Spread and Sustainability of Change

RESOURCE CARDS

BC Prehabilitation Toolkit

A practical tool for planning, spreading, and sustaining change

"Change" is often viewed as a single event — a moment in time when a new way of working is introduced. While this moment of change is important, what truly determines success is how people and systems transition from old ways of working to new ones.

For change to succeed, it must be adopted by teams, integrated into everyday practice, and sustained over time. Spread and sustainability address both the process of implementation and the people experiencing the change. When these elements are aligned, improvements can be successfully adopted and shared across teams and organizations.

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⚙ What is SPREAD

The SPREAD framework identifies six critical areas that influence the spread and sustainability of change: Support, Positive Culture, Resources, Engagement, Adoption and Desired Results.

S – Support
Leadership visibility, communication, and support for change

P – Positive Culture
Shared values and behaviours that encourage improvement

R – Resources
Capacity, skills, and infrastructure needed for change

E – Engagement
Involving and motivating people affected by change

A – Adoption
Integrating new practices into everyday workflows

D – Desired Results
Measuring outcomes and sustaining improvements

These resource cards highlight common risks that can prevent change from spreading or being sustained and provide practical strategies to help teams strengthen implementation and long-term success.

⚙ How to Use This Deck

This deck is intended as a support resource to help you foster the spread and sustainability of change.

The deck includes six critical areas that impact spread and sustainability: Support, Positive Culture, Resources, Engagement, Adoption, and Desired Results (S·P·R·E·A·D).

Each critical area includes four theme cards representing common factors that influence whether change initiatives succeed or struggle.

Each card helps teams identify and address potential challenges by providing:

Risk – A potential barrier that may affect implementation.

Why This Happens – Common dynamics that contribute to the challenge.

Quick Signals – Early indicators that the risk may be emerging.

Mitigation Strategy – Approaches that can help address the risk.

Practical Tactics – Specific actions teams can take.

Questions for Project Teams – Prompts to support discussion and planning.

Use the cards to identify which challenges may be present in your context and to generate practical strategies that strengthen the spread and sustainability of change within your system.

⚙ For More Information

Want to learn more about Doctors of BC and/or the BC Surgical Prehabilitation Toolkit? For more information please visit: **sscbc.ca**

Feedback and Ideas

Have ideas, feedback, or requests for the S·P·R·E·A·D Resource Cards? We would love to hear from you. Please share your thoughts by contacting us at: **ssc@doctorsofbc.com**

SOURCES

The following sources were referenced in the creation of these cards:

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Managing Transitions, 4th Edition: Making the Most of Change
William Bridges & Susan Bridges

www.mindtools.com/pages/article/bridges-transition-model.htm

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www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/fisher-transition-curve-2012bb.pdf

hbr.org/2008/07/choosing-strategies-for-change

The EQ Development Group Ltd
"Leading Change" course materials

The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, Peter M. Senge

blog.prosci.com/individual-barriers-to-change-and-what-to-do-about-them

pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d65a/0a5d1c13408ccac8d002d172e81334a13d8d.pdf

Visible Leadership

When leaders are present and engaged, teams are more likely to adopt and sustain new practices.

Risk

Staff do not feel connected to the leaders driving the change initiative.

Why This Happens

When leaders are not visible or engaged, staff may assume the initiative is not a priority or that leadership does not understand frontline realities.

Quick Signals

- Staff unsure who is leading the initiative
- Low engagement in change activities
- Skepticism about leadership commitment

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Ensure leaders are visible,
accessible, and actively engaged
with teams affected by the change.

Practical Tactics

- Spend time in operational areas
  connecting with staff
- Hold informal drop-in sessions
- Follow up announcements with
  direct conversations
- Respond visibly to staff feedback

Questions for Project Teams

- Do staff know who is leading
  this initiative?
- How visible are leaders
  to frontline teams?
- What opportunities exist for
  leadership engagement?

Encouragement

When people feel supported, they are more willing to engage with and sustain new ways of working.

Risk

Staff feel unsupported during the transition to new practices.

Why This Happens

Change often creates uncertainty and fear of losing competence or control.

