7.6: Plan, Do, Study, and Act

The plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle is one of several quality improvement tools or techniques used to improve care. It is easily used at all levels of the organization and focuses on the development, testing, evaluation, and implementation of quality improvement solutions. The PDSA cycle consists of plan (decide on the change to be tested), do (perform the change), study (look at the data before and after the change and determine what has been learned), and act (plan another change cycle with required modifications or move to full implementation). Large-scale changes are implemented only after a PDSA cycle consisting of rapid small-scale sequential or parallel tests has been conducted to investigate the proposed changes and determine if they work (Gillam & Siriwardena, 2013). PDSA has been described as a tool that can be used to evaluate current service delivery and to test and develop innovative ideas (Byrne, Xu, & Carr, 2015).

Essential Learning Activity 7.5.1

Watch these two videos for more detailed information on how to use PDSA: “PDSA Part 1” (4:45) and “PDSA Part 2” (3:45).