

Building CQI Resilience in your Organization, Team, and Yourself

CQI Community Webinar

Anita Larson

Paige Webb

September 25, 2026

Presenters



Building CQI Resilience in your Organization, Team, and Yourself

Friday, September 25, 2026
11 AM – 12:30 PM CT
Virtual Event via Zoom

This session explores how CQI can strengthen its strategic impact by aligning its work with an organization's measurement and data-use practices.



Presenter

Paige Webb, BSW

Senior Director of Performance Excellence
Cornerstones of Care

Presenter

Anita M Larson, DPA

Vice President
Quality & Evaluation, Nexus Family Healing



Objectives

Introduce a planning and strategic framework for CQI that helps explain

- Where an organization is in its CQI, data use, and measurement maturity,
- Where your CQI team is in terms of capacities to support the organization, and
- Where individual CQI practitioners are in terms of skills and knowledge

So that organizations can evolve, teams and individuals can grow and continue to add value.



Format

1. Please open the continuum PDF on another screen if you have one.
2. Paige will offer insights on the continuum from her and her organization's perspective.
3. We are interested in YOUR insights and would welcome your comments throughout the session.

Value and Resilience

1. Understand where your organization may go next (and what infrastructure is needed)
2. Understand what barriers stand between where your organization is and where leaders want it to be
3. Understand what skills a CQI team needs to proactively contribute and meet organization needs
4. Determine what skills individual CQI team members want to acquire to build and strengthen relevance
5. Identify your ideal organization as a CQI professional to increase your job satisfaction and growth

Proactive Positioning

Why think about this?

CQI is typically

- Reactive
- Executor (taking direction from others)
- Monitor
- Informer
- Assessor
- “Tracker” of compliance



We can be and do more.

