TOOL 19

Plan Do Study Act cycles

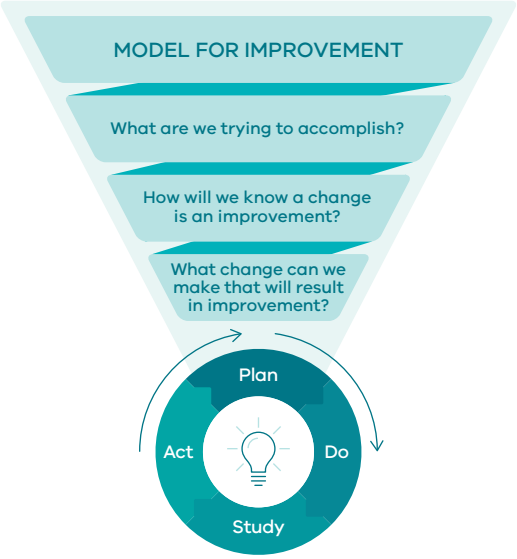
Overview

Once you have answered the three core questions of the Model for Improvement (the model), it is time to start testing your change ideas. This is done by using Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles.

Before you implement any change ideas, you need to assess them using small-scale testing. It is important that the tests are structured, systematic and documented. The PDSA process helps this.

Testing with PDSA cycles starts very small (with one patient, one day, or one team). Small tests are important so that you can test safely and quickly and build confidence in the effectiveness and appropriateness of the change idea. The PDSA approach allows you to gradually increase the size and complexity of your tests, to ensure robust results and to achieve the improvement in the system or process.

Importantly, PDSA cycles are decision support tools. At the end of each PDSA cycle, you can choose if you adopt the change, adapt the change idea, or abandon the change idea altogether.



Safer Care Victoria, in partnership with NSW Health's Clinical Excellence Commission, has developed a PDSA form to help you plan and document your PDSA cycles.

How to use the PDSA cycles?

Plan: the prediction phase

Select a change idea to test, ask yourself the following questions and record your responses:

1. What do you predict will happen? (You will need to compare what actually happened with what you thought would happen to identify 'gaps' in your planning)
2. What exactly will you do? (Clearly define tasks and activities that will be undertaken)
3. Who will carry out the plan? (State the people who will be involved – ownership is important)
4. When will it take place? (Define a short, specific short time period)
5. Where? (State the location the plan will be implemented or improvement will take place)
6. What data do you need? (What data or information will you collect to check the outcome of the change and to know whether there is an improvement)

Do: the execution phase

In the 'Do' phase teams carry out the planned test and collect relevant data and observations. It is important to do the activity and not get caught in the planning phase for too long. The doing phase should be as short as possible. It is important to document what really happened after the plan was carried out. Was the plan executed? Did it meet deadlines? What unexpected events or problems arose?

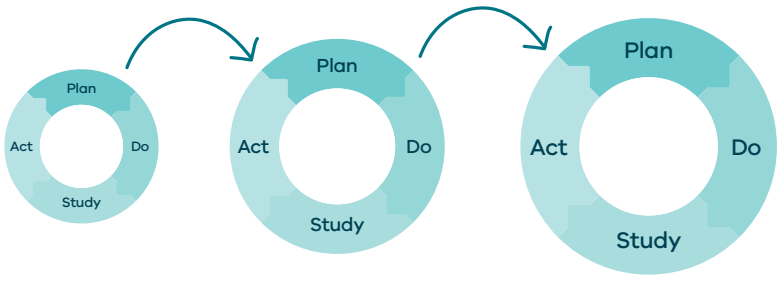
Study: the review phase

Use this phase to review what happened and study the data collected. In the review phase we consider the impact of the project and what could have been done differently. Where were we, and where are we now? Has it made a difference? Were our expectations met in the real world? What could be done differently? What would I change?

Act: deciding on next steps

In this phase you need to think about what you have learned and what further tests are needed to strengthen your belief in the change idea. Will you adopt, adapt or abandon the change idea? What are your reasons and evidence for the decision?

PDSA cycles should be scaled up over time if they show benefit/improvement. This means deciding on the different conditions you will combine together for your tests. Conditions may include different times, locations, expertise and experience of people involved in testing, or the number of people involved in the testing. Gradually increasing the size and complexity of your tests is called **PDSA ramping**. As the complexity of the conditions that you test increases, you can become more confident that your change idea will help you achieve the desired improvement.



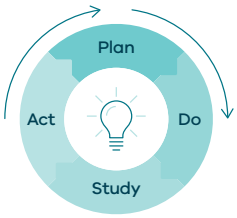
References

Clinical Excellence Commission, Quality Improvement Toolkit. 2022; Sydney: NSW; NSW Health.

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). Model for Improvement.

Nolan T, Resar R, Haraden C, Griffin FA. Improving the Reliability of Health Care. IHI Innovation Series white paper. 2004; Boston: Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

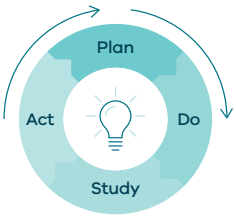
Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Cycles



PDSA Form – completed example

Plan	Cycle #: 2	Date: 12/9/2023
Change you will be testing Describe the change you will be testing	We will be testing the use of a new patient feedback survey using QR code access to have better understanding of patient satisfaction.	
Questions: What do you want to learn?	Will patients be able to use the QR code to access the feedback survey? Will patients experience of using the QR code be positive?	
Aim What are your predictions?	We aim to test the patient feedback survey & QR code access on 5 patients attending the outpatient podiatry outpatient clinic next Tuesday (19/09/2023) to ensure that the survey is easy to read, understand & complete. We predict that patients will find the tool easy to access and understand and that it will help motivate them to provide feedback.	
Team Members Names, roles and responsibilities	Sue – podiatrist Mike – allied health assistant Beth – administration	
How are you going to test? What/when/how	During clinic hours we will ask 5 patients if they would like to test and provide feedback on the newly developed tool and the method for completion.	
Data to be collected What/when/how	Survey completion Time to complete Number of issues faced by participants Qualitative data / feedback on tool and collection method	
Do		
Observations What happened?	Most patients found the survey easy to complete. One patient required carer/relative support to complete.	
Problems/barriers Did PDSA go as planned? If not, why not?	PDSA went as planned – patients were eager to provide feedback and overall found it easy to access and use but language was a difficulty for 1 patient.	
Study		
Data Analysis What did you learn? Any surprises? Were your predictions accurate?	5 people tested survey Average completion time was 4.5mins For patients who spoke English the tool worked well. Adaptation needed to support patients who speak languages other than English to complete the survey.	
Act		
Decision:	Adopt: ☐ Adapt: ☑ Abandon: ☐	
Next Steps: Is this change ready to be scaled-up, implemented, or spread?	Identify main language groups among patients. Translate into main language other than English & test.	

Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Cycles



PDSA Form

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Data Analysis What did you learn? Any surprises? Were your predictions accurate?		
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Decision:	Adopt: ☐ Adapt: ☐ Abandon: ☐	
Next Steps: Is this change ready to be scaled-up, implemented, or spread?		