

READINESS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Is Your Organization Ready for TeamSTEPPS™?

Answering these questions can help your institution understand its level of readiness to initiate the TeamSTEPPS program. You may find it helpful to have a colleague review your responses or to answer the questions with a larger group (e.g., senior leadership).

Defined Need?

Has your institution clearly defined the need to initiate a teamwork-based patient safety initiative for culture change?

1. Have you *clearly defined* the need that is driving your institution to consider implementing TeamSTEPPS?

TeamSTEPPS is an evidence-based comprehensive teamwork training system designed to improve quality and safety in healthcare. An organization is more likely to be ready to undertake a TeamSTEPPS initiative when it has objective information to support the need for improvement in these areas. Objective information could originate from a variety of sources including adverse event and near miss reports, root cause analyses or failure modes and effects analyses, administering the AHRQ Patient Safety Culture Survey, Surveys of Patient and/or Staff Satisfaction, and unit or site specific process and outcome measures (patient flow, hospital acquired infection rates, preventable deaths, etc.).

2. Is building a stronger *teamwork and safety culture* an appropriate strategy to address your institution's need?

TeamSTEPPS is a teamwork system which offers a powerful solution to improving collaboration and communication within your institution. Teamwork has been found to be one of the key initiatives within patient safety. Patient safety experts agree that communication and other teamwork skills are essential for providing quality healthcare and preventing and mitigating medical errors. An organization that is ready to focus on teamwork and safety is more likely to benefit from a TeamSTEPPS intervention.

Has your institution clearly assessed the willingness to participate in, the timeliness of, and the readiness for a culture change based upon teamwork and safety?

3. Is now the *right time* for implementing a culture change (i.e., it will not be competing with other major changes currently being made at your institution)?

If your organization is experiencing many changes at this time it may not be the ideal moment to begin implementing the TeamSTEPPS initiative. Attempting to manage multiple significant change efforts at one time may degrade your institution's ability (and employees' willingness) to implement and sustain the TeamSTEPPS effort. The program may be viewed as a distraction rather than a solution.

4. Will a culture change that emphasizes the importance of teamwork and safety be *feasible and acceptable*?

The goal of TeamSTEPPS is to provide the safest and highest quality healthcare, which involves optimizing a complicated delivery system of both people and processes. This requires change, including recognizing the need for change, developing a culture that will accept change, and fostering change in individuals' approach to the healthcare delivery process. This change may involve giving people freedom and discretion, encouraging risk-taking and speaking up, as well as permission to find team-driven solutions. Your institution must be willing to change its culture and processes to enhance teamwork and safety.

5. Will your institution's *leaders support* the culture change and the effort required to implement and sustain the TeamSTEPPS initiative?

It is essential that the leadership of your institution actively supports and champions TeamSTEPPS. Leadership needs to understand the requirements of the program (e.g., trainer preparation and training, on-going coaching, weekly team meetings to reinforce concepts) and be willing to provide the personnel, time, and resources required to successfully implement and sustain it over time. In addition, it is important for them to understand their role in sponsoring, evaluating, enabling or modifying the behaviors necessary to shape and maintain the targeted safety/teamwork behavior changes.

Is your institution willing to allocate the necessary time, resources, and personnel to implement and sustain the TeamSTEPPS initiative over time?

6. Provide sufficient staff with the necessary characteristics (and willingness) to serve as *instructors*?

It is important to find individuals with the right characteristics to serve as trainers to increase the success of the TeamSTEPPS initiative. Instructors should be: viewed as advocates of teamwork and models for implementing teamwork actions during day-to-day operations; dynamic presenters; viewed as leaders among their peers and administrators (highly respected and able to influence others); in positions that allow flexibility in scheduling; and highly visible, accessible and available for teamwork coaching throughout the change effort.

