

Guidelines to the Development of an Effective Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

- Consumers, line staff and other interested parties often bring a wealth of ideas and helpful suggestions to the table. Involve stake holders in the process of helping to conduct assessments, to help analyze the causes as well as the development of improvement strategies. This is often accomplished by creating a team of stakeholders to work on the plan.
- Identify the areas that need improvement or enhancement carefully. Base this selection on your internal data that you have collected through your self-assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys, site visit feedback, Abuse and Neglect investigation recommendations etc. and DDS data that is provided to you. By reviewing all of these different points of data, you will be able to identify priority trends or themes that lend themselves to an improvement goal.
- Define the improvement area carefully to make sure it is understood by all involved. Spend some time talking about what outcome you would like to see if this area is successfully addressed. Be specific about steps that will be needed to achieve goal, who is responsible and timelines for completion.
- Make sure to collect data about your current level of performance in this area. All too often decisions are based upon impressions or emotions rather than actual facts.
- Make sure to do a root cause analysis of the situation so you are not just addressing the obvious symptoms of the issue. Rushing to a solution without understanding all of the possible causes hinders creativity and effective problem solving.
- Take a holistic view. Address issues systemically to avoid issues in the future or in other programs within your agency.

- Identify specific, measurable goals and time frames to conduct regular reviews of the data that is being collected. Do not be afraid to change strategies mid-stream if there is no improvement.
- Publicize and discuss the areas of improvement so all members of the organization are aware of the agency's goals.
- Once success has been achieved, spend some time making sure that this change has been incorporated into the way you do business from now on. Otherwise, the improvements may prove to be temporary and you will be back to the same problems in the future.
- Ensure that your goals support improved person centered outcomes for the individuals that you support and are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Ensure that your plan includes goals that assist individuals move on a career path toward individual employment.