

A Professional Growth Module:

UNDERSTANDING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

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Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time



A Professional Growth Module:

UNDERSTANDING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

We hope you enjoy this inservice, prepared by registered nurses especially for nursing assistants like you!

Instructions for the Learner

If you are studying the inservice on your own, please do the following:

- Read through **all** the material. You may find it useful to have a highlighting marker nearby as you read. Highlight any information that is new to you or that you feel is especially important.
- If you have questions about anything you read, please ask _____.
- Take the quiz. Think about each statement and pick the best answer.
- Check with your supervisor for the right answers. You need **8 correct** to pass!
- Print your name, write in the date, and then sign your name.
- Keep the inservice information for yourself and turn in the quiz page to _____ no later than _____. Show your Inservice Club Membership Card to _____ so that it can be initialed.
- Email In the Know at feedback@knowingmore.com with your comments and/or suggestions for improving this inservice.

After finishing this inservice, you will be able to:

Define quality, especially as it applies to client care.



Explain why quality improvement is an important function at every health care organization.



Describe the four basic steps of the QI process.



Name at least six benefits of a quality improvement program.



Demonstrate your commitment to QI by participating in studies, attending meetings and proposing creative solutions to problems you see in your daily routine.

THANK YOU!



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Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

A Professional Growth Module:

Understanding Quality Improvement

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

You've probably heard the words "quality improvement". You may have even been asked to participate in a study or attend a meeting. But what's all this fuss about quality—especially when everyone's already working so hard?

Remember, the **quality of client care can be a life or death matter.**

Because of this, everyone who works in healthcare has an ethical obligation to provide good quality care.

Here's an example of one hospital's quality improvement project:

A hospital in Virginia wanted to decrease the number of new pressure ulcers in its patients. A Quality Improvement (QI) Team was formed and the goal was set to decrease the number from 24 percent to 10 percent (4.5% is the national average).

The QI Team quickly realized that an educated staff, easier documentation and greater accountability were the keys to success.

Team members educated physicians about pressure ulcer prevention and trained staff in the use and function of the Braden Scale, specialty beds, and wound care supplies. A system was designed to teach all new staff members, patients and family members how to assist with turning and repositioning.

A specially trained staff member was designated as the "Pressure Ulcer Prevention (PUP) expert and rounded on all patients and served as a resource for the staff.

Once the new system was in place, the hospital met the goal of 10 percent . . . and exceeded it by reducing the number of new pressure ulcers to 3.4 percent!

The hospital identified a problem, devised a plan to improve the situation, implemented the plan, then evaluated the results.

Some pretty small changes made a huge improvement!

Keep reading to learn more about quality improvement, including ways to make QI a top priority in your daily work.



HOW DO YOU DEFINE QUALITY IN HEALTHCARE?

There are several organizations that are concerned with quality improvement in healthcare. Two major organizations you may have heard of are:

- **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**, found on the web at www.ahrq.gov
- **Institutes of Medicine (IOM)**, found online at www.iom.edu

AHRQ defines quality as *"Doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right person, and having the best possible result"*

IOM describes quality in healthcare as treatment and care that is:

- **Safe:** The treatment helps patients and does not cause harm.
- **Effective:** Research shows that the treatment has positive (good) results.
- **Patient-centered:** Healthcare providers (doctors, nurses, and others) treat all patients with respect. This means taking into account each patient's values about health and quality of life.
- **Timely:** Patients get the care they need at a time when it will do the most good.
- **Efficient:** Treatment does not waste doctors' or patients' money or time.
- **Equitable:** Everyone is entitled to high quality healthcare. This includes men and women of all cultures, income, level of education, and social status.

WHY IS QUALITY IMPORTANT?

At some point, every single person on Earth will have to rely on a doctor, hospital, nursing home or home health agency to:

- Keep themselves or their loved ones safe,
- Restore health, or
- Transition peacefully toward death.

Healthcare organizations and the professionals who staff them have an obligation to society to provide safe, effective, respectful, and timely care to anyone who needs it.

In a perfect world every doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other provider would give high-quality care all the time. . . unfortunately, that is not always the reality.

Quality can suffer for many reasons, including:

- Lack of appropriate and ongoing staff training.
- Poor leadership.
- Under staffing.
- Financial issues.
- Lack of access to technology or the latest treatment options.

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."

~ William A. Foster

WHAT'S NEW?