7. Provide sufficient staff with the necessary characteristics (and willingness) to serve as *coaches*?

Given that this is a culture change effort, the TeamSTEPPS initiative extends beyond classroom teaching and calls for “coaches” to reinforce, monitor and role-model teamwork principles in everyday practice. It is important to find individuals with the right characteristics to serve as coaches to increase the likelihood of their success and other’s receptiveness to their coaching. Coaches should be: effective at developing the teamwork skills of others; able to affect changes (highly respected with sufficient informal or formal power) in work patterns, behaviors, and the environment; have an interpersonal style conducive to coaching (e.g., demonstrates a supportive attitude and ability to build confidence in others); able to provide effective feedback that is descriptive, problem-oriented, empowering, exploring and considerate. For coaching to be effective, approximately one coach is needed for every 10 staff members.

8. Allow *time to prepare* the instructors/coaches for their role?

TeamSTEPPS offers a 2.5 day Train-the-Trainer course to educate instructors/coaches in the fundamentals of the content and the associated knowledge and training required to implement and coach the desired behaviors to achieve positive results.

9. Allow *time for personnel* to attend training?

Regardless of your institution’s plan for implementing TeamSTEPPS, some direct staff training will be required. The full training element of the program includes up to six hours of classroom training, however your institution may decide to train only one segment (e.g., a specific tool or strategy) which may take one hour. To preclude disruptions and scheduling problems and to maximize learning, participants should be **excused from all duties** during class attendance.

10. Allow time for instructors to potentially *customize* the course?

TeamSTEPPS provides flexibility in how it is implemented – an institution may determine that its best to “start small” and select one tool (e.g., SBAR) and implement that segment of the training and the necessary follow-up coaching to ensure that teams learn and continue to use the tool to enhance teamwork and safety. It also includes sufficient supplemental and interchangeable content and examples that may be used to customize the program to a specific area. In addition, institutions may choose to have their own content and examples included. Each of these options requires some time on the part of the trainers to customize the content.

Has your institution clearly defined the systems and measures needed for sustaining continuous improvement of processes and fostering positive teamwork behaviors?

11. Will your institution be willing to *measure and assess progress* and continuously improve processes?

For the continued success of the culture change, the organization needs to view it as a process rather than an event. It is important that your institution adopt an approach to continually measure the on-going effectiveness of the TeamSTEPPS intervention. This enables the institution to know whether the intervention is successful and to publicize that success (to gain additional staff buy-in) or to make changes to the program. In addition, part of the process is to identify opportunities for further patient safety and quality improvement. Once these opportunities have been identified, the organization needs to be willing to implement these changes.

12. Will your institution be able to *reinforce and reward* positive teamwork behaviors and improvements in processes?

To become accepted practice, positive teamwork behaviors and improvements in processes and outcomes need to be reinforced and rewarded. Leaders, champions, instructors, and coaches should be willing to provide on-going feedback to others within the institution. Successes need to be formally recognized and showcased throughout the organization. All of these activities help maintain the momentum needed to sustain a safety and teamwork culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Record your responses to the questions below:

Question	Response
Defined Need	
1. Have you clearly defined the need that is driving your institution to consider implementing TeamSTEPPS to improve safety and teamwork?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2. Is building a stronger teamwork and safety culture an appropriate strategy to address your institution's need?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Readiness for Change in Culture	
3. Will a culture change that emphasizes the importance of teamwork and safety be feasible or acceptable?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
4. Is now the right time for implementing a culture change (i.e., it will not be competing with other major changes currently being made at your institution)?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
5. Will your institution's leaders support the culture change and the effort required to implement and sustain the TeamSTEPPS initiative?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Time, Resources, Personnel	
6. Provide sufficient staff with the necessary characteristics (and willingness) to serve as instructors?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
7. Provide sufficient staff with the necessary characteristics (and willingness) to serve as coaches?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
8. Allow time to prepare the instructors/coaches for their role?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
9. Allow time for personnel to attend training?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
10. Allow time for instructors to potentially customize the course?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Sustainment of the Change	
11. Will your institution be willing to measure and assess progress and continuously improve processes?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
12. Will your institution be able to reinforce and reward positive teamwork behaviors and improvements in processes?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Count the number of NO responses that you've recorded above. If the number is:

NO Responses

0-3 Given your responses, this is likely to be a good time to implement TeamSTEPPS within your institution. Make sure that you continue to monitor whether the answer to these questions would change as you begin the implementation process and keep a close eye on any items to which you answered "no."