Continuum

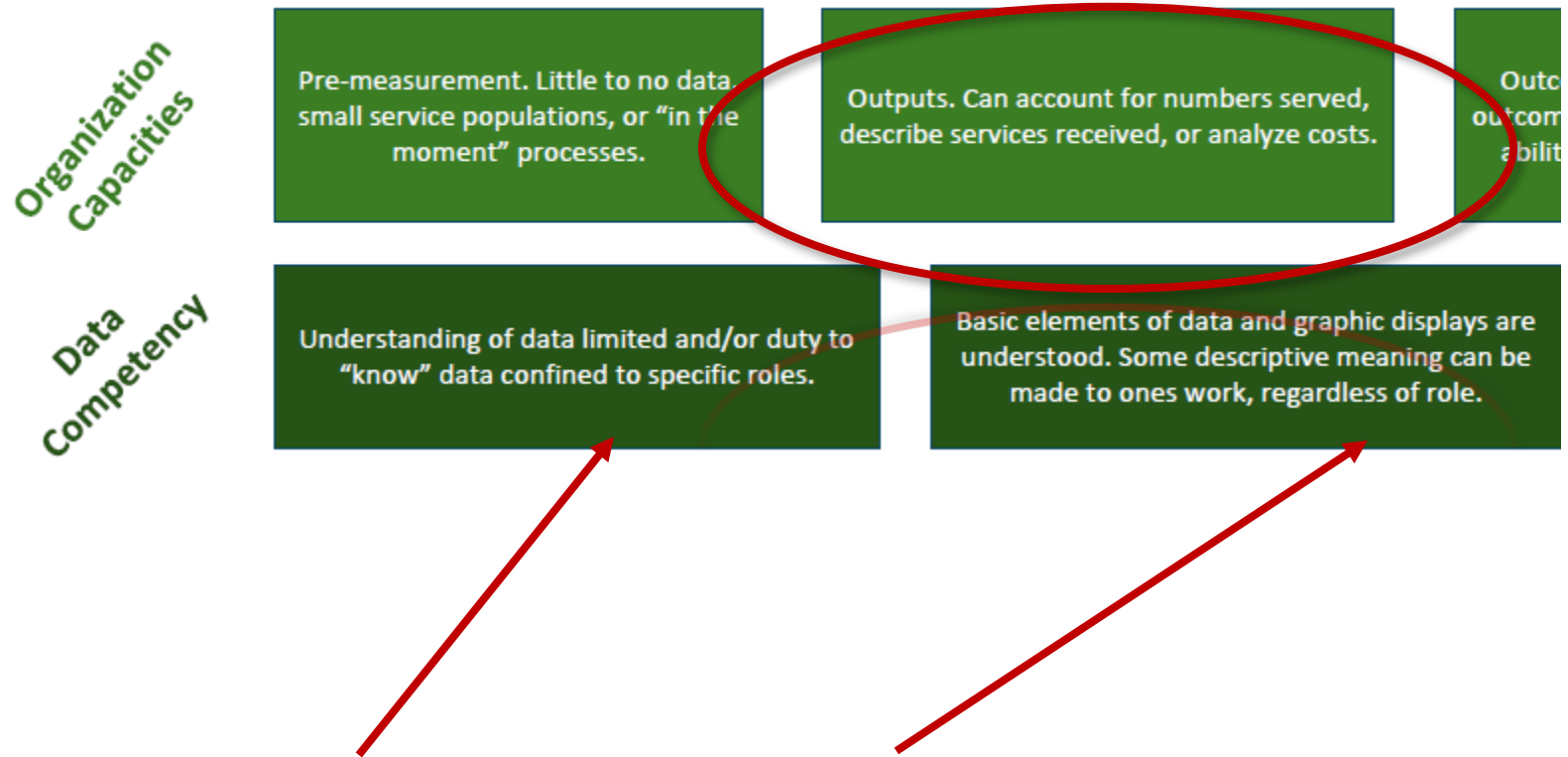
MEASUREMENT & DATA USE CONTINUUM

Anita M Larson, DPA
anita.larson65@gmail.com



Increasing rigor, complexity, and maturity of data use.

Capacities & Competency



Evaluation Capacity (“Evaluability”)

“evaluation” and “rigorous measurement”

- An organization’s readiness to engage in robust measurement of performance is referred to as evaluability.
 - *“The extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion” (OECD-DAC 2010; p.21)*
 - Evaluability Assessments include multiple attributes including data quality, theories of change, use of EBPs, etc.
- As an organization moves to the right along the continuum, it will need more than compliance monitoring from CQI.

CQI Role and Internal Evaluation

(Activities and Capacity)

(Love, 1998) first used the phrase “internal evaluation” in social work practice as comprised of six stages/types

- I. Ad hoc evaluation
- II. **Systematic evaluation**
- III. Goal evaluation
- IV. Effectiveness evaluation
- V. Efficiency evaluation
- VI. Strategic benefit



Stages of Evaluation

Pre-measurement. Little to no data, small service populations, or “in the moment” processes.

Outputs. Can account for numbers served, describe services received, or analyze costs.

Outcomes. Data to demonstrate short-term outcomes (e.g., overall improvement), emerging ability to understand differential outcomes.

Confidence in long-term outcomes. Practices (EBP) and short-term outcomes align with known research on long-term impacts. Variation can be acted upon for improvement.

Mature service and maintenance of quality. Data consistently monitored to assess adherence to models (EBP) and contributing factors to improvement. Ability to adjust to changing conditions or populations.

