

Tip Sheet - How To Use Data

Goal: Tips for how to use data for continuous quality improvement effectively, and how to make data interesting, relevant, and meaningful to different stakeholders.

1. **Have a Data/CQI standing agenda item at each County Leadership Team meeting.**
2. **Choose a data topic for each meeting – see below for ideas!**
 - ❖ Log into your data dashboards <https://yftidash.upmc.com/idashboards/> to find information.
 - ❖ Look at public county-level data sources – links available on PA CARE website: <https://www.pacarepartnership.org/resources/evaluation-resources/>
 - ❖ Look at census (descriptive and demographic) data to get a better sense of your county’s minority populations around race/ethnicity/language/culture.
 - ❖ Ask a different leadership team member to choose a topic for the following month’s meeting and be responsible for bringing some data (a few slides/charts) to discuss.
 - ❖ Let the natural discussion of each meeting identify a topic for the following month.
 - ❖ Allow curiosity/questions to arise first, and then the group begins to identify the data that can help to answer the question or illuminate the discussion.
 - ❖ Develop a list of important topics and schedule them for the next 6 months of meetings so that everyone can bring something relevant to discuss.
3. **Choose a reason to look at data and how to focus the discussion.**
 - ❖ **Strengths-based** – look at positive things, discuss possible strengths of your county that may have led to the positive results, and celebrate successes around the work that your county has done that has made a difference.
 - ❖ **Challenges** – look at barriers to positive change, discuss what possible challenges your county has that may have led to the negative results, discuss the elephant in the room, and identify areas for improvement.
 - ❖ **Outcomes** – focus on one particular county program, service, support, etc. and look at a small number of outcomes to see how the program is functioning and what is working/not working.
 - ✓ Bring in staff and/or family/youth who have participated to help think about the outcomes.
 - ❖ **Confusing/conflicting information** - spark discussion from different perspectives around the table (family, youth, systems, providers, community, etc.) - ask critical questions and reflect about why some information is mixed or conflicting.
 - ❖ **Lack of information** – identify areas where there is a need for more data and brainstorm ways that you could obtain more information about the topic.
4. **Develop a plan about next steps.**
 - a. Identify what you want to do to make sure that the good work continues.
 - b. Choose and prioritize areas that you want to improve or adjust.
 - c. Discuss whether you have all the information you need or if you need to brainstorm more ideas/sources of data, etc.
 - d. Discuss who, what, when, where, how, why the plan will be developed around CQI.
 - e. Decide when updates will be made to the group and how the group will be informed of progress.

What are general tips around presenting data?

- Choose data that are relevant and timely to the issues/needs that are current to your stakeholders.
- Stakeholders are more likely to listen to data if it is coming from a peer.
- Provide data in different formats so there is the ability to multi-task while absorbing information.
- Background information and a key of acronyms and/or definitions are important for the presentation.
- Provide a reference sheet that defines data/evaluation terms and general information to make reading data easier.
- Utilize personal stories and reviews of the program/process to help enhance the numbers/data.
- The role of systems and how they communicate, integrate, use their own language, etc. is often the difficult part to grasp and change for youth/families.

What do youth, family, provider, and system partners look for in data?

Family

- Simple graphs, not lists of numbers, not overly busy with data
- Demographics/System involvement – are these families similar to me and my experience?
- Clearly observable so the untrained eye can easily see the point of the data
- Data to show the importance and impact of Family Voice and Choice
- How will it make a difference in family life? / Improvement in Family Functioning
- Education information – improvement in attendance/performance/discipline
- Data to show lower out of home residential placement/ youth returning home faster
- Family satisfaction / found process helpful and engaging
- Good outcomes for youth – at home, in school, out of trouble, and in the community

Youth

- Demographics/System involvement – are these youth similar to me and my experience?
- See simple information at a glance, with the choice to dig deeper
- Simple graphs – with more visual aspects
- Appeal to a variety of different learning styles
- Send data through Facebook and other social media formats that are already familiar
- More likely to listen to data if it is coming from a peer
- Youth satisfaction – have other youth found it enjoyable/ are they satisfied with outcomes?
- How will it make a difference in my life? / Will I feel better?

Provider

- Where referrals are coming from?
- Who is participating in the process/treatment?
- Can I convince youth/families that they should put the time into the process/treatment?
- Data to help show youth that were engaged and that it was helpful
- Data to show it can reduce length of stay in residential placement
- Data to show cost savings for providers
- Data to convince systems that it is a good investment to increase referrals

System Partners

- Improved access to care
- Lower cost to systems
- Data that is tailored to the needs of each system so that the outcomes are meaningful and specific to their needs
- Data that they can use to compare to their own system data to increase validity
- Cross-system data to show outcomes/cost savings in integrating and coordinating with other systems