

# LEARNING HANDBOOK

Guidance and tools to support systematic learning before, during and after project activity in health and care

## PDSA

Plan, Do Study Act (PDSA) is a method of evaluation that allows you to test the impact of an initiative and continuously learn from your experiences, whilst improving your approach.

Tool	Time	Resources	Physicality	Interactivity
PDSA	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

### When?

PDSA cycles should be used and monitored throughout the life span of any project. It will help you to understand what you want to achieve and how you will measure the effectiveness of the initiative against your agreed aims.

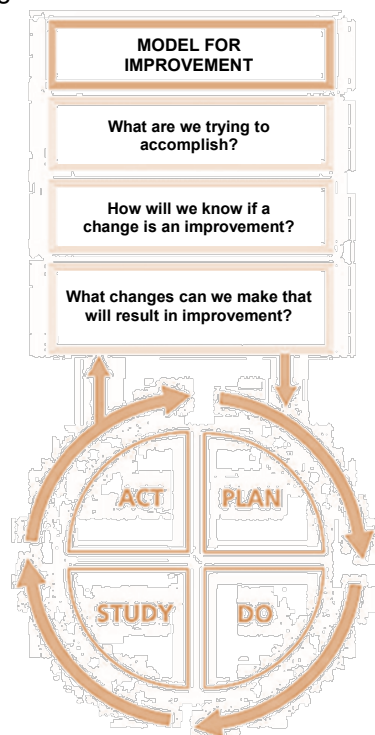
PDSA is particularly useful if you are hoping to expand a project to a wider audience as it allows you to test the impact of any efforts on a smaller scale first to minimise risk, much like a pilot.

### Who?

All members of the team should be involved and encouraged to share all relevant experience, not dependant upon hierarchy. It is essential that all experiences are heard, discussed and noted to ensure full understanding of previous learning.

### How?

PDSA cycles form part of the Associates in Process Improvement’s Model for Improvement, which provides a framework for developing, testing and implementing changes leading to improvement. The model is based in scientific method and moderates the impulse to take immediate action with the wisdom of careful study. The framework includes three key questions and a process for testing change ideas.



### What we trying to accomplish?

Teams need to set clear and focused goals. The team should fully understand the problem the improvement project is attempting to solve and the intended outcome of the project.

The team should then develop an aims statement to ensure there is a clear and concise description of what the team expects to accomplish. The aims statement should follow SMART principles and answer the question 'what are we trying to accomplish?'

The aims statement should be developed in collaboration with members of the senior leadership within your organisation to ensure full engagement and support.

The aims statement should:

- Be consistent with any national goals
- Relevant to the length of the project
- Pose a constructive challenge for the organisation
- Follow SMART principles (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely)

### How do we know if the change is an improvement?

To ensure you know whether or not the changes that occur throughout the life of the project are an improvement, you will need to measure outcomes. Your team should ensure you have a robust approach to the collection and analysis of data.

### What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

The changes your team are able to make will be individual to your organisation's structure, funding and leadership style. It is recommended you gather case studies and other evidence to inform the answer to this question.

#### Further reading:

- Institute for Innovation and Improvement - [PDSA Webpage](#)
- Langley *et al* - [Improvement guide](#)
- Project Smart - [SMART goals](#)