Ad hoc evaluation

Systematic evaluation

Effectiveness evaluation

Goal evaluation

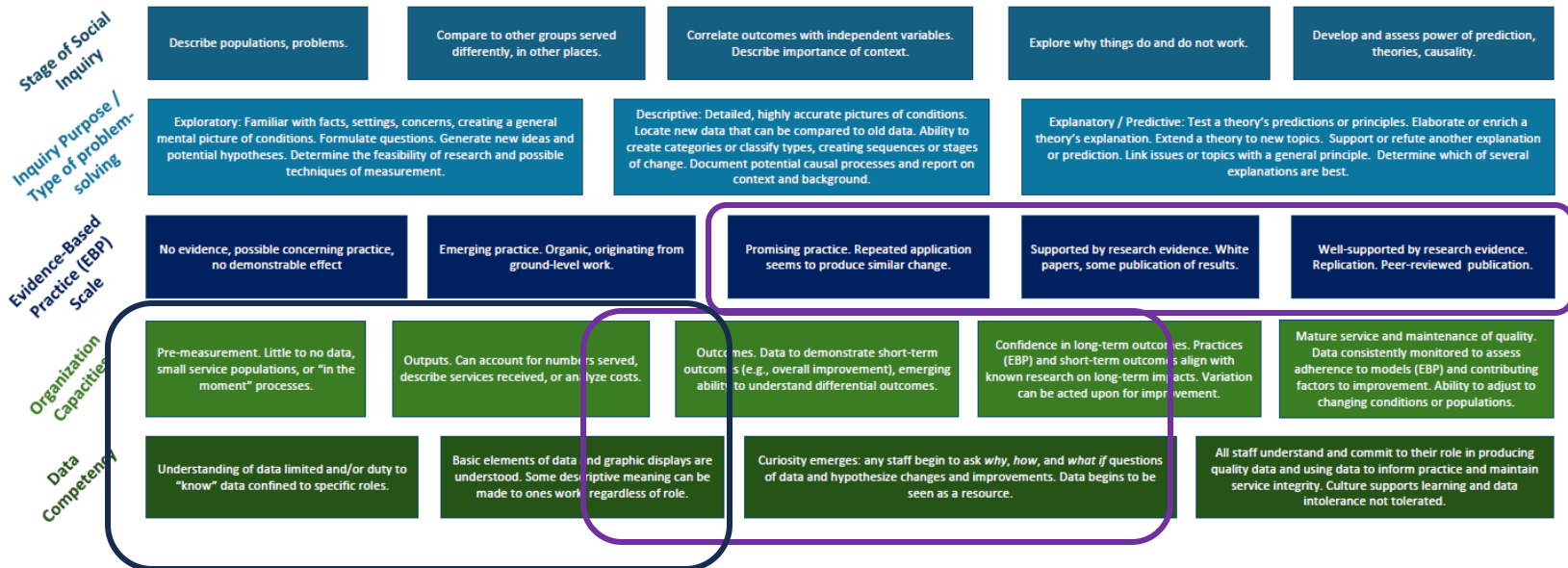
Efficiency evaluation

Strategic evaluation

How Stages Relate to Inquiry/Theory



How Stages Relate to Inquiry/Theory



Implications for CQI Skills

CQI Activities

By-hand data collection, repetitive / duplicative data entry. Reliance on spreadsheets.

Develop or support systematic data collection methods. Align data with regulatory requirements. Help staff adopt systems.

Monitor staff data entry quality. Develop efficiencies and automations to notify of quality gaps. Development and deployment of feedback tools. Advancement of aggregated reporting tools.

Assess change data (assessments) including reliability and validity principles. Analyze problems; investigate causality and the maintenance of solutions. Monitor maintenance of service outcomes. Strengthen data infrastructure. Compliance is stable.

Monitor beyond outcomes (model fidelity), conduct internal evaluations and research. Partner with executive leaders on strategy that includes technology infrastructure, client experience patterns, with early involvement in grants, proposals and new initiatives. Compliance remains stable.

CQI Skills & Capacities

Ability to summarize basic counts, percents, describe populations served. Understand basic components and stages of service delivery. May or may not use a reporting platform. Can understand, create, and translate basic graphs.

Can construct sound survey instruments using accepted practices. Ability to develop interview and focus group questions and ability to facilitate both. Understand and use basic improvement practices such as building workflows, conducting root-cause analyses, and operate using the PDSA cycle. Ability to construct requirements for multi-selection reports that track dimensions of program performance ranging from compliance to performance. Identify opportunities to build data competency with staff.

Understand concepts of reliability and validity as they relate to both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Ability to thematically code and summarize qualitative data. Adept at developing engaging graphical displays. Ability to coach staff in reflection and data use when problem-solving. Meet staff and leaders "where they are at" by understanding common forms of resistance and awareness of math trauma.

