not run as smoothly as expected don’t despair - this is good learning too.

Study

Observe the results, describe the measured results, compare to the predictions.

- When you start out in a new project the results from these small tests may not be quantifiably measureable but you will acquire lots of qualitative data to help you progress and move to the next test. It is particularly important to reflect on the things you did not predict would happen or not happen; gathering this data will help you build up understanding of your local system as well as the people working with you.

Act

The study phase of the cycle allows you to determine what the next round of testing should involve so that your next act is building on your learning.

- For example, do you need to adapt a form or template to collect additional or different information? Is the language of your reminder text misleading?

Using PDSA cycles allows you to learn from each small test and refine.
It is important to recognise that testing with one small group of staff or service users may progress very well. However, to get the best out of the PDSA cycle, it is essential that you keep trying under different circumstances for example will the same process work for your service at the weekend? Or can the same process be used when delivering group therapies rather than individual therapies?

The improvement will require testing in a new setting to allow staff to work out how they can fit the change into their practice.
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