Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program (CUSP) Premortem Project Assessment

ICU & Non-ICU

Projects often fail, and many factors may contribute to this failure. Understanding potential implementation barriers and challenges before launching a project can help the team mitigate these risks and increase the probability of the project’s success.1

## What Is a Premortem Project Assessment?

A premortem project assessment is an exercise conducted before a project launch. The team imagines the project failed and brainstorms all possible reasons for it. Having identified the reasons, the team brainstorms interventions that can be included in the intervention that will mitigate these possible reasons for failure.1

## Who Should Use This Tool?

Generally, the CUSP Coordinator leads the premortem project assessment before the project kicks off. However, any member of the team may use this tool to facilitate a pre-project assessment.

All stakeholders in the program/project should be invited to participate in the premortem project assessment discussion.

## When Should This Tool Be Used?

This tool should be used prior to implementing CUSP or any project. It can also be used as a project enters a new phase, such as the sustainability phase following a successful intervention.

## Unit Input Worksheet

Barriers, threats, and challenges can sabotage a program or project. Use this worksheet to identify, prioritize, and address these potential risks.

1. Brainstorm all possible reasons that the project or CUSP team might fail.
2. Prioritize the identified reasons based on level of concern. Ensure everyone has a voice in this process.
3. For each of the three or four highest priority concerns, brainstorm interventions that can be carried out during implementation to mitigate these risks and increase the chance of success.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Reasons for Failure: *“What Could Have Caused This?”* | Level of Concern: 1 (Lowest Concern) to 5 (Highest Concern) | Action Steps To Prevent Failure:*“What Can I Do Differently?”* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |
| *Insert reason* | *Insert ranking* | *Insert action steps* |

## CUSP Premortem Results

Compile the list of specific interventions below (not all the brainstormed interventions; just the ones the group selected). Assign responsibility for each intervention to a specific team member.

**Date of Premortem Project Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitator/Coordinator/Project Lead:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Participants in Premortem:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

| Top Concerns | Intervention(s) | Person Responsible |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. *Insert concern* | *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| 2. *Insert concern* | *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| 3. *Insert concern* | *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| 4. *Insert concern* | *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |
| *Insert intervention* | *Insert person responsible* |

## References

1. Klein G. Performing a Project Premortem. Harvard Business Review. 2007 Sep;85(9):18-9.