



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets Our Latest Newsletter (06/08/2021)



TOOL OF THE SEASON – PDSA cycle (Plan Do Study Act)

With the summer coming, let's get our curiosity tuned! The tool of the season is **PDSA**.

Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles are the engine room of improvement work. In a project, the quicker you can get to testing (small) and learning (fast), the better. Rapid cycles of testing and learning help us to test a hunch or a theory in a way that builds knowledge as we go. Other industries use a similar process – prototyping.

What we expect to happen ← **Learning** → **What actually happened**

Rapid cycles of testing and learning (PDSA cycles) enable us to test a hunch, theory or a change on a small scale, building knowledge, understanding and commitment as we go – before we think about implementing a change on a large scale. Making the change safer and less disruptive for patients and staff.

The [PDSA cycle](#) is shorthand for testing a change by developing a plan to –

- test the change (Plan)
- carrying out the test (Do)
- observing and learning from the consequences (Study)
- determining what modifications should be made to the test (Act)

Sit back and enjoy the video...

P.S. – It's only a few minutes long, totally worth a watch!



We wish you all the best with your PDSA cycles, either way it goes it'll be a win!

You will learn what works or doesn't work.

One of the most important skills to learn in PDSA is to decide the 'scale of the test'. A useful place to start is to think what is the smallest unit I can test this idea with to get the most learning? One clinic, one hour, one minute, one patient contact?

Have a look at the table below to determine the scale of the test depending on three critical elements:

1. The degree of belief that the change idea will lead to improvement (this is the hunch or theory that you're testing)
2. The cost of failure (if it goes wrong)
3. The level of commitment in the team where the test is happening

PDSA: Deciding on the Scale of the Test

		NO COMMITMENT	SOME COMMITMENT	STRONG COMMITMENT
Low degree of belief that change idea will lead to Improvement	Cost of failure large	<i>Very small-scale test</i>	<i>Very small-scale test</i>	<i>Very small-scale test</i>
	Cost of failure small	<i>Very small-scale test</i>	<i>Very small-scale test</i>	<i>Small-scale test</i>
High degree of belief that change idea will lead to Improvement	Cost of failure large	<i>Very small-scale test</i>	<i>Small-scale test</i>	<i>Large-scale test</i>
	Cost of failure small	<i>Small-scale test</i>	<i>Large-scale test</i>	<i>Implement</i>

IG, Table 7.1, p. 146



Wishing you a happy summer!

Team EQUIP