Quick Signals

- Staff expressing frustration or anxiety
- Resistance to new processes
- Reduced morale or energy

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Provide emotional and practical
support throughout the transition.

Practical Tactics

- Acknowledge uncertainty openly
- Encourage discussion
  of challenges
- Offer coaching or mentorship
- Recognize progress and effort

Questions for Project Teams

- What concerns are staff expressing?
- How can leaders support teams
  during transition?

Feedback and Ideas

When teams can contribute input, changes are more relevant, accepted, and sustained.

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Risk

Staff feel their input is not heard or valued.

Why This Happens

When feedback channels are unclear or ignored, people disengage from the initiative.

Quick Signals

- Staff stop offering suggestions
- Concerns shared informally instead of constructively
- Repeated complaints about unresolved issues

✿ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Create clear and visible systems
for gathering and responding
to feedback.

Practical Tactics

- Maintain a visible list
  of questions and issues
- Provide accessible
  feedback channels
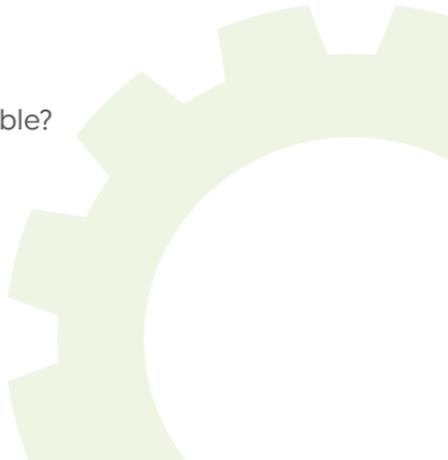- Share updates on actions taken
- Encourage staff suggestions

Questions for Project Teams

- How are staff currently
  providing feedback?
- Are responses to feedback visible?

Communication

When information is shared effectively, teams understand expectations and are more likely to adopt change.

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Risk

Teams lack clear and consistent information about the change initiative.

Why This Happens

In the absence of clear communication, people often create their own interpretations.

Quick Signals

- Staff asking the same questions repeatedly
- Conflicting information across teams
- Rumours about the initiative

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Provide clear, consistent
communication throughout
implementation.

Practical Tactics

- Share regular updates
- Use multiple
  communication channels
- Reinforce key messages
- Clarify decisions and expectations

Questions for Project Teams

- What information do staff
  need most?
- Are messages about
  the initiative consistent?

Model the Way

When leaders and peers model the change, it reinforces expectations and builds trust.

⚠ Risk

Leaders promote behaviours they do not demonstrate.

? Why This Happens

Staff closely observe leadership behaviour during change.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Leaders not following new processes
- Staff questioning leadership credibility
- Mixed messages about expectations

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Ensure leaders demonstrate the
behaviours they expect from others.

Practical Tactics

- Model new practices
- Participate in early implementation
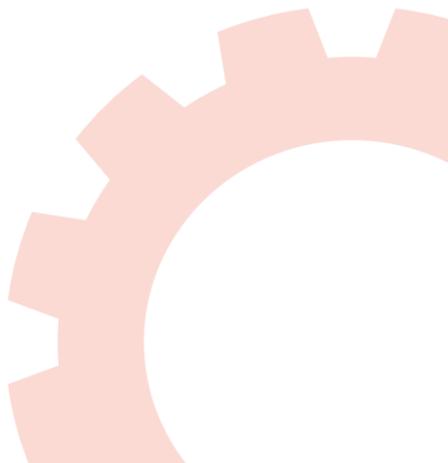- Share personal experiences
  adopting the change

Questions for Project Teams

- Are leaders modelling the change?
- What behaviours should
  leaders demonstrate?

Rewarding Work

When contributions are acknowledged, teams are more likely to sustain effort and engagement.

Risk

Staff do not see how the initiative improves patient care or their work.

Why This Happens

People are more motivated when they see meaningful outcomes.

Quick Signals

- Low enthusiasm for the initiative
- Staff questioning its value
- Limited engagement with implementation activities

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Connect the initiative
to meaningful outcomes.