Grab your favorite highlighter! As you read through this inservice, **highlight five things** you learn that you didn't know before. Share this new information with your supervisor and co-workers!



A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

For centuries, countries around the world have had rules about who could practice medicine. In the 1800's, these rules expanded to include:

- The minimum education needed by doctors and nurses.
- Tests that people had to pass in order to practice medicine.
- Special licenses given to health care professionals.

However, beyond making sure that doctors and nurses were licensed, health care organizations spent very little time worrying about the quality of client care.

In the early 1900's, health care organizations used a "watch dog" approach to quality. They depended on outside government agencies to find problems with client care.

Other types of businesses did things a little differently. They checked the quality of their *own* work so that they could identify issues early on—*before* they became problems.

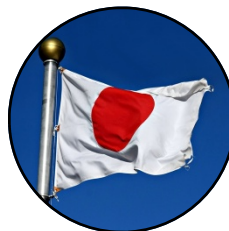
This seemed like a good approach, so in 1917, the American College of Surgeons developed a set of standards that American hospitals had to meet in order to give good client care. These standards became the foundation for **The Joint Commission** (formerly JCAHO). Today, The Joint Commission continues to promote quality improvement for healthcare organizations across America.

Now, quality improvement is an important function at every healthcare organization...and for every health care employee.

HERE'S A TRUE STORY ABOUT "QUALITY" IN JAPAN

IBM decided to have some computer parts manufactured in Japan. In the contract, IBM stated that they would accept three defective parts out of ten thousand.

When the parts were delivered from Japan, they arrived with a letter. It said, *"In Japan, we have a hard time understanding American business practices. But, the three defective parts you ordered have been manufactured separately and are included with your regular order. We hope this pleases you."*



"The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas."

~ Dr. Linus Pauling

As you read through this inservice, think about ways you can improve the quality of care you provide.

Come back to this page and keep a list of your ideas.

Present your ideas to your supervisor! You never know. . . your small idea can make a huge impact!

THE TRUTH ABOUT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

A workplace program for managing quality may go by one of several different names.

- **QI** or Quality Improvement
- **CQI** or Continuous Quality Improvement
- **PI** or Performance Improvement
- **TQM** or Total Quality Management

In most healthcare organizations, these four terms mean the same thing. They are simply different names for the same program.

The idea behind any of these quality improvement programs is to provide the best possible client care. To do so, healthcare organizations must study and adjust themselves *constantly*—instead of waiting for problems to show up.

Here is the truth about Quality Improvement:

- **In healthcare, quality can't always be measured by how quickly clients get well.** No matter how hard they try, healthcare workers are never in complete control over their clients' health status. For example, hospice employees care for people who are dying. It would be unfair to measure the quality of hospice care based on how many clients get well and go home! Instead, there are other measurements such as: *Is spiritual counseling offered? How many clients at the hospice die free from pain?* The methods for measuring quality vary somewhat from one healthcare workplace to another.
- **Spending a lot of money on client care does not guarantee good quality.** Poor client care can be just as expensive—if not more so—as quality improvement programs. Think about it. It can cost up to \$30,000.00 to heal just one bed sore. And, if a client falls and breaks a hip, it can cost up to \$35,000.00! Preventing these problems would cost much, much less.
- **Changing the way things are done does not necessarily mean the old way was “wrong”.** It could mean that a QI team at your workplace has come up with a better way to do something...or an easier way...or a quicker way...or a cheaper way. There's always a reason for change. If you're not sure what that reason is...ask!
- **Quality improvement is the responsibility of every employee.** Even if a workplace has a special QI nurse or a large QI committee, all employees are still responsible for doing their part to improve quality of care.



TALK about it!

Open the Discussion

What does QUALITY health care mean to YOU?

Think about a time when you were the patient (or family member of the patient) in a healthcare situation.

- **What elements of the healthcare experience would you consider to be “quality” healthcare?**
- **What areas of the care you received needed improvement?**

Ask your friends and co-workers the same questions and see how many different answers you get.

Think about what quality means to you and to each individual you talked to. Now, try to incorporate those quality elements into your every day care!

“People forget how fast you did a job, but they remember how well you did it.”

