

# Quality Improvement Basics: Team Concepts Transcript

## Slide 1:

Welcome to the Quality Improvement Basics course "Teams Concepts" module.

## Slide 2:

Our topics in this module will be to:

Learn Team Basics & Team Effectiveness

Create Your QI Project Charter

Build your QI Team

Also, before we start, please open the related documents for this module (tools, templates and any samples) which are available on the web page where you found this a link to this module. It will help you to have those ready for quick reference as screenshots of the documents may not legible on your screen.

## Slide 3:

Team Basics and Team Effectiveness

## Slide 4:

All QI projects involve a team process. Whether an organization is seeking to improve patient wait times, diabetes care, or other goals where quality needs improvement, a team effort is foundational for an organization to achieve significant and lasting improvements.

At its core, QI is a team process. A well-functioning team will harness the knowledge, skills, experience, and perspectives of different individuals within the team to make lasting improvements. Underpinning these teams are leadership support, and policies and procedures to organize and facilitate the work of the team

Other key components of a well-functioning QI team are effective infrastructure elements such as meeting space, tools and resources to foster effective teamwork and communication.

A team approach is needed when:

- The process or system is complex. (which is quite often the case in healthcare, even when we think a process is fairly simple, when we map it out, we often are surprised by the number of people and steps that are actually involved)
- No one person in an organization knows all the dimensions of an issue (which is almost always the case)
- The process involves more than one discipline or work area (most process cross department boundaries or are multi-disciplinary in nature)
- Solutions require creativity



- Staff commitment and buy-in are needed

One or a combination of these characteristics indicate that a team approach is needed.

**Slide 5:**

There are a number of ingredients that contribute to achieving a high level of team performance. Teams that perform well

- Have a clear and shared vision (or a shared ‘mental model’ ... which are mental pictures of the relevant facts and relationships defining our QI project and work...in other words ‘are we all in synch and understand what we are doing?’)
- Teams must also have clear roles and responsibilities
- Have strong team leadership
- Engage in the discipline of regular feedback
- Develop a strong sense of collective trust and confidence
- Create mechanisms to cooperate and coordinate
- Manage and optimize performance outcomes

This module will provide strategies for cultivating these characteristics in your Quality Improvement teams

**Slide 6:**

We all know that we encounter barriers and challenges in our daily work. We just reviewed some traits of high performing teams, so let’s enumerate some common challenges

- Inconsistency in team membership. (inconsistent participation or high team turnover)
- Lack of time
- Lack of information sharing
- Hierarchy
- Defensiveness
- Conventional thinking (when we need innovative thinking instead)
- Varying communication styles
- Conflict
- Lack of coordination and follow-up
- Distractions
- Fatigue
- Workload
- Misinterpretation of cues
- Lack of role clarity

Many of these intersect with the topic of communication and we’ll talk about methods of addressing these barriers in this module:

**Slide 7:**

We’ll talk about team roles in a few minutes, but let’s start with a few traits that should be demonstrated by your team leader.

The person acting as the team leader should be able to:

- Organize the team
- Articulate goals clearly
- Empower members to speak up and share their ideas, knowledge and perspectives
- Enable decisions through collective input of members
- Actively promote and facilitate good teamwork
- Skillfully work with the team to employ conflict resolution

**Slide 8:**

The team that you'll need to assemble for any given project is based on the improvement you are seeking and the people with the skills and talents to fulfill the roles you'll need. Additionally, you'll need to ensure that the appropriate stakeholders are represented in the roles on your QI team. Having people that carry out the work (not just managerial oversight) will be integral when it comes to analyzing your processes and designing and implementing changes to achieve your quality improvement goals.

As we are all constantly learning and growing in our own roles and work, you may be starting with many team members who are new to QI work and part of the project will be to help build quality improvement skills as your project unfolds. Each member with the team leader's help and direction should aim to:

- Provide useful ideas, information and feedback
- Engage in team decision-making
- Understand their QI team roles and responsibilities
- Assist and enable their fellow team members
- Contribute to conflict resolution
- Reduce stress on the team as a whole by putting the needs of the team first
- Your QI Project Charter

**Slide 10:**

When creating a Quality Improvement project charter, you want to be certain that the improvement you are seeking is indeed a team project and not just a singular activity or "one-off" task. Certainly not everything is a project and some things can be fixed quickly without the formalities of assembling a team and creating a project charter.