Practical Tactics

- Share patient stories
- Highlight improvements in care
- Celebrate milestones

Questions for Project Teams

- How does this initiative improve
  care or service?
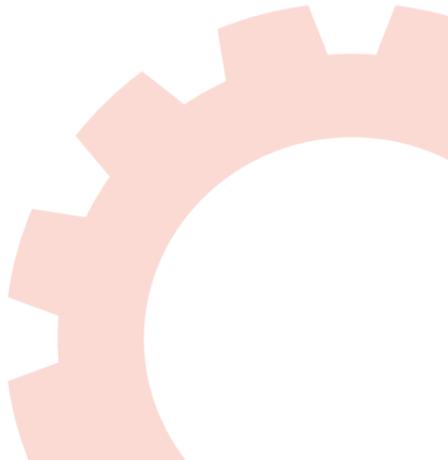- How can we highlight
  positive outcomes?

Shared Purpose

When people understand the purpose, they are more committed to adopting and sustaining change.

Risk
Different teams interpret the initiative differently.

Why This Happens
Without a shared understanding, teams may focus on different priorities.

Quick Signals
- Inconsistent implementation across departments
- Confusion about goals
- Competing priorities

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Create alignment around
a shared purpose.

Practical Tactics

- Clarify goals and expectations
- Reinforce shared objectives
- Align leadership messaging

Questions for Project Teams

- Are teams aligned on the
  purpose of the change?

Learning Culture

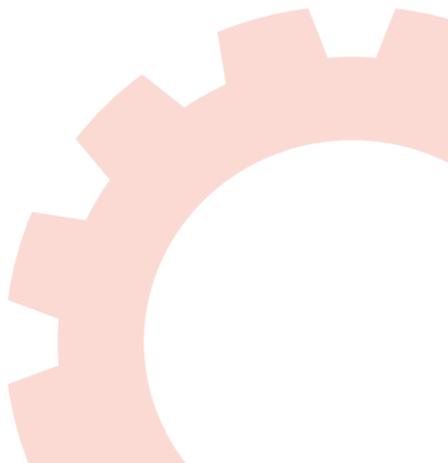When teams feel safe to learn and adjust, change is more likely to be sustained over time.

⚠ Risk

Staff hesitate to share mistakes or lessons learned.

? Why This Happens

Fear of blame discourages learning and open discussion.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Limited discussion of challenges
- Staff reluctant to speak openly
- Repeated mistakes

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Encourage open learning
and reflection.

Practical Tactics

- Share lessons learned
- Encourage reflective discussions
- Celebrate small improvements

Questions for Project Teams

- What are we learning from
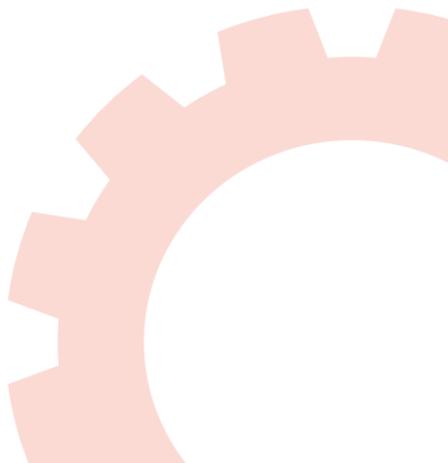 this implementation?

SEE ALSO

SUPPORT
Encouragement

SUPPORT
Feedback
and Ideas

ADOPTION
PDSA Cycles

Capacity

When teams have sufficient capacity, they are better able to adopt and sustain change.

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⚠ Risk

Teams lack time or staffing to support the initiative.

? Why This Happens

Change initiatives often compete with operational priorities.

🏳 Quick Signals

- Staff reporting workload pressure
- Implementation tasks delayed
- Burnout or fatigue

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Ensure adequate capacity
for implementation.