Understand and monitor model fidelity. Ability to complete basic research literature reviews and distill information into digestible summaries for staff and leaders. Apply previous research to internal examinations and analyses. Ability to conceptualize and design evaluations that target causal factors.

Ability to partner on external academic research. May involve policymakers to influence regulation or piloting innovation. Organization may have an IRB and/or receive large grants that include a research component. Staff may hold terminal degrees, have published research or pursue publication.

Develop or support systematic data collection methods. Align data with regulatory requirements. Help staff adopt systems.

Monitor staff data entry quality. Develop efficiencies and automations to notify of quality gaps. Development and deployment of feedback tools. Advancement of aggregated reporting tools.

Assess change data (assessments) including reliability and validity principles. Analyze problems; investigate causality and the maintenance of solutions. Monitor maintenance of service outcomes. Strengthen data infrastructure. Compliance is stable.

Can construct sound survey instruments using accepted practices. Ability to develop interview and focus group questions and ability to facilitate both. Understand and use basic improvement practices such as building workflows, conducting root-cause analyses, and operate using the PDSA cycle. Ability to construct requirements for multi-selection reports that track dimensions of program performance ranging from compliance to performance. Identify opportunities to build data competency with staff.

Understand concepts of reliability and validity as they relate to both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Ability to thematically code and summarize qualitative data. Adept at developing engaging graphical displays. Ability to coach staff in reflection and data use when problem-solving. Meet staff and leaders "where they are at" by understanding common forms of resistance and awareness of math trauma.

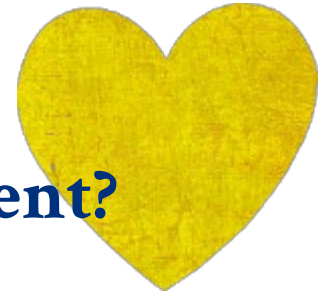
Understand and monitor model fidelity. Ability to complete basic research literature reviews and distill information into digestible summaries for staff and leaders. Apply previous research to internal examinations and analyses. Ability to conceptualize and design evaluations that target causal factors.

From Data to Learning

- **See → Understand → Act → Learn**
- Make performance visible
- Interpret findings with context
- Test a response
- Determine whether it worked

Building Capacity

- ▶ *“Who can afford to hire a bunch of evaluators?”*
 - Pretty much no one. But, you likely don’t need a credentialed evaluator: what you do need is a skilled measurement expert who can soundly and pragmatically apply measurement (and evaluation) principles.
 - Why? Because we are not doing a dissertation or preparing for a peer-reviewed publication every day. **We want to know what works, when, and how to improve it.**
- ▶ **How can this be applied to a CQI department?**



