**Sustaining Change**

**Background:** The work is not done when you have completed initial implementation of your change idea with all targeted groups. The most successful change efforts also plan strategies to make the ideas stick. To sustain change, your PDSA team will want to make the new way of doing things a part of the agency culture, that is, the standard way we do the work. You also want to identify any challenges and barriers to sustaining the new practice(s). Use this handout to plan strategies for sustaining your change implementation.

**Directions:** This worksheet can be used by the PDSA team leader alone but is best completed by the PDSA team as a group.

**Step 1: Brainstorm.**

Facilitation instructions for PDSA teams: Choose a facilitator to read the questions below out loud to your team. Allow 1-2 minutes for individuals to think about and write out their initial thoughts to the questions privately. Then move into 5-10 minutes of brainstorming time where you discuss the questions as a group. Write team answers in the box below. Use this discussion to inform your sustaining change planning as you continue in this handout.

**Questions:** Assume your PDSA team members ALL retire TOMORROW:

* What changes from PDSA tests will continue to be used in your agency?
* What could make your unit/agency revert to the old way of doing things?
* What would have to be in place to prevent your unit/agency from reverting to the old system(s)?

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**Step 2:** Individually, read the table below which contains an overview of many strategies for sustaining change.

As you read, do the follow activities on your own:

* ***Circle*** the strategies your PDSA team has already used to sustain change you have made so far. Consider whether you think your team should continue to implement these strategies.
* ***Star*** the strategies you think would be effective to help sustain change going forward. Consider what was discussed in the Step 1 brainstorm.

| **Category** | **Strategies** | **Description & Tips** | **How it works** |
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| ***Culture change*** | Align to agency values/mission | * Have a simple vision statement describing why the proposed change fits the values/mission or your agency, and positively impacts workers and/or clients * Leadership can be critical to communicating and modeling importance of sustaining change | Builds intrinsic motivation when people know the why behind sustaining new practices |
| Demonstrate link between change & practice improvements | * Make aims, successes, learning, and benefits of sustaining the proposed change clear to all staff | People may not accurately conceptualize the link between the change and the improved outcomes |
| Group decision | * Clearly identify all the workers who are working to sustain the proposed change | Knowing that many co-workers are implementing the change encourages the individual to participate |
| ***Standard work*** | Standard operating procedure (SOP) | * Instructional document that describes the process steps * Includes who is responsible * May also include approximate amount of time required for each step | Provides a framework to ensure that changes that have improved practice are consistently and reliably applied; helps with training new staff; transparent and clear method to measure staff performance against |
| Forms or checklists | * Standardizes the information gathered and/or behaviors completed during the completion of a task |
| Written definitions of current best practices | * Concretely defined descriptions, often with examples, of the behaviors that lead to best practice |
| ***Communication*** | Update and share storyboards, posters, or flyers | * Post or distribute to all impacted employees on a predetermined, regular basis to keep awareness on sustaining the change | Communicates outcomes of improvement efforts; shows progress and shares reason for effort |
| Improvement huddles | * Improvement huddles are short (10-15 min), regular check-ins among staff to anticipate problems, review performance, and support a culture of improvement * Should be consistent (weekly, monthly or quarterly depending on your stage of implementation) * Can be done as a standard agenda item at regular staff meetings | Keeps change at front of minds; allows staff to address barriers/problems quickly and ask questions |
| Staff shout-outs & encouragements | * Share good stories from improvements or words of encouragement * Could be done in-person via individual conservations or at staff meetings, as well as email | Builds intrinsic motivation |
| Keep the change visible | * Remind people of the change at consistent intervals: include a clear description of what to do, who to ask if you have questions, the reason for the effort, and what progress has already been made. * Can be done via email, at staff meetings, or other formats |  |
| ***Data*** | Monitor key measures | * Track progress on key measures for effective implementation (may not need to be as often as before when PDSA testing) * Consider using a scaled down version of the strategy you used for PDSA testing * Tip: sometimes administrative staff are willing to enter data to provide results used for checking that change has stuck * Identify the person to be notified if gains slip | Key for sustainability, engagement and contribute to building intrinsic motivation; when staff know the change is being measured, they are more likely to make it a priority |
| Report results | * Report out results to all staff participating regularly |
| ***Address barriers or costs to sustaining change*** | Proactively check for and address any barriers | * Be open and honest about barriers you faced when PDSA testing so others know what to expect. Allow for chances for others to individualize the change and/or provide feedback about it * Provide time and resources to staff as necessary continue to sustain change * Consider if there will be issues if change involves movement between departments, job functions, workflow transfers, etc. | If costs outweigh benefits, change is likely to be discontinued. |
| ***Environmental restructuring*** | Remove previous structures/forms | * As soon as possible, remove any old forms, structures, procedures, technologies so that they are no longer available to use | Makes it hard to go back |
| Make the change mistake-proof | * Set up the environment so that the correct behavior is obvious. * Examples include outlining the shape of where an object should be put back, using signs for where objects are found, setting up workspaces to use the correct form or technology because it is obvious and visible to all. | Make it as easy to accept the change and continue to do it as possible in the environment. Allows you to easily differentiate new behavior from old. |
| ***Training strategies*** | Practice new behaviors together | * Set up time to practice the new behaviors in pairs or small groups | To develop new habits, people need practice, reflection, and reminders. |
| Plan training refreshers | * Set up a standard schedule for re-training on the desired change to sustain |
| Change champions | * Change champions are coaches that are internal leaders that encourage others, answer questions, and model the change themselves * TIP: always watch for new employees that can be brought on to be new change champions | Someone must own it. Because if no one owns it, then it goes by the wayside. |
| Orient new staff | * Integrate key messages and training into new staff orientation and training | Make it standard practice from the beginning |
| ***Look for Opportunities*** | Share learnings with others at your agency | * Watch for interest from other workers, or units about implementing your change * Recruit PDSA team members to help others make the change in their locale | Responding to others’ interest by sharing and providing support maintains momentum to sustaining change in own work/unit. |
| Share learnings outside your agency | * Watch for opportunities to present on your change at regional meetings or conferences |
| ***Supervisory Supports*** | Modeling | * Models the desired behavior as a supervisor every inch of the way | Demonstrates consistency & the importance of the change. |
| Provide incentives | * Match incentives with the new desired behavior * Examples include lunch/snack at staff meeting, promotion to leadership, involvement in new agency opportunities for training or development | Uses external motivation to build excitement about sustaining the change. |
| Consistent supervisory check-in | * Set up a standard schedule to ask about implementing the desired change during supervision | Provides accountability and visibility |
| Tie to performance evaluations | * For large scale changes that are tied to work performance, the desired behaviors can be included on job descriptions and assessed on performance evaluations |
| Hire new staff that will continue to champion the changes of their predecessors | * Consider asking questions in the hiring process if new staff align with values of the practice changes and if they are willing to be part of a learning culture of improvement at the agency | Improves change of sustaining change with new staff |

**Step 3:** If working in a group, discuss your individual reflections on the table and decide on a few strategies that your team believes will be most beneficial to sustaining your change. Fill out the Sustaining Change Action Plan below to plan out your next steps.

**Sustaining Change Action Plan**

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| **Strategy Type** | **Person Responsible** | **Steps**  **(*What actions are necessary?)*** | **Timeline**  ***(When should these actions be completed?)*** | **Resources**  ***(What is needed?)*** |
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