~ Howard W. Newton

THE STEPS TO QUALITY IMPROVEMNT

Your workplace may have a Quality Improvement Nurse and/or a QI Team. If so, it's probably their job to oversee the steps of the QI process. However, every healthcare worker should be familiar with these four basic steps:

1. **IDENTIFICATION:** The first step in the quality improvement process is to identify an area that needs improvement. To identify a "problem area", the QI staff might review client records, employee suggestions, feedback from clients or the results of a Joint Commission survey. Once they identify a problem area, they need to look for all the possible *causes* of that problem. NOTE: QI problems are based on something that's happening *throughout* a workplace...and not on a mistake made by just one employee.

Example: By reviewing client records, Mary, the QI nurse, sees that there has been an increase in the number of urinary tract infections lately. Some of the clients with UTI's wear adult diapers; some go to the bathroom by themselves. Some of the clients have catheters; some do not. So, Mary decides that the problem could be coming from poor hand washing—by both employees and clients.

2. **PLANNING:** The second step of the QI process is to figure out solutions to the problem. What practical changes can be made at a workplace to make sure that people are doing the *right* things the *right* way?

Example: Mary decides that an employee inservice on hand washing (and its relationship to urinary tract infections) may help. She thinks that the clients also need to be instructed on the importance of hand washing. She creates a sign about hand washing that can be posted around the workplace—as a reminder to clients and employees. Mary decides that some "spot checks" of people's hand washing habits may be helpful.



YOUR OWN QI PROJECT!!

There are many reasons healthcare workers give for not washing their hands before and after patient care. Here are a few:

- Skin Irritation:** The hand cleaners are harsh and damage the skin.
- Supplies are not available:** Sinks are not conveniently located or are not stocked with soaps and towels.
- Urgent or emergency care:** The client needs immediate care, there is no time to wash hands.
- Wearing of gloves:** The belief that if gloves were worn, hands do not have to be washed after client care.
- Not enough time:** High workload and understaffing.

Take a poll!. Ask your co-workers which of the situations above is the most likely reason they would give for not washing their hands.

Take your findings to your supervisor or QI Team. There may be an easy solution! For example, if the reason is that the soap is too harsh, a different brand may be tested. If sinks are not conveniently located... your employer will want to know so the situation can be fixed.

THE STEPS TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - CONTINUED

3. **IMPLEMENTATION:** The third step of the quality improvement process is to put into place all the changes that may solve the problem.

Example: *Mary asks the staff development department to present the handwashing inservice. She asks the nurses and nursing assistants to talk to their clients about handwashing. The housekeeping staff agrees to post the handwashing signs around the workplace. Mary asks each supervisor to observe employees and clients at random—watching to see if they are washing their hands...and offering friendly reminders as needed.*

4. **EVALUATION:** The fourth step in the QI process involves looking at the results. It's really a repeat of the first step because it involves looking for problems. Did the changes work? Are the standards now being met? Is there any way to improve the situation even more?

Example: *After three months, Mary reviews the client records again—counting the number of UTI's. The results are good...with 28% fewer urinary tract infections than before. Mary believes that changes are working—but has an idea for making it even better. She suggests to administration that each new employee and each new client should be instructed on the importance of proper handwashing. Administration agrees to try this for three months to see how it goes.*



THINK about it!

WHAT IS "GOOD ENOUGH"?

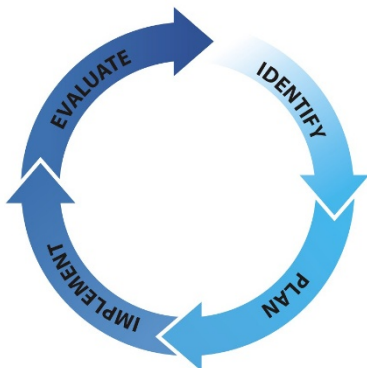
Is it really necessary to try to improve client care if it's already good?

Well, consider this...if 99.9% quality is good enough for Americans, then:

- Hospitals would give 12 babies to the wrong parents, daily.
- Footwear companies would ship out 114,500 mismatched pairs of shoes each year.
- The US Postal Service would lose 18,322 pieces of mail every hour.
- The IRS would lose two million documents this year.
- 315 entries in Webster's Dictionary would be misspelled.
- Doctors would write 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions this year.
- 103,260 income tax returns would be processed incorrectly during the year.
- 5.5 million cases of soft drinks produced would be **flat!**
- 291 pacemaker operations would be performed incorrectly.

So, when you are sure your work is good enough ...

IMPROVE IT!