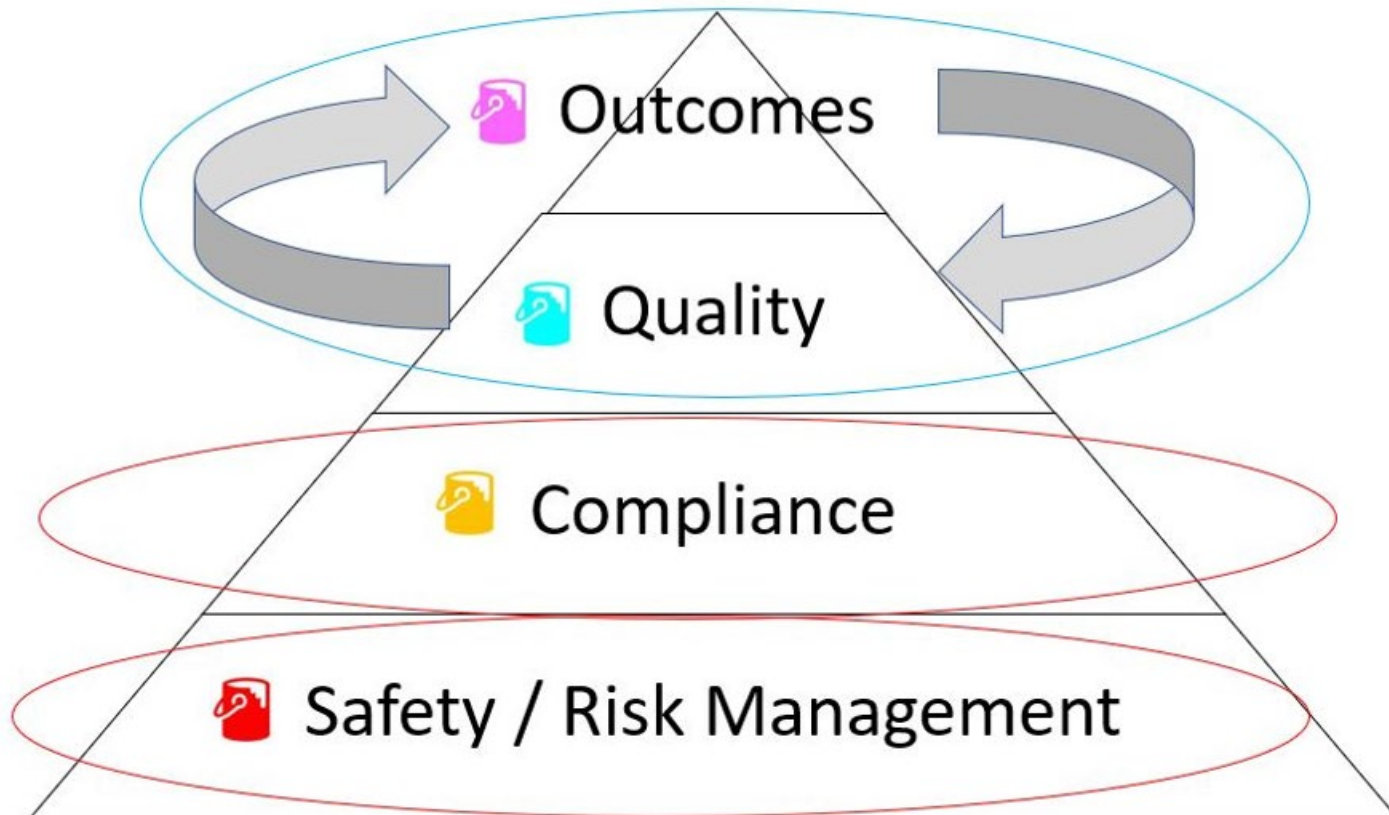
Nexus Family Healing CQI Restructuring

Three Phases and Resiliency Planning

