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FOUNDATION FOR ACTION—GUIDANCE  
FOR THRIVING IN HEALTH CARE TODAY

# **Creating Sustainable Change Assessment**



# SUPERIOR HEALTH QUALITY ALLIANCE ACTION GUIDE

## Creating Sustainable Change Assessment

This tool is the second in the series, *Foundation for Action – Guidance for Thriving in Health Care Today* and organized by four foundational areas: *Facilitate the Initiative, Calibrate the Team, Translate Evidence into Practice and Ensure a Smooth Rollout and Adoption of Best Practices*. This assessment will help you and your team identify opportunities to improve implementation of best practices and maintenance of sustainable change within your organization.

### Keys to Successful Completion of the Creating Sustainable Change Assessment

- Establish or identify a cross-functional and multi-disciplinary team within the organization to work together to implement best practices into clinical practice, develop strategies to sustain change and create a foundation to support a safety culture.
- Include leadership and frontline staff when completing the assessment to ensure an accurate representation of how current best practice implementation occurs within the organization. Organizations may complete this assessment as a team or choose to have team members review the information independently and then come together to discuss responses.
  - Each section of the assessment receives an individual score. The higher the score, the more prepared your organization is to implement evidence into practice. Lower scored sections indicate areas of opportunity, and your organization should determine a priority of focus to address these. Improving processes within the lower-scored sections will ensure implementing evidence into practice is a seamless transition for your organization.
- Once the assessment is complete and reviewed, the team develops an action plan for the identified areas of focus, including the identification of roles and responsibilities.
- As you identify opportunities for improvement, please refer to the resources toward the end of this document. These resources will provide sustainability strategies for you to review and consider implementing within your organization.
  - [Facilitate the Initiative Resources](#)
  - [Calibrate the Team Resources](#)
  - [Translate Evidence into Practice Resources](#)
  - [Ensure a Smooth Initiative Rollout and Adoption of Best Practices Resources](#)

## How to Use this Assessment

Use this resource to assess and reassess the ability of your organization to embed best practices into clinical practice, sustain change and create a foundation to support a safety culture. As Wood et al, point out, “in promoting innovation or a piece of research evidence, we are not dealing merely with the uncomplicated dissemination of findings to a passive and receptive audience but are, in fact, reconnecting research with its supplementary other—practice.” More often, the difficult part of the process is developing how to implement evidence-based practices into daily practice. It is imperative an organization creates opportunities for successful implementation strategies, in addition to having a strong foundation to enhance their safety culture. By completing this assessment, you can identify gaps within this process and identify your organization’s strengths in implementing best practices to maintain sustainable change.

Ongoing, your organization could use the assessment tool to measure progress as well to identify future areas of focus opportunities and reassess change.

## Strategies to Create Sustainable Change with Your Organization



## Step 1

### FACILITATE THE INITIATIVE

Facilitating an improvement initiative and choosing what and where to start can be challenging. Ensuring your leadership team is on board with the initiative is key. You prepare to discuss the potential opportunity for improvement with your leadership team by gathering evidence to support the initiative or change in practice, gather data to reflect change is needed, write a proposal outlining the current state and future state of the initiative. It is essential you connect the area of focus to strategic goals to secure resources and ensure ongoing leadership support.

How do you discover new products, evidence, guidelines or processes?

- Ensure your team dedicates time to review clinical practice guidelines, new guidelines released, new products etc.
- Assign staff to create a proposal (crosswalk/form/etc.)
- Review the proposal with medical director of the program.
- Consider finance and/or no additional cost, equipment, depending on the proposed change.
- Create a plan for initiating the process, education and re-evaluation.

The systems design perspective allows an organization to embed the process of facilitation within their safety culture. This often refers to the process of enabling (making easier) the implementation of evidence into practice.

To determine what evidence to translate into practice, it is essential to understand the needs, goals and priorities of the organization, how it will impact the organization as a whole and how it can be sustainable. These key components need to be addressed at the start of the work. To be successful, organizations need to first identify initiatives in which the organization is willing to dedicate time, personnel and finances to implement.

An organization also needs to understand the evidence to translate and how it will be applicable to the priorities of the organization. Evaluating evidence and the associated levels of evidence will provide an organization the most information to make an unbiased decision on which initiative to implement. In doing so, it is important to not only evaluate evidence, but also understand the levels of evidence associated to each.

