Joint Commission Resources Mission
The mission of Joint Commission Resources (JCR) is to continuously improve the safety and quality of health care in the United States and in the international community through the provision of education, publications, consultation, and evaluation services.

Disclaimers
JCR educational programs and publications support, but are separate from, the accreditation activities of The Joint Commission. Attendees at Joint Commission Resources educational programs and purchasers of JCR publications receive no special consideration or treatment in, or confidential information about, the accreditation process. The inclusion of an organization name, product, or service in a JCR publication should not be construed as an endorsement of such organization, product, or service, nor is failure to include an organization name, product, or service to be construed as disapproval.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. Every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy at the time of publication; however, please note that laws, regulations, and standards are subject to change. Please also note that some of the examples in this publication are specific to the laws and regulations of the locality of the facility. The information and examples in this publication are provided with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in providing medical, legal, or other professional advice. If any such assistance is desired, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

© 2022 The Joint Commission and Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Published by Joint Commission Resources
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523 USA
https://www.jcrinc.com

Joint Commission Resources, Inc. (JCR), a not-for-profit affiliate of The Joint Commission, has been designated by The Joint Commission to publish publications and multimedia products. JCR reproduces and distributes these materials under license from The Joint Commission.

For more than 30 years, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health systems across the world. IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyzes learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths. IHI collaborates with a growing community to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. IHI generates optimism, harvests fresh ideas, and supports anyone, anywhere who wants to profoundly change health and health care for the better. Learn more at ihi.org.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher. Requests for permission to make copies of any part of this work should be sent to permissions@jcrinc.com.

ISBN (print): 978-1-63585-271-4

Printed in the USA
For more information about The Joint Commission, please visit https://www.jointcommission.org.

Development Team
Associate Director, Editorial, Books and Digital Subscriptions: Phyllis Crittenden
Editorial Coordinator: Kristine Stejskal
Senior Project Manager: Heather Yang
Associate Director, Production: Johanna Harris
Executive Director, Global Publishing: Catherine Chopp Hinckley, MA, PhD

Joint Commission Reviewers for the Fourth Edition
Joint Commission Division of Healthcare Quality Evaluation
Caroline Christensen, BS, Technical Project Director, Department of Standards and Survey Methods;
Susan Yendro, MSN, RN, Associate Director, Measure Coordination and Outreach, Department of Quality Measurement

Joint Commission International
Kathryn K. Leonhardt, MD, MPH, CPHQ, CPPS, Principal Consultant, International Quality & Patient Safety
# Table of Contents

Dedications ........................................................................................................................................................................... vi

**Foreword** by Kedar Mate, MD, President and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement.................................................. vii

**Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1

About the Authors ....................................................................................................................................................................... 3

**Chapter 1: Identifying Gaps in Quality and Working in Teams to Close Those Gaps** ................................................................. 5

Diagnosing an Individual ................................................................................................................................................................... 6

Diagnosing a System .................................................................................................................................................................... 6

Finding the Quality Gap ............................................................................................................................................................. 7

Evidence-Based Improvement ..................................................................................................................................................... 9

Describing Improvement Methods ........................................................................................................................................... 11

Health Equity and Its Role in Quality Improvement .................................................................................................................. 13

Interprofessional Teams for Improvement ..................................................................................................................................... 14

The Model for Improvement ....................................................................................................................................................... 16

Summary .................................................................................................................................................................................. 20

Study Questions ........................................................................................................................................................................... 22

**Chapter 2: Finding Scientific Evidence for Clinical Improvement** ................................................................................................. 25

The Importance of Evidence-Based Practice .................................................................................................................................... 26

Formulating the Right Questions.................................................................................................................................................... 28

Evaluating the Strength of Evidence ............................................................................................................................................. 31

Choosing the Right Resources Based on the Question .................................................................................................................. 34

Working with a Reference Librarian ............................................................................................................................................. 34

Summary .................................................................................................................................................................................. 35

Study Questions ........................................................................................................................................................................... 35

**Chapter 3: Identifying a Focus for Improvement** .......................................................................................................................... 37

Step 1: Identifying an Improvement Area ........................................................................................................................................ 38

Step 2: Narrowing the Focus of the Improvement Work ................................................................................................................. 40

Step 3: Creating a Global Aim Statement ......................................................................................................................................... 42

Summary .................................................................................................................................................................................. 46

Study Questions ........................................................................................................................................................................... 46
Appendix: Tools to Help Your Improvement Work ........................................................................................................... 161
Improvement Project Worksheet .................................................................................................................................................... 163
The Seven-Step Meeting Process .................................................................................................................................................. 164
Team Roles ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 164
Team Charter .................................................................................................................................................................................. 165
Readiness for Change ..................................................................................................................................................................... 166
Stakeholder Assessment ................................................................................................................................................................. 168
Complex Adaptive System ............................................................................................................................................................... 170
Time Line ........................................................................................................................................................................................ 171
Communication Plan ......................................................................................................................................................................... 172
Flowchart .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 175
Cause-and-Effect Diagram ............................................................................................................................................................. 176
Driver Diagram .................................................................................................................................................................................. 178
Tips for Developing a Survey and Collecting Real-Time Data ....................................................................................................... 181
Change Concepts Worksheet ............................................................................................................................................................ 181
Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Worksheet ......................................................................................................................................... 183
Team Evaluation ................................................................................................................................................................................ 184
Creating a Storyboard ..................................................................................................................................................................... 185
Reviewing the Literature: The CRAAP Test .................................................................................................................................... 189
Index ............................................................................................................................................................................................................. 191

Tools to Use

Many of the tools featured in the Appendix of this book are downloadable and may be adapted for use. These resources can be distributed internally to health care staff.