Model For Improvement Clip 1

Every time you start out on a journey, whether it be by land or sea, you need to have some way to guide your journey—some roadmap, a compass if you will, that gives you direction and gives you some sort of sense of where you’re going. Well, we have that at the IHI. It’s called the Model For Improvement.

The Model for Improvement gives us the foundation and the framework for doing improvement work. It is really structured around several key components and, basically, two major sections.

First of all, what is your aim? The second question, which gets to measurement, is how will you know that a change is an improvement? The third question: What changes can you actually put in place to achieve the aim? These three things continually loop together and we always check ourselves against our aim. How good and by when are typically the things we ask in the aim statement: How good do you want to be and, then, by when? It’s not good enough just to say we want to be in the top decile, top quartile, but we also need to know by when. Let’s give a date.

The measures: Are you going to look at process and outcome measures? And then what changes are you actually going to put into place that you can track with data and then match back up against your aim? This, then, gets carried out in daily work with the team through something called the PDSA cycle, or plan, do, study, and act.

The three questions (mentioned above) give us the framework that we always go back to. Again, what are we trying to accomplish? How will we know a change is an improvement? And what changes can we actually make? Within PDSA cycles is where we do our testing on a day-to-day basis. We go out and take the ideas, we put them into a PDSA Cycle, we plan it, we do it, we study it (that is, we get the data we come back up and look at this question (look at the measures)), and then we act—that is we’re going to change our plan based on the feedback we obtained and then we’re going to go through another cycle. This, then, becomes our model and our framework for how we’re going to actually carry out improvement strategies. It gives us our guide and our road map.