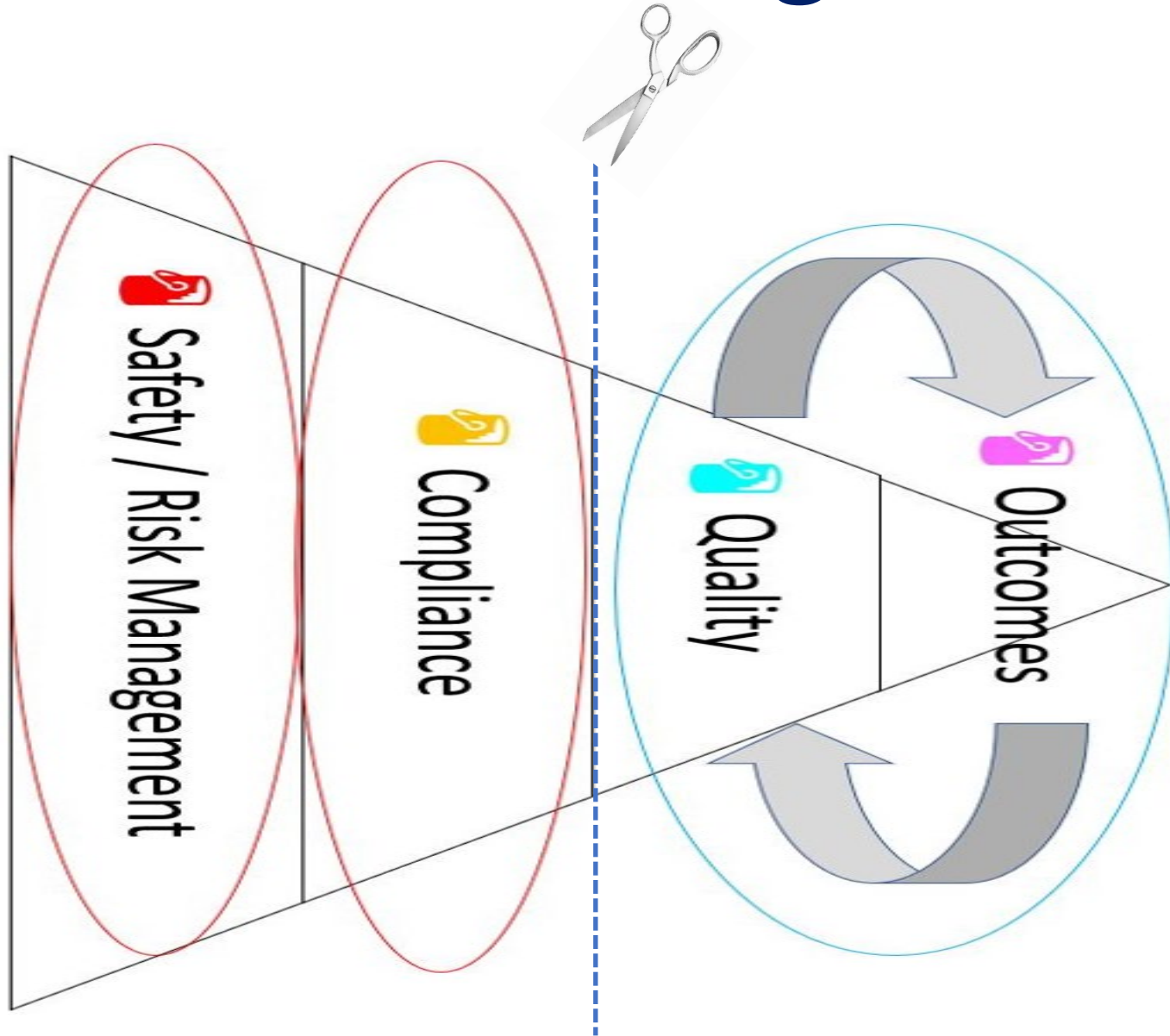
1. Assess existing roles and fill needed gaps
2. Skill up
3. Expansion of capacity & build redundancy

