

# Job Aid: Model for Improvement and PDSA Cycles

## Using the Model for Improvement

The Model for Improvement (MFI) is a simple framework that many primary care practices use to help them organize their improvement work.

A practice can use it as their primary approach to improvement, or to augment an approach they are already using.

There are four steps to the Model for Improvement:

### The Model for Improvement



### Step 1 - Create an improvement aim.

Good aim statements answer four questions:

- What do we want to improve and why?
- Who is the improvement for?
- How much improvement do we want to make?
- By when?

Remember: It's important when creating aim statements to talk about "why" the practice wants to make an improvement. This is what motivates the practice.

### Step 2 - Determine how to measure improvement.

There are three types of measures:

- Process Measures look at how the parts of the system are functioning. These answer the question: "Is the system functioning as planned?"
- Outcome Measures focus on the results of a process. These address the question: "What are the results of the improved process?"
- Balancing Measures check for negative consequences of the change. These answer the question: "Are there any negative consequences as a result of the change?"



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### Step 3 - Identify changes to try.

To generate ideas for changes to try:

- Use a Key Driver Diagram
- Try brainstorming
- Conduct a “last 10 patients” chart audit
- Identify root causes with 5 Whys and Fishbone Diagrams
- Study exemplars and evidence-based resources

### Step 4 - Test changes using Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles.

Conduct small tests of change (e.g., one patient, practitioner or team), refine, and then spread using PDSA cycles and ramps.

### Using Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles

PDSAs are a scientific method for testing out and learning about the impact of different changes. The purpose of a PDSA is to support rapid learning so a practice can take informed actions.

A successful PDSA finds out whether a change works or doesn't work. Both positive and negative results of testing are valuable.

A key word for PDSAs is SMALL! Keeping tests "small" reduces people's fear and helps overcome our natural resistance to change.

### Four stages of a PDSA cycle

**Stage 1. Plan** – The practice creates the plan for testing the change.

**Stage 2. Do** – The practice implements their plan, conducts a small test of change and collects data about it.

**Stage 3. Study** – The practice analyzes the data collected during the Do stage.

**Stage 4. Act** – The practice determines whether to abandon, adapt, or adopt the change they just tested.



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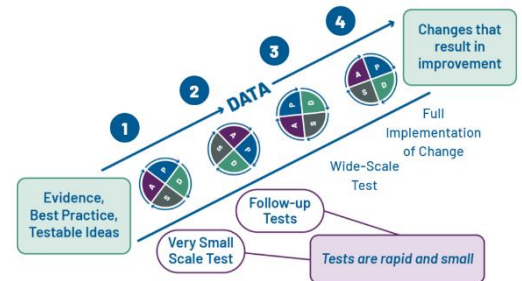


## PDSA Ramps

Early PDSAs should start with small numbers - one patient, one practitioner, one team for example.

When data show the change being tested is promising, the tests can increase in size.

A PDSA ramp is a set of related cycles of the same change strategy where each cycle builds on the last. Cycles move from small tests, to refining the change based on the results of the small test, to testing with larger numbers, to eventually implementing practice-wide if the data show the change is producing the desired results.



## Using a worksheet to plan and keep track of PDSAs

Worksheets can be very helpful to a practice just learning about the MFI and PDSA cycles. You can use them to guide a practice through the steps of the MFI and PDSA and a practice can use them after you complete your work with them to keep themselves on track. You can find out where to find worksheets online in the resources section of this module.

Here are some suggestions for using MFI and PDSA worksheets.

- Complete a worksheet with a practice.
- Provide a practice with a copy of an MFI and PDSA worksheet they can use in improvement work they do without you.
- Create a new worksheet for each cycle
- Store all completed worksheets together to create a record of the improvement work

**PDSA Worksheet**

Complete Page 1 of the worksheet when planning your Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. Multiple PDSAs can be designed in support of a single Aim.

**AIM STATEMENT** (Measurable goal, with a target date)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PDSA Cycle #: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN**

What will you try? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will be involved?

Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Patients: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you predict will happen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will you evaluate how it went? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will collect the evaluation data? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you need to do to get ready? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PDSA Worksheet Page 1 of 2