AMPLIFY YOUR STORY: Using Data for Decision Making and Improvements

Purpose: It is easy to get so wrapped up in the daily grind that you lose sight of the big picture. How do you know you are accomplishing what you set out to do as a program? How do you know if your program is working, and working the same for all of your clients? How do you know if you are keeping up with the evolving needs of the communities you serve? You collect data for funders; what about collecting data for yourself, and using that data to make program improvements? In this tool we share tips for using data for decision making, including Continuous Quality Improvement, so you can make data-driven decisions to better serve your communities. *Thank you to the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) for the contents of this emPower Tool!*

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What is CQI?

Continuous
Quality
Improvement

The complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions (Childwelfare.gov).

Why use Data for Decision Making?

Using data to inform your decisions helps you to:

- Determine whether you are having the impacts you hoped
- Ensure your program is keeping up with the emergent and evolving needs of the communities you support
- Find ways to improve your outputs and outcomes
- Find ways to improve your data collection processes

The CQI Cycle

Form Your Team
Put together a group that well represents the program or organization at *all levels* + the community and stakeholders.

See the *Creating Decision Making Teams* emPower Tool for more information on building respresentative teams.

Data Analysis
Explore your data for patterns and trends over time. What answers did you find to your questions? Were your hypotheses correct? What was unexpected? Stick close to mission.

Determine Questions
What do we want to know about our program? Start with your mission and program goals, and come up with some questions and/or hypotheses.

Data Processes
Put the systems and structures in place you will need to collect that data. What forms need to be created or revised? What processes need to start or change? Look for ways to weave data collection into your regular practices.

Data Review
What is the best way to answer our questions, or test our hypotheses? What data *are we already collecting* that can help us answer those questions? What else might we need to ask or ask differently?

Data Planning
What will be the *simplest* way to get the data we need to answer our questions or test your hypotheses? What else do we need to measure? How can we maximize data while minimizing barriers to clients?

What are your questions?

How do we know whether we are achieving our mission or our program goals?

Are we serving the right people?

Who is being left behind?

Are we making a difference?

Are clients meeting their goals?

How can we improve?

What data will help you answer your questions?

Program Data: Data relevant to administration of the program, like the number of families connected to services

Fidelity Data: Data that measure the extent to which the program has been implemented as intended, like the number of clients receiving suggested # of visits

Outcome Data: Results data that measure the impact of the program or intervention, like percentage of participants reporting they feel more connected to community

What is the easiest way to get the data?

What reports already exist?

What reports can we create with data we are already collecting?

What are we collecting for funders that we can use?

What do we already have in case notes or comment boxes?

What questions can we add to an upcoming survey or focus group?

How do we know what data we already have?

Create a Data Map

Gather all of the **tools** that show you what you are collecting.

Think through the full experience of navigating your program—at each step, what are you asking of your clients?

Look at all of your **forms**, **assessments** and **surveys** you use, and he **reports** you create in your database.

Map out WHAT info you have about WHOM, collected WHEN and HOW

Origin: What is the name of the form, assessment or other data collection tool?
Measure: What piece of data is collected? For whom (like caregiver or child)?
When Collected: At what point in the program is this data collected?
How Often: Is this collected more than once? Can we track over time?
Format: Is the data in a text or numeric format? Checkbox or radio button?

Origin	Measure	When Collected	How Often Collected	Format
Intake Form	Primary Caregiver Name	First home visit	One time	Text
Intake Form	Primary Caregiver Address	First home visit	One time	Text
Intake Form	Primary Caregiver Gender	First home visit	One time	Checkbox
Home Visit Form	Health Update	Home visits	Every 6 months	Text
ASQ-3 Assessment	Fine Motor Skills	Home visits	8 times over program	Number
ASQ-3 Assessment	Gross Motor Skills	Home visits	8 times over program	Number

Making Data-Driven Decisions

What?

- What data are we reviewing today?
- What stands out?
- Are there patterns in the data?
- Are there patterns month- to-month?
- Are we noticing trends over time?

So What?

- Why is this important?
- What conclusions can we make?
- What progress/changes have we seen since our last meeting?

Now What?

- What actions do we take based on these data?
- How might the program need to adapt?
- What support do staff need?
- How will we determine whether progress is made?