With strategic actions to support resiliency over time

Assess Existing Roles

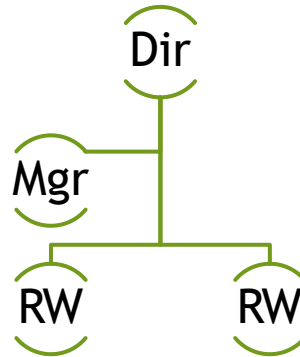


Assess Existing Roles

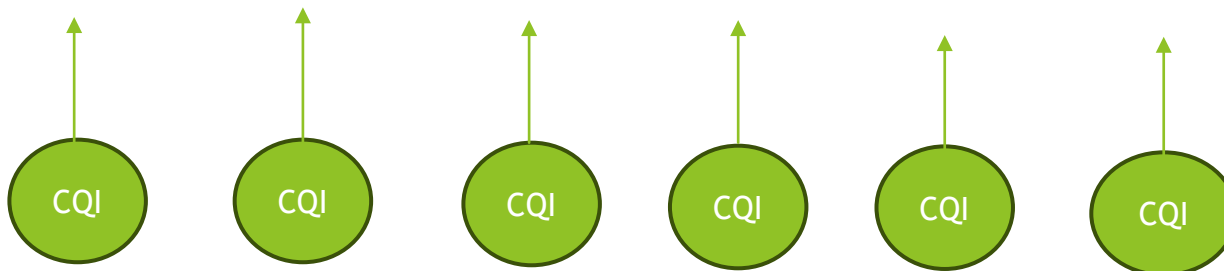


Nexus Q&E Restructuring

Home Office

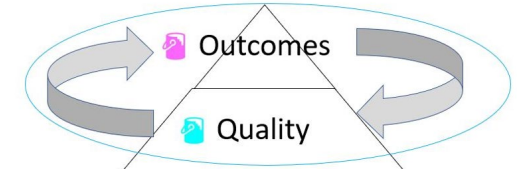
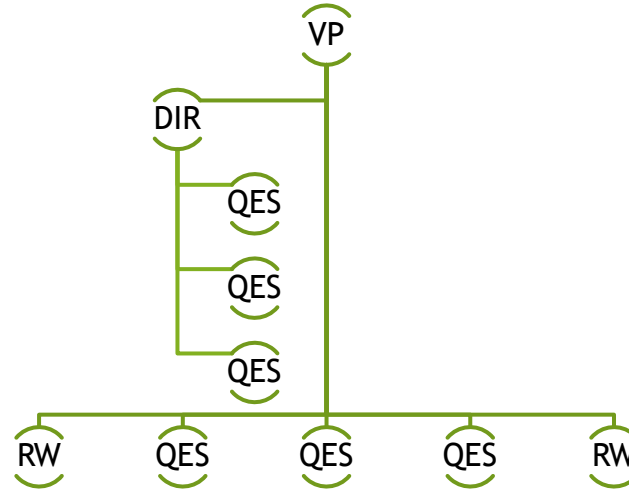


Agencies (multiple locations and states...)



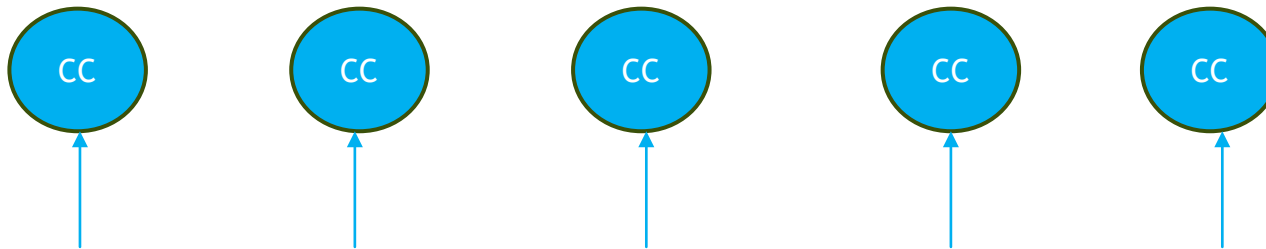
Nexus Q&E Restructuring

Home Office



Quality & Evaluation Specialists (QES)

Agencies (multiple locations and states)



Compliance Coordinators

Transitioning into Expanded Roles

- Most had little to no formal evaluation experience
- All had been in the CQI (Safety/Risk Management and Compliance) roles in the past
- Three areas of focus for transitioning
 1. Skill development and redundancy
 2. Mindset (understanding resistance, culture of our department)
 3. Expansion of organizational worldview

Skill Development

Organization
Capacities

Pre-measurement. Little to no data, small service populations, or “in the moment” processes.

Outputs. Can account for numbers served, describe services received, or analyze costs.

Outcomes. Data to demonstrate short-term outcomes (e.g., overall improvement), emerging ability to understand differential outcomes.

Confidence in long-term (EBP) and short-term known research on long can be acted upon

- Thematic coding
- Survey construction
- Project mgmt. basics
- Reviewing research (lit review)
- SQL & PBI

- ✓ Cross-training (learn in 2s & groups)
- ✓ Assigned to 2+ agencies to support
- ✓ Goal to back up each other as well as CCs

CQI Skills &
Capacities

Can construct sound survey instruments using accepted practices. Ability to develop interview and focus group questions and ability to facilitate both. Understand and use basic improvement practices such as building workflows, conducting root-cause analyses, and operate using the PDSA cycle. Ability to construct requirements for multi-selection reports that track dimensions of program performance ranging from compliance to performance. Identify opportunities to build data competency with staff.

