

Conducting a Change Project

Base Your Project on Five Questions

1. What is it like to be our customer?
2. What are we trying to accomplish?
3. How will we know if a change is an improvement?
4. What changes can we test that may result in an improvement?
5. How can we sustain the improvement?

Fill These Key Roles

- **Executive Sponsor:** Appoints the Change Leader and works to remove all barriers to the Change Project
- **Change Leader:** Provides daily leadership, energy, enthusiasm, and coordination of Change Project
- **Change Team:** The staff members selected to work on the Change Project

Walk-through: Understand your customer

In a walk-through, staff members experience the treatment processes just as a customer does. The goal is to see the agency from the customer's perspective. Taking this perspective of services—from the first call for help, to the intake process, and through final discharge—is the most useful way to understand how the customer feels, and to discover how to make improvements that will serve the customer better.

PDSA Cycles for testing and implementing change

The PDSA Cycle is an efficient way to learn what will work in your organization, and should be the foundation of every change you make. The PDSA Cycle begins with a Plan and ends with Action based on what you learn from the Plan, Do, and Study phases of the cycle:



Plan the change or test. What is the aim of the test, and how will you know if the change being tested is an improvement? What do you predict will happen? What steps are needed to prepare for the test (who, what where, when)?

Do the plan. Document problems and unexpected observations. Begin to analyze the data.

Study the results. Complete the analysis of the **data**. Compare the actual results to the predicted results. Has the change resulted in an improvement? Why or why not? Summarize what you have learned.

Act on the new knowledge. Should the change be increased in scope or tested under different conditions? Should you adopt, adapt, or abandon the change? What will be your next change cycle?

Measure Change

By **collecting data** before, during, and after the change you implement, you can measure, evaluate, and compare your progress toward the goals you set. Use a simple method to collect data—there's no need to develop a complex measurement system. Measuring change should speed up your project.





NIATxTM Smart Chart



A Quick Guide to the NIATx Model of Process Improvement

About NIATx

NIATx began in 2003 as a partnership between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Paths to Recovery program, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment's Strengthening Treatment Access and Retention (STAR) program, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and a number of independent addiction treatment organizations. Today, more than 3,500 organizations in a variety of human services use the NIATx process improvement model to improve their systems and business practices.

As a learning collaborative within the UW–Madison's **Center for Health Enhancement Systems Studies**, NIATx provides research, case studies, and technical assistance and training.

NIATx Aims: The Original 4 – NIATx promotes systems change and innovation with a focus on four aims:



Reduce waiting time

between first request for service and first treatment session



Increase admissions

to treatment



Reduce no-shows by reducing the number of patients who do not keep an appointment



Increase continuation

from the first through the fourth treatment session

Expanding the NIATx Aims – The NIATx model has also successfully addressed other aims, such as:

- Improving **transitions** between levels of care
- Reducing **readmissions**
- Implementing medication-assisted treatment and other **evidence-based practices**
- Improving **business practices** and systems: billing, contracting, and reimbursement

*In fact, NIATx users have found that the NIATx model works with **any aim in any organization** looking to improve its systems, no matter who the customer or the type of service provided.*

Five Key Principles – of the NIATx Model

1. Understand and involve the customer
2. Fix key problems that keep the CEO awake at night
3. Pick a powerful change leader
4. Get ideas from outside the organization or field
5. Use rapid-cycle testing to establish effective changes

www.niatx.net