And so, the QI process goes around in a continuous circle from **identifying** a problem ... to **planning** a solution ... to **implementing** changes ... to **evaluating** the situation ... **and so on!**

THE BENEFITS OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Have you ever heard the saying, “If it’s not broken, don’t fix it”? So why bother trying to improve when the quality of care may already be good? Healthcare organizations that focus *continuously* on quality benefit in many ways:

- The clients receive the best possible care.
- The employees have a clean and safe workplace.
- Problems can be identified and solved before they become serious or widespread.
- Staff members from different departments work together to solve problems.
- The organization avoids wasting resources...including supplies, money and employee’s time.
- Surveys from the state or the Joint Commission are less stressful because meeting (or exceeding) standards is a way of life for every employee.
- The workplace gains a positive image in the community.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?

When you work to continuously improve client care, you enjoy personal benefits as well, such as:

- Awareness—from paying close attention to your clients’ needs.
- Pride in your work—from the satisfaction of a job well done.
- Respect and cooperation—from working closely with other employees.
- Job satisfaction—from sharing your ideas on how to improve client care.
- Better problem-solving skills—from working with others to eliminate problems.
- Job security—from increasing your own professionalism and the reputation of their workplace.
- A smoother work day—since your clients have a high level of satisfaction.



Thinking outside the box!

Working in the healthcare industry often requires coming up with creative solutions to uncommon problems.

THE PROBLEM:

- The healthcare industry is on the verge of a major overhaul. The economy, the political environment, and the need to “reform healthcare,” are all leading to a leaner, more cost efficient system, with a greater demand for quality and results.

WHAT YOU KNOW:

- Wasting time, supplies, and energy are all zapping the healthcare industry of vanishing resources it needs to care for people in the best possible way.

GET CREATIVE:

- Think of **3 creative solutions** you can begin to do today to improve the quality of care you provide while making better use of time, supplies and energy.

TALK ABOUT IT:

- Share your ideas with your co-workers and supervisor and find out how they plan to contribute to the solution!

HOW DO YOU MEASURE QUALITY?

To measure the quality of care for any health care organization, it has to be measured against certain *standards*. At your workplace, these standards may include:

- A mission statement.
- A policy manual.
- A procedure manual.
- Employee job descriptions.
- Joint Commission standards.
- Medicare & Medicaid standards.
- State laws.

To be useful, standards must:

- Be written down—so that they are clear for everyone.
- Outline a set of rules or actions for people to follow.
- Provide answers to the following questions:
 - What care can clients expect to receive?
 - How are employees expected to function?
 - How is the workplace expected to operate?

Do you know the standards for your workplace?

AREAS THAT COMMONLY NEED IMPROVEMENT

Many health care organizations deal with some of the same quality improvement issues:

Safety:

- Preventing falls and other injuries (for clients and employees).
- Preventing pressure sores.

Nutrition:

- Making sure that clients get enough to eat and drink.

Infection control:

- Reducing the spread of infection between clients.
- Following universal infection control precautions.

Documentation:

- Making sure that client records are complete and accurate.
- Keeping the client's plan of care up to date.

Competency:

- Training for each employee for the job that he or she is doing.
- Providing the required number of inservice hours.

Supervision:

- Providing appropriate supervision.



THE NEXT STEP!

Apply what you've learned!

Now you have an idea what quality means to you and others around you. And, you know what areas in healthcare commonly need improvement.

- **Take a moment to look around your workplace and at your own practices and list two areas you feel could be improved.** (For example, you may list "documentation" if you feel your workplace system for charting client care is inefficient . . . or you may list "competency" if you feel you need more training in certain areas.)

1. _____

2. _____

- **On a separate sheet of paper write down a few creative solutions to the problems you listed above.**
- **Share your thoughts with your co-workers and supervisor and find out how they would solve the problem.**

WHY IS CHANGE SO HARD?

Have you ever heard a coworker say something like this:

- “We’ve always done it this way.”
- “That’s not how I did it at my last job.”
- “My way is better.”
- “That new way of doing things is stupid.”

Maybe you’ve even had thoughts like these yourself! It’s natural. Changing the way we do things can be uncomfortable—even if the new way is easier. When faced with change, some people feel angry, anxious, confused or sad. This is *normal*.

However, there’s something that every healthcare worker needs to know: ***It’s unacceptable not to change.***

Remember, the world of healthcare is constantly changing—as more and more is learned about how to provide quality client care. Healthcare workers must be willing to change, too.