Understand concepts of reliability and validity as they relate to both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Ability to thematically code and summarize qualitative data. Adept at developing engaging graphical displays. Ability to coach staff in reflection and data use when problem-solving. Meet staff and leaders “where they are at” by understanding common forms of resistance and awareness of math trauma.

Building Capacity Beyond CQI

- **EQUIP Facilitator Training**
- Improvement skills for employees at every level
- Practice with data, root causes, process mapping, and PDSA
- Facilitators guide the process without owning the solution
- PE provides tools, coaching, and measurement support

Resources for Gaining Skills (Bite-sized)

- The CQI Community!
- American Evaluation Association (www.eval.org)
- Online toolkits (e.g., Community Toolbox – [Table of Contents | Community Tool Box](#))
- Other agencies that do community evaluation ([WHO](#), [CDC](#), etc.)
- Learn about and use culturally-specific resources when you need them (e.g., growing resources for indigenous evaluation approaches).
 - [Indigenous Evaluation Toolkit](#)

Expansion of Capacity & Redundancy

- ▶ Spread effort of reaccreditation (COA)
- ▶ Extra support to CCs for managing risk management, corrective action plans, regulators, problem-solving
- ▶ Support org-wide initiatives involving measurement: grants, culture grants, outcome measures, high-risk event reviews, etc.
- ▶ Training in SQL, PBI
 - Redundancy benefits being realized (PBI)
- ▶ Building familiarity of multiple agencies (worldview)



Mindset and Expansion of Worldview (examples)

- **Change in scope of work** (agency to organization)
- **Mindset:** understanding how the culture of CQI can conflict with the culture of direct practice (Quinn-Patton has some great insights on this).
- **Understanding resistance:** depersonalizing when programs and leaders say 'thanks, but no thanks' to us and how to move things forward anyway (Block).



Resiliency

Resiliency:

Maintaining what you build

CQI can be vulnerable to funding cuts, perceptions and understanding of value by new leaders, regulatory pressures, or any number of external and internal challenges.

Some ideas for maintaining the capacity and value you are building...



Protecting Investment

○ Cultivating Benevolent Reliance

- Involving department early on grant applications or agency/service line start-up for reporting and measurement
- Involving department in key initiatives requiring measurement (proactively)
- Being seen as a distinct, important voice in strategy:
 - *“What does CQI/Quality think?” or “What do you think CQI/Quality’s perspective is?”*



Protecting Investment

○ Create Visibility

- Alignment of all team projects to at least one strategic objective and reporting annually to executive leaders
- Building tools for partner departments outside of programs (MarCom, Foundation) with external visibility
- Model CQI: gathering annual feedback at team and individual levels

○ Be Essential

- Being a critical **support** to CCs in agencies
- Being a go-to for problem-solving (work-flowing problematic processes)
- Being a translator between technical (IT, the EHR) and program



Resiliency: CQI Individuals



Individual CQI resiliency comes down to **growth** and **fit**.



Growth

The continuum can help a team develop skills and competencies, but it can also help *an individual* CQI practitioner think through what they want for their career. What if

- You love regulatory compliance?
 - You're on the left-hand side of the continuum and you can decide how far to the right you want to go in terms of skill development.
 - Maybe you really like helping programs move from paper to systems: this side of the continuum is also for you.



Growth

- You really like knowing whether services are effective, and for whom?
 - You are positioned in the middle and will want to master some of the techniques needed there.
- You want to be part of generating research, partnering with multiple programs or other researchers?
 - You strive for the right and will want to build out skills as well as the relationships you need to do this more rigorous work.



Fit

Knowing yourself, your skills and interests can help you choose an organization that will

- Be a good fit for where you are now
- Help you grow in the direction you want





Thank you!