

Model for Improvement Guidance

A concise reference to the Model for Improvement: the three fundamental questions (Thinking Part) and the PDSA cycle (Doing Part).

The Model for Improvement is a simple, widely used framework for testing and implementing change. It has two parts: a **Thinking Part** where the team agrees what to improve, and a **Doing Part** where change ideas are tested through Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles.

Thinking Part — three fundamental questions

Aim <i>What are we trying to accomplish?</i>	A SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). See Appendix 01 .
Measures <i>How will we know that a change is an improvement?</i>	A small set of outcome, process, and balancing measures with a baseline. See Appendix 02 .
Ideas <i>What changes can we make that will result in improvement?</i>	Concrete change ideas, each of which can be tested as a PDSA cycle. Use driver diagrams (Appendix 03) and cause-and-effect (Appendix 05) to generate them.

Doing Part — Plan-Do-Study-Act

Each change idea is tested through one or more PDSA cycles. Cycles are small, fast, and focused. Many ideas need two or three cycles before they are ready to adopt.

P — Plan	Describe the test. What will be done, by whom, when, where? What do we predict will happen? What data will we collect?
D — Do	Run the test on a small scale. Record whether it was completed. Note anything unexpected.
S — Study	Analyse the results against the prediction. What happened? What was learnt?
A — Act	Decide what to do next, using one of three options defined below.

The three Act decisions

Every PDSA cycle ends with one of three decisions. Document which one, and why.

Adopt	The change worked. Roll it out as standard practice. Record what changed and update any workflow documentation. The improvement cycle for this idea is complete.
Adapt	The change shows promise but is not quite right. Revise it based on what was learnt, then run another PDSA cycle to test the revised version. Most successful changes go through 2–3 cycles before being adopted.
Abandon	The change did not work, or had unintended consequences the team is not willing to accept. Move on to a different idea. A cycle ending in Abandon is still a success — the team has learnt that this approach does not work in this practice.

PRINCIPLES

Start small. Test with 5 patients before 50. Many small cycles outperform one big intervention. Predictions matter as much as results, because a wrong prediction is a learning opportunity.

ATTRIBUTION

Adapted from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Model for Improvement (Langley, Nolan, Provost et al., *The Improvement Guide*, 2009) and the NINCo Quality Improvement Template developed by Prestantia Health for the PHN National Improvement Network Collaborative.

USE WITH

Appendix 07 (MFI & PDSA Template) — the combined worksheet for documenting one complete improvement cycle.