LEADING CHANGE TOOLKIT™

TO HELP CHANGE AGENTS AND CHANGE TEAMS MAKE LASTING IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH CARE

RNAO Healthcare Excellence Canada

Tips to enhance your gap (opportunity) analysis experience
A checklist for change agents and change teams

Completing a gap (opportunity) analysis is an essential first step toward launching a successful change initiative. Use this checklist to help you and your change team:

- understand the value of conducting a gap analysis
- find the resources you need to get the most out of a gap
- focus on considerations you need to take your next steps

Want background information about the Leading Change Toolkit? Read more.

1. Start strong: Take time to consider the current state of your practices

Completing a gap analysis can give you a clear snapshot of your current practice, as well as insight into the changes you want to make. Take the time upfront to pull together all of the data and resources you need – think chart audits, policies, observations, quality improvement metrics, staff surveys and more. This can help you identify the best starting point for change. And, it can provide a personal roadmap for planning the change initiative and documenting progress.

2. Define your goals: Get clear on the evidence

Your change team must be clear on what the best practices are before starting your gap analysis. Take the time to review the guidelines and evidence-based recommendations. This will highlight which best practice applies, and start you thinking about what support you need to achieve and sustain it (for example, documentation, education or supplies).

3. Value everyone's input on practice changes

Practice changes often involve members of an interdisciplinary team. So, it's important to commit to being inclusive and welcoming feedback from everyone, including front-line staff. This will give your change team valuable insights into the state of current practices and any potential barriers to making and sustaining change. Be aware that this will likely require talking a lot about the change, whether at staff meetings, small huddles or one-on-one sessions. Know that there may be some "crucial conversations" with candid feedback. Trust that this feedback will give you a clearer sense of others' reactions to the change and to potential priority areas of focus.

4. Start where you are at: don't wait for the perfect moment

There is no perfect time to complete a gap analysis and get started on making practice changes. Trust that change can happen if you get going and keep at it. If you need to start small, you can do so by focusing on one recommendation only and seeing where the process takes you. Consider easy wins to gain experience and build confidence and momentum.

5. Continue to keep everyone in the loop

Once you have started to use the results of your gap analysis, be sure to keep everyone updated on the progress being made especially when a recommendation moves to the "met" criteria. This will help to reinforce the value of the gap analysis and how it can support driving a practice change from planning to achievement!

6. Treat the gap analysis like a living document

Update your gap analysis documentation regularly to keep it relevant and effective. When completing the original gap, be sure to date it and include the names of the change team members who contributed to it. Then update your gap analysis as needed with details on the progress made for each of the recommendations. This can be helpful for many purposes – keeping your stakeholders updated, tracking the progress made on practice changes and having available data for quality improvement measures. Your gap analysis will also help you determine new priorities as you achieve your initial goals.

Dig Deeper: Want to know more about the "know-do" gap and the Knowledge to Action (KTA) Framework? Read more about **the KTA Framework** https://rnao.ca/leading-change-toolkit/determining-the-knowledge-to-practice-gap-know-do-gap and **the knowledge-to-practice gap** rnao.ca/leading-change-toolkit/determining-the-knowledge-to-practice-gap-