

Quality Improv(e) Methods & Mindset

Five Simple Tools

Knowing the science of improvement is not enough. Successful leaders also apply the psychology of change to their toughest improvement challenges, using adaptive methods and a collaborative mindset to meet people where they are and help them move forward. These collaborative tools can be used in complement with traditional quality improvement models to help you further engage your stakeholders.

Collaborative Tool	Question	Key Concepts
Collaborative Mindset (Quality Improv(e))	What if you met people and problems where they were, moved forward as a high functioning team, and were able to test and learn together?	“Yes, and...” Practice “yes” instead of “no” or “but”. Honor the gifts and offerings people give and create a safe and supportive environment.
Reframe the Problem (Design Thinking)	What if you flipped the script from “You are broken and need fixing” to “What experience(s) are we trying to create?”	“<Who> needs a way to <what> because <why>?” Focus on the experience you are trying to create for people.
Be Inspired by the Good (Appreciative Inquiry)	What if you started by looking at what is working well, rather than focusing on what is wrong?	“What’s working well?” Imagine what is possible and build on strengths.
Consider What Not to Do as Your Guide (Reverse Brainstorming)	What if you just stopped doing things that guaranteed failure?	“What are all the ways we could sabotage our goal?” Create a plan to do the opposite of what would ensure your failure.
The Productive Level of Distress (Adaptive Leadership)	What if we expected and accepted that people will have a full range of emotions regarding the change?	“I feel _____, and I’m curious about what will happen.” Ask how people feel. Foster curiosity about what the future holds. Work through tension.