- Just think about taking a client’s temperature. In the old days, temperature was measured by touching a person’s skin. Then, for a long time, glass thermometers were used. These took at least three minutes to work. Now, we have electronic thermometers—some of which take only *seconds* to complete the job!

TIPS FOR MAKING CHANGE EASIER!

- Since nothing ever stays the same, *expect* things to change at your workplace. If you remember that change is *normal*, you’ll become more comfortable with unfamiliar situations—and more skilled in dealing with them.
- Make sure you understand why a change is necessary. Look at the *big picture* . . . not just at how the change affects you.
- If you have concerns about how something at your workplace is being changed . . . express your concerns to your supervisor with your suggestions for improving the process!
- Remember that making the change may be less stressful than spending time resisting it.
- Share your ideas for improving things at work. If you don’t, you’ll have to be satisfied with other people’s ideas!
- Remember that change gives you the chance to learn something new and/or to develop new skills.



5 KEY POINTS

Key Points to Remember

1. Every healthcare worker has an ethical obligation to provide quality care.
2. Quality improvement in healthcare is important because quality of client care can be a life or death matter.
3. The continuously cycling steps of the QI process include identifying a problem, planning a solution, implementing changes and evaluating the situation.
4. Keep your eyes open for solutions to areas that commonly need improvement: safety, nutrition, competency, infection control and documentation.
5. Participate in QI at your workplace. Make suggestions for how you think client care could be improved. Remember that you are the expert at the tasks you perform every day. If you see a way to make your job—or your client care—better, share your idea!

TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN QI AT YOUR WORKPLACE

- Avoid getting into a “rut” at work. Remember that “passive” employees do their work the same way today as they did it yesterday. “Active” employees look back at yesterday’s work to see what they can do better today.
- Listen to your clients when they express their needs and concerns. (Keep in mind that client satisfaction is one important measurement of good quality care. And, putting your clients first is a way to improve the quality of client care.)
- Remember that the needs of family members are also important. If a family member is dissatisfied, chances are your client will be, too.
- Learn from *your* mistakes and from any errors made by your *coworkers*. (Remember that mistakes are simply opportunities for improvement!)
- Ask your supervisor to share the results of any quality improvement studies for your workplace.
- Volunteer for the QI committee at your workplace.
- Make suggestions for how you think client care could be improved. Remember that you are the expert at the tasks you perform every day. If you see a way to make your job—or your client care—better, share your idea!
- If your workplace has a “suggestion box”, add your ideas to it. If not, share your suggestions with your supervisor.
- Document your client care completely and in a timely manner. (Client records are reviewed frequently as part of any quality improvement program. If you forget to document something, it will seem as if you didn’t do it!)
- Keep your eyes open during your work day for any possible safety hazards—for clients and employees. You may come up with a safer way to provide client care!
- Review your job description regularly so you remain clear about what is expected of you. Be sure to check out the policy manual for your workplace . . . especially for new or changed policies.



WHAT I KNOW NOW!

Now that you’ve read this inservice on quality improvement, take a moment to jot down a couple of things you learned that you didn’t know before.





Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

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Understanding Quality Improvement

EMPLOYEE NAME
(Please print):

DATE: _____

- ***I understand the information presented in this inservice.***
- ***I have completed this inservice and answered at least eight of the test questions correctly.***

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

Inservice Credit:

<input type="checkbox"/> Self Study	1 hour
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Study	1 hour

File completed test in employee's personnel file.

Are you "In the Know" about quality improvement? Circle the best choice or fill in your answer. Then check your answers with your supervisor!

1. True or False

Only organizations with poor reputations should be concerned about quality improvement.

2. True or False

The first step in the QI process is designing a plan to improve a problem.

3. True or False

Once a problem is solved, the QI process ends.

4. True or False

When faced with change, some people feel angry, anxious, confused or sad.

5. Some areas that commonly need improvement in healthcare include:

- A. Safety and infection control.
- B. Competence and continuing education.
- C. Documentation.
- D. All of the above.

6. True or False

Quality of care for any healthcare organization must be measured against official written standards or rules.

7. True or False

Quality should be measured by how many people get well and go home after care.

8. True or False

Implementing the plan is the third step of the QI process.

9. True or False

When a change is planned at your workplace, it means you did something wrong.

10. Fill in the Blanks

AHRQ defines quality as "Doing the right _____, at the right _____, for the right _____, and having the best possible result."