

# PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) TOOL



## The PDSA method is a way to test a change that is implemented<sup>1</sup>

Keep the following in mind when completing the worksheet and using the PDSA cycles to implement the continuous quality improvement (CQI) process<sup>1</sup>:



Each PDSA cycle is a **single segment** of the CQI process. Break down the task into steps and then evaluate the outcome, improve on it, and test again.



Each PDSA cycle should be **as brief as possible** for you to gain knowledge regarding whether it works or not.



Start with a **small sample size**. A PDSA will likely involve only a portion of the institution or practice. Once feedback is obtained and the process is refined, the implementation can be broadened to include the whole institution.

## Fill out your background, aims, and measures<sup>2</sup>

### Background or problem statement

*Why are you doing this? What is the problem? Who is affected? How does this affect the patient?  
Current situation is [blank] which leads to [blank] (ie, your problem).*

### Aim

*What are you trying to accomplish?*

### Measures

*How will you know that a change is an improvement?*

Fill out the tool name, smaller step, and the cycle number<sup>1</sup>

Tool \_\_\_\_\_

Step \_\_\_\_\_ Cycle \_\_\_\_\_

**1** | The cycle begins with the **Plan step**. This involves identifying a goal or purpose, formulating a theory, defining success metrics, and putting a plan into action<sup>1,3</sup>

I plan to \_\_\_\_\_

I hope this produces \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to execute \_\_\_\_\_

**2** | The **Do step** follows, in which the components of the plan are implemented and the new process is communicated to the team<sup>1,3</sup>

We observed \_\_\_\_\_

**3** | Next comes the **Study step**, where outcomes are monitored to evaluate the plan for progress and success, as well as to identify problems with the plan and areas for improvement<sup>1,3</sup>

What did we learn? \_\_\_\_\_

Did we meet our measurement goal? \_\_\_\_\_

**4** | The **Act step** closes the cycle, integrating the learning generated by the entire process, which can be used to adjust the methods, reformulate the process altogether, or broaden the learning/improvement cycle from a small-scale experiment to a larger implementation plan<sup>1,3</sup>

What did we conclude from this cycle? \_\_\_\_\_

**References:** 1. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) directions and examples (09-2020). <https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/tool2b.html>. Accessed 01-26-2021. 2. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Worksheet for developing your quality improvement project. [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/armstrong\\_institute/\\_files/patient%20safety%20and%20quality%20improvement%20project%20tools/spirit\\_toolkit/module%203\\_worksheet%20for%20qi%20project.pdf](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/armstrong_institute/_files/patient%20safety%20and%20quality%20improvement%20project%20tools/spirit_toolkit/module%203_worksheet%20for%20qi%20project.pdf). Accessed 1-19-2021. 3. The W. Edwards Deming Institute. PDSA Cycle (2020). <https://deming.org/explore/pdsa>. Accessed 12-19-2020.