Practical Tactics

- Prioritize initiatives
- Adjust workloads where possible
- Provide additional support
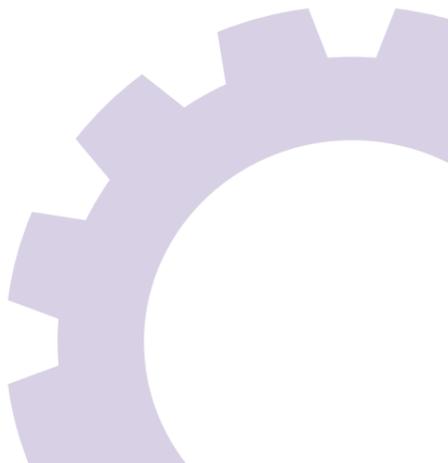
Questions for Project Teams

- Do teams have capacity to
  support this initiative?

Investment

When initiatives are properly supported, they are more likely to succeed and endure.

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⚠ Risk

Organizations fail to invest in staff development.

? Why This Happens

Sustainable change requires investment in people and learning.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Limited training opportunities
- Staff feeling unprepared
- Lack of professional development

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Support ongoing learning
and development.

Practical Tactics

- Provide training opportunities
- Offer protected learning time
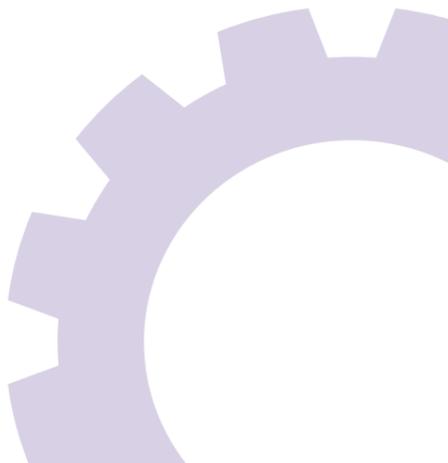- Encourage professional growth

Questions for Project Teams

- What development opportunities
  are needed?

Training and Education

When teams understand what to do and how to do it, adoption becomes more consistent.

⚠ Risk

Staff lack the skills required to implement the change.

? Why This Happens

New processes often require new knowledge and competencies.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Staff unsure how to apply new practices
- Frequent errors or confusion
- Dependence on informal workarounds

✿ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Provide targeted training
and education.

Practical Tactics

- Assess training needs
- Offer learning sessions
- Provide ongoing support

Questions for Project Teams

- What knowledge or skills
  are required?

Accessibility

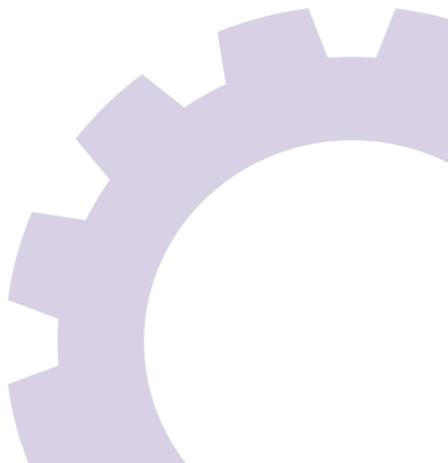When resources are easy to access, teams are more able to integrate change into practice.

Risk
Learning resources are difficult to access.

Why This Happens
Resources may not be easy to locate or use.

Quick Signals
- Staff unaware of training opportunities
- Low attendance at learning sessions
- Difficulty finding information

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Provide accessible learning resources.

Practical Tactics

- Provide online learning options
- Offer mentoring
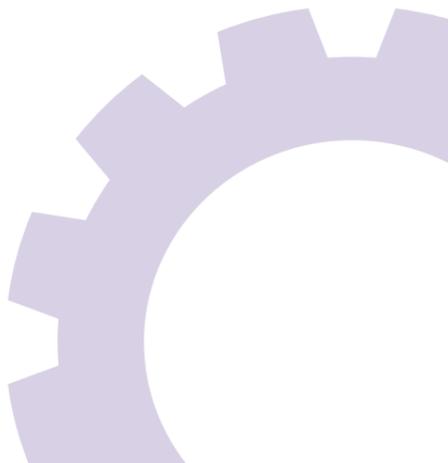- Encourage peer learning

Questions for Project Teams

- How can learning resources
  be made more accessible?

Valued Contribution

When people see their contributions matter, they are more committed to sustaining change.

Risk
Staff feel their contributions are not recognized.