This can be a bit of a grey area, but looking at the issue at hand through using these criteria can help you decide whether you'll need to assemble a team:

- Changes will be made that affect multiple roles that work together, not just an individual
- A multidisciplinary team is needed (the change or improvement needed cuts across multiple roles, unit, departments, etc.)
- A process is involved (again, often spanning multiple departments...and we'll define what a process is later in this course)
- The problem is recurring—past efforts to improve haven't worked (maybe you have already tried the 'just fix it' approach?)
- Multiple cycles of improvement may be needed
- Information needs to be gathered systematically to clarify issues
- The issue is not a "quick fix" ...rather a deeper system or process problem

It is important to keep in mind that there is no short term or quick fix approach to make Quality Improvement happen. It is a journey and involves doing things differently to achieve real change. It requires continuous evaluation, assessment of where there are gaps, implementing tests of change and evaluating the impact. It takes involving people affected by the process and outcomes of the improvement work (stakeholders). It is usually a combination of several of the bullet points here that indicates a need to recognize this work as a needed Quality Improvement project, create a QI project charter document and assemble a team.

**Slide 11:**

Once you have confirmed that the change you are seeking qualifies as a Quality Improvement project, creating a QI project charter document will help organize your efforts and serve as a placeholder and reference document, along with other QI project artifacts, such as the PDSA form which we'll review in an upcoming module.

When it comes to quality improvement projects, good planning during the initiation phase of the project can dictate whether or not the project will be a success. One of the best ways to get a project off on the right foot is to create an effective project charter.

Depending on the organizational processes and potentially the specifics of a given project, the individual or group responsible for developing the charter may differ. In some cases, charters are developed by leadership teams and then handed off to the QI project team leader. At other times, the QI project leader or the QI project team may develop the charter and then seek approval to move forward from leadership. //

The QI project charter will help you define what your team is trying to improve, the issues at hand and includes a clear statement of the goal or AIM that you are seeking to achieve. Here's a list of the components of a QI project charter and we'll look at an example of the document on the next slide:

Fields in the charter include the:

- Problem statement
- Background
- Goals
- Scope
- Time line
- Team roles & responsibilities
- Resources required
- Barriers
- Approvals
- Stakeholders.

The problem statement is a key element in the charter and should include the following:

- Specific dates in when the problem occurred or if it is ongoing
- Specifics of the problem
- Quantify the problem
- Difference between current and desired performance
- Impact of the problem on patients or the organization

**Slide 12:**

Here is a sample of a QI project charter that contains the elements enumerated in the prior slide. Like all documents presented in this course, there is a template available to you on the web site where you launched this module. It includes directions on how to complete the document, including what should be entered in each field. Overall, the project charter should be able to describe the work your team is doing to someone who is unfamiliar with your QI work. In essence, it's a project overview and summary document.

It is important to remember that the charter is not a work plan; it does not describe specific tasks or activities to be done or how to complete the work. It is a higher-level guidance and direction document. In fact, a charter can be a good opportunity to indicate how the work being requested links back to the organizations strategic plan, mission and vision....this sort of statement can be entered in the 'goal' field. A good project charter is a written document that is clear and concise. Charters should not contain pages and pages of information but instead should focus on the key elements of the project. Additionally, the charter should be kept in a place where it is available to everyone involved because it can help the team stay focused and avoid expanding the work beyond what the project charter describes...also known as project scope creep.

**Slide 13:**

The Quality Improvement work plan, in contrast to the project charter, does describe specific tasks and activities to be done.

The work plan will keep your team organized and accountable for the tasks and follow up items that you'll be tracking during your project work. For each task, you'll want to know the current status, who is responsible for specific tasks and other details such as actual completion dates and any notes or details about each task. Work plans come in many formats, varying level of detail and the one included here is very straight forward, easy to use tool. Typically, the team leader owns this document and it should be shared and reviewed with the team at each meeting to create accountability and insure that progress is being made and any barriers to specific tasks should be discussed.

**Slide 14:**

Building your QI Team

**Slide 15:**

Let's go back to the concept of building a QI team and take a closer look at the roles that typically are needed on this type of team. Based on the what you are trying to improve, you may not need to fill certain roles and multiple roles may be covered by a single team member.

The roles include:

- Project sponsor
- Team leader
- Meeting facilitator
- Team contributor
- Data specialist
- Systems specialist
- Scribe / Note taker

Compared to traditional hierarchical work with managers and those who report to them, the QI team, optimally will have a "flatter" structure where members "leave their stripes" (or hierarchical ranking) at the door and put the team members on equal footing. The idea is to fill needed responsibilities and having members contribute to solve the QI issue at hand. An effective approach is to think of some of the listed roles more as responsibilities which can be shared or rotated, especially the role of the facilitator or the scribe/ note taker.

In the follow slides, we'll consider the responsibilities of each role.