When evaluating evidence, there are two questions to keep in mind:

1. Is this relevant to your patient or problem?
  - a. Does the study population representative of the patient or problem you are treating or addressing?
  - b. If the study population or problem matches your patient, does it also focus on the problem you are looking to address?
2. Is the evidence in the study valid?
  - a. Are the study results free from bias or other confounding practices?
  - b. Are the results able to be applied outside of the study setting and population(s)?

The [\*Critically Evaluating Research Articles\*](#) tool from East Carolina University can assist in determining the validity of a research article.

Levels of evidence are assigned to studies based on the methodological quality of their design, validity and applicability to patient care. All evidence-based practice is not created equal, therefore you want to be sure to determine the credibility and validity of a study or evidence prior to deciding to implement within your organization.

### Levels of Evidence Considerations

- Provides the best evidence to make a decision.
- The higher the level of evidence, the more confidence you can put in the results and the applicability to your patients or the problem.
- In most cases, you will want to focus on Level I or Level II level of evidence as these provide the highest quality of evidence.

Additional information to understand levels of evidence available on [East Carolina University Evaluating the Evidence website](#).

## Step 2

### CALIBRATE THE TEAM

Support is needed at every level of the organization for the identified focus area to be successful. Without a clear understanding and agreement on the problem, the identified focus area may be met with resistance. Anticipating potential roadblocks, learning from similar work in the past, identifying champions or change agents and creating a plan for collecting real-time feedback will allow the organization a more successful adoption of the identified focus area.

## Step 3

### TRANSLATE EVIDENCE INTO PRACTICE

Evidence-based practice is a problem-solving approach to improve the delivery of health care which incorporates the best evidence from research and patient care data while including clinician expertise, patient preferences and values. When evidence-based practice is delivered in partnership with clinicians and patients in a caring and a supportive organizational culture, the highest quality of care and best patient outcomes can be achieved. There is more to changing practice than adopting a checklist. Simply disseminating evidence-based guidelines within an organization will not ensure adoption, implementation and sustainability. To be effective, organizations need to promote a psychologically safe culture where anyone is comfortable asking questions and providing feedback on the impact of any change within the organization. Without a supportive safety culture, it makes it very difficult to successfully translate the evidence into practice.

## Step 4

### ENSURE A SMOOTH ROLLOUT, ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES AND SUSTAINMENT

Implementing new practices requires testing cycles to identify any barriers that might prevent the adoption of the initiative. These cycles allow the team to adjust accordingly, which increases the chances the implementation will be successful. Successful implementation is about changing the system and creating a new way of doing things to better serve the community.

## Creating Rapid Scalable and Sustainable Change Assessment

### Facilitate the Initiative

Element	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
The initiative aligns with organizational strategic goals.					
An assessment of long-term benefits post initiative roll out is completed.					
Leadership is committed to investing time to the initiative.					
Leadership is committed to investing personnel to the initiative.					
Leadership is committed to investing financial resources to the initiative.					
Leadership is committed to ensuring initiative accountability.					
Tally					
Facilitate the Initiative Section Total					

### Calibrate the Team

Element	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
There is a multi-disciplinary team including staff directly impacted by the initiative roll out.					
Team identifies core components of every initiative.					
Team develops a localized approach for the initiative.					
Team creates validation criteria as part of the initiative roll out to ensure accountability.					
A testing plan is developed for every initiative.					

## Creating Rapid Scalable and Sustainable Change Assessment

A sustainability plan is developed at the onset of every initiative.					
An evaluation plan, including when to terminate, is developed for every initiative.					
A communication plan developed for every initiative to provide updates to all levels within the organization.					
Tally					
Calibrate the Team Section Total					

## Translate Evidence into Practice

Element	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence based practice evaluation is reviewed for research experience.					
Evidence based practice evaluation is reviewed for clinical experience.					
Evidence based practice evaluation is reviewed for patient experience.					
Evidence based practice using multiple sources of information on performance is preferred.					
There is a process to create organization specific standards of practice if none are available.					
Evidence based practices are reviewed at least annually for effectiveness.					
Tally					
Total Score					



## Creating Rapid Scalable and Sustainable Change Assessment

### Roll Out Strategies

Element	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Every initiative includes small scale testing.					
Testing cycle feedback loops in place to monitor both intended and unintended consequences.					
A standard operating procedure is created for every initiative.					
Ongoing review of testing plan, modify as needed occurs with every initiative.					
Ongoing review of evaluation plan occurs with every initiative.					
Ongoing review of the sustainability plan occurs with every initiative.					
Ongoing review of communication plan occurs with every initiative.					
Ongoing review of policy and procedure occurs with every initiative.					
Tally					
Roll Out Strategies Total Score					

