

Identifying a CQI Topic

How do you choose your topic?

Several factors should be considered when identifying an aspect of program function or practice which could benefit from CQI efforts. Topics should be selected based on a review of existing data, stakeholders should be involved in the process, potential objectives should align with the strategic vision of the agency, and the goals should be both clear and feasible.

This handout describes two approaches to goal setting, SMARTIE Goals and Aim Statements, which can be useful at the onset of a CQI project.

SMARTIE Goals

The SMARTIE approach is an efficient way to ensure all the necessary components of the project are being thought of. SMARTIE is an acronym for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable or Attainable, Relevant, Timely, Inclusive, and Equitable.

Specific



- The more specific the goal, the easier it will be to identify processes for improvement and when the goal has been achieved.
- Try asking who, what, where, when, and why. Once these questions can be answered clearly and concretely then you know that the topic/issue is specific.

Measurable

- Goals should be quantifiable, meaning improvement can be tracked over time.
- Trackable goals allow you too clearly see progress.
- You should be able to identify how the goal will be measured and how that measurement will be documented.



Attainable



- It is important to set realistic goals.
- When setting goals, make sure you have considered the time, effort, resources, and authority needed to accomplish the objective.
- Consider what factors are outside of your control, what could get in the way of reaching your goal.

Relevant

- SMART goals will focus attention where it is most needed.
- Relevant goals serve to help meeting the purpose of the program.
- To ensure the objective is relevant, ask:
1) Is it related to home visiting? 2) Is it meaningful to your team or agency? 3) Is it important for your program and the families it serves?



Time-Bound



- Give yourself a deadline.
- Clearly defined time-frames, including a specific target completion date, helps to maintain focus and motivation.

Inclusive

- It is important to ensure the perspectives of traditionally excluded individuals are included in this process.
- The goal setting process should prioritize creating spaces of shared power over decision making.



Equitable



- Goals should seek to apply the benefits of program participation equitably to all individuals receiving services.
- Setting goals grounded in equity requires us to consider if our intended outcomes could create an inequitable impact along lines of power and identity.

What is an aim statement?

An aim statement is an explicit description of a team's desired outcomes, which are expressed in a measurable and time specific way.

Setting Aim Statements

By _____, _____ of _____
(when) (#, % or % change) (whom)

will _____.
(what result, change, benefit)