Why This Happens
Recognition reinforces motivation and engagement.

Quick Signals
· Reduced participation
· Low motivation
· Limited initiative

✿ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Recognize and
celebrate contributions.

Practical Tactics

- Publicly acknowledge
  contributions
- Celebrate milestones
- Thank staff personally

Questions for Project Teams

- How do we recognize
  team contributions?

Understanding Motivation

When change aligns with what matters
to people, adoption is more likely.

Risk

Leaders overlook what motivates individuals.

Why This Happens

Different people are motivated by different factors.

Quick Signals

- Declining enthusiasm
- Minimal participation
- Reduced initiative

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Understand what motivates
team members.

Practical Tactics

- Ask staff about motivators
- Provide meaningful recognition
- Celebrate achievements

Questions for Project Teams

- What motivates our
  team members?

Involvement

When people are involved in shaping change, they are more likely to support it.

Risk

Staff are excluded from decisions affecting their work.

Why This Happens

People support what they help create.

Quick Signals

- Staff saying "this was decided without us"
- Low participation in planning
- Resistance to implementation

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Involve staff early in planning.

Practical Tactics

- Invite participation in
  planning sessions
- Create working groups
- Engage frontline teams

Questions for Project Teams

- Who needs to be involved
  in planning?

Ownership

When teams feel responsible for change, they are more likely to sustain it.

Risk
Teams feel change is imposed on them.

Why This Happens
Without ownership, initiatives lose momentum.

Quick Signals
· Passive compliance
· Minimal engagement
· Lack of initiative

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Empower teams to take ownership.

Practical Tactics

- Encourage local adaptation
- Support experimentation
- Allow contextual solutions

Questions for Project Teams

- Where can teams take ownership
  of implementation?

Process Simplicity

When changes are easy to understand and use, teams are more likely to implement them consistently.

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Risk
Implementation processes become overly complex.

Why This Happens
Complexity discourages adoption.

Quick Signals
- Staff avoiding new processes
- Confusion about steps
- Workarounds developing

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Simplify implementation processes.

Practical Tactics

- Reduce unnecessary steps
- Clarify expectations
- Use visual guides

Questions for Project Teams

- How can we simplify this process?

PDSA Cycles
(Plan, Do, Study, Act)

When teams can test and refine changes, implementation becomes more effective and sustainable.

Risk
Changes are implemented without testing.

Why This Happens
Testing allows improvement before scaling.

Quick Signals
- Large changes implemented quickly
- Limited feedback from teams
- Unexpected issues emerging

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Use iterative testing cycles.

Practical Tactics

- Pilot small changes
- Gather feedback
- Adjust based on learning

Questions for Project Teams

- What small test could we run first?

Reason for Change

When people understand the "why," they are more likely to engage and adopt new practices.

··

⚠ Risk

Staff do not understand why the change matters.

? Why This Happens

Understanding purpose increases engagement.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Questions about the purpose
- Low enthusiasm
- Skepticism about value

✿ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Clearly communicate the rationale.

Practical Tactics

- Explain the reason for change
- Link the initiative to outcomes
- Reinforce purpose regularly

Questions for Project Teams

- Do teams understand the reason
  for change?

Workflow Integration

When changes align with how work is done, they are more likely to be sustained.

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⚠ **Risk**

The initiative does not fit local workflows.

? **Why This Happens**

Teams operate in different contexts.

⚑ **Quick Signals**

- Workarounds emerging
- Frustration with new processes
- Inconsistent implementation

⚙ **Now what do we do about this?**
To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Adapt implementation to
local realities.

Practical Tactics

- Map workflows
- Identify barriers
- Allow flexibility in implementation

Questions for Project Teams

- What local factors
  affect implementation?

SEE ALSO

RESOURCES
Training and
Education

ENGAGEMENT
Involvement

ADOPTION
Process Simplicity

Impact measurement

When teams can see results, they are more likely to sustain and build on change.

⚠ Risk

Teams cannot see whether the change is working.

❓ Why This Happens

Visible results reinforce engagement and momentum.

🚩 Quick Signals

- Staff unsure about results
- Limited data sharing
- Reduced motivation

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Measure and share
meaningful outcomes.