**Slide 16:**

The project sponsor is frequently an executive or leadership person who empowers the QI team to undertake its work

They will :

- Determine scope and authority of the QI team
- Assist in defining purpose
- Secure necessary resources for the team (such as allocating time in team member's work schedule)
- Review and provide feedback regarding project outcomes
- Help disseminate information about the project's purpose and outcomes throughout the organization

The sponsor may participate in team meetings at the outset and conclusion of the project and may attend meetings on an "as needed" basis depending on scope and duration. The team lead typically communicates with and confers with the sponsor throughout the project.

**Slide 17:**

The team leader provides guidance and direction for the QI team and ...

- Secures organizational support and necessary resources with the project sponsor
- Identifies and recruits team members
- Drives and manages the project; follows the project charter, develops a work plan and timeline
- Ensures tests of change are implemented and oversees data collection
- Schedules meetings and develops agendas
- Responsible for the communication plan (and ensure necessary communication outside the immediate team) We'll take a look at a sample communication plan in this course.

**Slide 18:**

The meeting facilitator often is a rotating role and is specific to a single meeting. This role:

- Works with team leader to prepare agenda and assure availability of meeting resources
- Guides discussion through three phases of opening, narrowing and closing (that is: opening the meeting and broader conversation...helping to narrow the conversation and discussion to the topic at hand...and then closing the conversation out with necessary actions and decisions needed)
- Keeps group conscious of purpose, progress and time
- Periodically synthesizes and summarizes themes to test understanding
- Assists to identify and resolve conflict

- Assists in developing action steps (or the closing phase of the meeting)

Having a meeting facilitator can free up other team members from the 'mechanics' of the meeting while having someone keep guide rails around the conversation and provide general direction for the meeting so that ultimately, action and steps forward are identified.

The core of the QI work is undertaken by the team members and participants or 'team contributors' who have intimate knowledge of the processes in your organization. The contributors are often subject matter experts and are expected to:

- Participate fully to support and achieve the goals of the project charter
- Help gather and interpret needed information
- Act as liaisons with others in the organization as needed
- Provide subject matter expertise about processes they carry out
- Advance their learning and skills about QI as they engage in the project

This is a generalized list of tasks for this role and it could also include other activities that rely on any member's particular expertise or job function. There isn't a specific number of team contributors you'll have on your team, but one or two that represent and understand the process(es) under discussion is typical. You will have more contributors if your scope is larger and covers broader multidisciplinary and/or cross-departmental processes.

The data specialist role is a key role on your QI team. The data specialist:

- Collects and aggregates data
- Helps with reporting and data visualization needs (using charts, graphs and tables)
- Is conversant and knowledgeable about the content and topics presented in the "Using Data" module
- Team members can grow into this role during the QI project...particularly as you may not have a person that would be able to fulfill this role.

If you discover that someone on your team has special interest in learning these tasks, this is a good opportunity not only for the team, but for that persons individual learning and career growth.

#### **Slide 21:**

The systems specialist role is filled by one of your team members who:

- Could be an IT or IS resource
- Might also be staff or functional role who has had extra training in your electronic health record, often a "super-user"
- This person Supports the QI team in leveraging electronic systems to achieve the project goal
- Provide perspective based on deeper understanding of the electronic health record and/or other electronic systems

Overall, they are a person or several people on your team who have a deeper understanding of the EHR and how it supports the workflow. They might find themselves working closely with the data specialist or this may be a combined role where the systems specialist and data specialist are covered by single team member.

**Slide 22:**

Lastly, it's helpful to have someone fill the role of scribe or note taker at your meetings. As this role requires focusing on capturing conversation summaries, decisions made, action items, etc...it can be a bit challenging for that person to fully contribute their thinking and ideas at the same time. Quite frequently, this role rotates among team members unless you have someone that enjoys the task or if you have an administrative support staff person attend and take on this work for your team.

The roles that have been presented here may be combined, assigned to a particular person, or divided differently, depending on how you structure your QI team work. The roles and responsibilities are listed on checklist in the next slide to make sure your team is covering the needed bases when creating the team and ensuring the tasks typically associated with these roles are assigned to team members with the corresponding skill sets.

**Slide 23:**

The Team Roles and Responsibilities tool is a that basic checklist you can use to confirm that key roles and responsibilities are being covered by members of your quality improvement team. The tool includes the roles we just covered and you can add rows as needed.

It's also helpful to keep this along with your Project Charter so that anyone can quickly learn not only what the project entails, but how it has been staffed. Additionally, the document can also be kept along with all other tools and templates and referred to in the future to determine who may have participated in completed projects or might be a good fit for upcoming QI projects.

**Slide 24:**

Thank you for taking time to learn about Teams Concepts as part of the QI Basics course. Please join me for the next module in the course: Communication and Facilitation