## Resources to Support Progress on Creating Rapid, Scalable, and Sustainable Change Assessment

### Facilitate the Initiative Resources

Resource	Description
<p><b><i>Will it Work Here? A Decisionmaker's Guide to Adopting Innovations</i></b></p> <p>Brach C, Lenfestey N, Roussel A, Amoozegar J, Sorensen A. Will It Work Here? A Decisionmaker's Guide to Adopting Innovations. Prepared by RTI International under Contract No. 233-02-0090. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Publication No. 08-0051. Rockville, MD: AHRQ; September 2008.</p>	<p>Promotes evidence-based decision making and help decision makers determine whether an innovation would be a good fit – or an appropriate stretch – for a health care organization.</p>
<p><b><i>Leading a Culture of Safety: A Blueprint for Success</i></b></p> <p>American College of Healthcare Executives and Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2017.</p>	<p>Provides organizations with clear actions to assess and advance their culture of safety.</p>
<p><b><i>National Steering Committee for Patient Safety Implementation Resource Guide: A National Action Plan to Advance Patient Safety</i></b></p> <p>Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2020.</p>	<p>Provides clear direction for health care leaders and organizations to make advances toward safer care and reduce harm across the continuum of care.</p>

### Calibrate the Team Resources

Resource	Description
<p><b><i>Psychology of Change Framework – Institute for Healthcare Improvement White Paper</i></b></p> <p>Hilton K, Anderson A. IHI Psychology of Change Framework to Advance and Sustain Improvement. Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2018.</p>	<p>Provides insight on creating an organizational framework to advance and sustain improvement.</p>
<p><b><i>TeamSTEPPS® – AHRQ</i></b></p> <p>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality</p>	<p>Provides a teamwork system designed for health care professionals.</p>

## Resources to Support Progress on Creating Rapid, Scalable, and Sustainable Change Assessment

### ***What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team***

The New York Times Magazine

Provides insight on creating psychological safety to enable teams to work effectively.

### ***IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work***

Perlo J, Balik B, Swensen S, Kabcenell A, Landsman J, Feeley D. IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work. IHI White Paper. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2017. (Available at [ihi.org](http://ihi.org))

Provides a platform to ask staff “what matters to you?” as a way to create strategies to address barriers to joy in work.

### ***Creating Psychological Safety Video***

Superior Health Quality Alliance

Provides a four-minute video of three steps to create psychological safety.

## Translate Evidence into Practice Resources

### **Resource**

### **Description**

***What is Evidence-Based Practice? - Evidence-Based Practice for Nursing - Research Guides at East Carolina University Libraries ([ecu.edu](http://ecu.edu))***

Provides an overview of what is evidence-based practice and how to evaluate it.

### ***How to Critically Evaluate a Research Article***

East Carolina University Libraries

A checklist to evaluate a research article or report.

### ***Improvement Project Roadmap***

Institute for Healthcare Quality

Provides a list of essential tasks of key components to guide improvement efforts.

### ***EvidenceNOW Model***

Agency for Health Research and Quality

### ***EvidenceNOW Tools for Change***

Agency for Health Research and Quality

Provides support to small- and medium-sized primary care practices with adoption of clinical and organizational evidence.

### ***Translation Research in Practice: An Introduction***

Titler, M.G., (May 31, 2018) "Translation Research in Practice: An Introduction" OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing Vol. 23, No. 2, Manuscript 1.

This article offers an introductory overview of translation science (aka implementation science) and addresses issues in this field of science.

## Resources to Support Progress on Creating Rapid, Scalable, and Sustainable Change Assessment

### *Implementation Science*

Provides a unique, multidisciplinary platform for research on implementation strategies, including their development, outcomes, economics, and a process by which effects are achieved, and factors associated with implementation outcomes.

### Ensure a Smooth Initiative Rollout and Adoption of Best Practices Resources

Resource	Description
<b><i>Sustainability Planning Worksheet</i></b> Institute for Healthcare Improvement (follow the link to easily create a free login to access the document)	Provides long-term stability planning of improvement efforts.
<b><i>IHI Innovation System – Institute for Healthcare Improvement White Paper</i></b> Martin LA, Mate K. IHI Innovation System. IHI White Paper. Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2018.	Creates a system focusing on improving health care delivery.

### References

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4. Wood M, Ferlie E, Fitzgerald L. Achieving clinical behavior change: a case of becoming indeterminate. *SocSdMed*. 1998;47(11):1729-1738.

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