Practical Tactics

- Track outcomes
- Share results regularly
- Highlight improvements

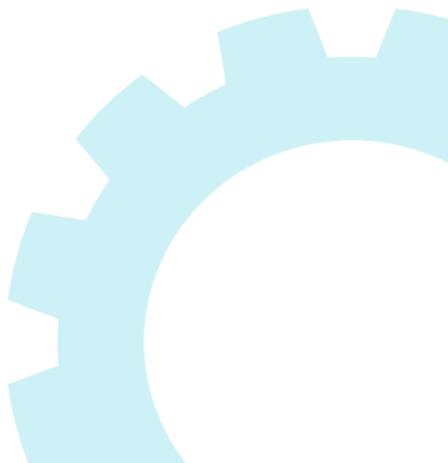## Questions for Project Teams

- What outcomes matter most?

Monitoring Outcomes

When outcomes are tracked over time, teams can adjust and sustain improvements.

Risk

Results are not monitored over time.

Why This Happens

Without monitoring, improvements fade.

Quick Signals

- Performance rarely reviewed
- Improvements declining
- Lack of follow-up

✿ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Establish regular monitoring.

Practical Tactics

- Schedule review cycles
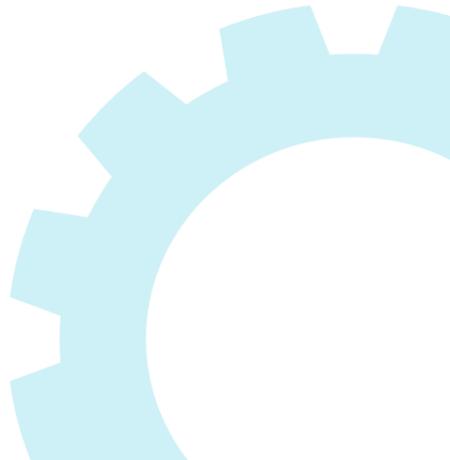- Share data with teams
- Adjust processes as needed

Questions for Project Teams

- How often should outcomes
  be reviewed?

Data Collection

When relevant data is available, teams can better understand and improve implementation.

Risk

Data collection becomes burdensome.

Why This Happens

Too much reporting discourages participation.

Quick Signals

- Complaints about reporting workload
- Incomplete data
- Delayed reporting

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Simplify data collection.

Practical Tactics

- Collect essential data only
- Automate reporting where possible
- Provide support

Questions for Project Teams

- What data is truly necessary?

SEE ALSO
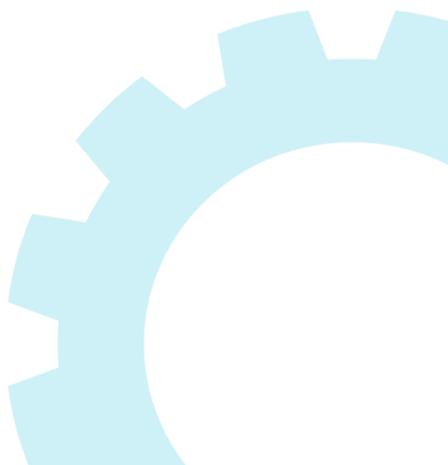
ADOPTION
Keep It Simple

DESIRED RESULTS
Monitoring
Outcomes

DESIRED RESULTS
Impact
Measurement

Innovation

When teams are encouraged to innovate, change can evolve and be sustained over time.

⚠ Risk

Teams lose momentum and creativity.

? Why This Happens

Continuous improvement requires experimentation.

⚑ Quick Signals

- Few new ideas emerging
- Teams relying on old approaches
- Improvement slowing

⚙ Now what do we do about this?

To strengthen this area, focus on practical actions
that support teams and reduce barriers to implementation.

Mitigating Strategy

Encourage innovation and
experimentation.

Practical Tactics

- Brainstorm new ideas
- Support experimentation
- Celebrate creative solutions

Questions for Project Teams

- How can we encourage new ideas?

SEE ALSO

POSITIVE CULTURE
Learning Culture

RESOURCES
Investment

ADOPTION
PDSA Cycles