4-6 Your responses indicate that your institution may not be ready on one-third to one-half of the factors. This reduces the likelihood that the program will be a success. Take some time to determine if this is the appropriate time to implement TeamSTEPPS. Review the tips/suggestions that follow to enhance readiness and determine if any are appropriate within your institution.

7-10 Based on your responses, significant work is probably needed to raise the readiness level of your institution. Implementing TeamSTEPPS at this time could engender significant risk that it will not succeed or provide the desired results. Consider postponing the implementation process for a few months then answer the questions again to determine if any of the factors have changed. Also, review the tips/suggestions that follow for ways to enhance your institution's readiness.

REFERENCES

1. The Conference Board. (August, 2005). *Effecting change in business enterprises*. (Report No. R-1371-05-RR). New York, NY: Beaman, K.V. & Guy, G. R.
2. Lines, R. (2004). Influence of participation in strategic change: Resistance, organizational commitment and change goal achievement. *Journal of Change Management*, 4, 193-215.
3. Sirkin, H.L., Keenan, P., & Jackson, A. (2005). The hard side of change management. *Harvard Business Review*, 83, 109-118.
4. Tannenbaum, S.I. (1997). Enhancing continuous learning: Diagnostic findings from multiple companies. *Human Resource Management*, 36, 437-452.
5. Tracy, J.B., Tannenbaum, S.I., & Kavanagh, M.J. (1995). Applying trained skills on the job: The importance of the work environment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 239-252.

APPENDIX A: TIPS/SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

Below are some tips/suggestions for actions you can take to help assess and enhance the readiness of your institution to implement TeamSTEPPS.

- Use some of the **site assessment tools** identified in Phase I of the TeamSTEPPS initiative to further assess readiness and clarify needs – for example, the AHRQ Patient Safety Culture Survey, Surveys of Patient and Staff Satisfaction, unit or site specific process and outcome measures (patient flow, hospital acquired infection rates, preventable deaths, etc.). Gather information that will provide a baseline of the organization’s current status and serve as data that can be used to develop a business case or leader briefings.
- Conduct a **briefing** for senior leadership and key stakeholders about the TeamSTEPPS program – its purpose and goals, what’s required from an organizational perspective and what’s required of them to make the initiative a success. Be sure they are aware of what will be needed for your organization to gain the benefits from TeamSTEPPS and allow them to make an *informed decision*. Reinforce the concept that TeamSTEPPS is more than just a training program – it’s an on-going effort to enhance teamwork. This will reduce the likelihood of a “false start” where the training is conducted but no further actions are taken to ensure that the behaviors become incorporated into everyday actions.
- Gather information regarding the need within your institution and **assemble a business case** that you can present in support of initiating TeamSTEPPS. Identify who the business case will be presented to (e.g., senior leaders), what you need from them (e.g., decisions, support for the program, resources), and the type of information that will mean the most to them (e.g., evidence based research, hospital safety statistics, success stories) and that they will rely on to inform their decisions. In the business case, present a compelling rationale for why the change effort is necessary (e.g., the problem that it will solve) and the benefits that will potentially be obtained. A recent report from the Conference Board (2005) suggested that a lack of urgency and unclear rationale are two of the most common de-railers of change efforts. If there really isn’t a clear, compelling rationale, it is best to determine that upfront and postpone the effort.
- **Identify all the changes that are currently occurring** within the organization, determine who the changes are impacting (e.g., specific units) and create a timeline of the project progress of each change effort. Based on this timeline, identify when it might be a good time to implement TeamSTEPPS for a specific unit. Ideally, start with a group that has a need and the capacity to handle the change effort. Postpone the start, if necessary, until another major change has been “absorbed” or completed if its organization wide. Sometimes delaying for a few months can make a big difference. Having “too many” changes underway that exceed peoples’ change capacity is one of the most common reasons why change efforts fail. In some cases you may be able to work with leadership

to identify whether any of the other change efforts are unnecessary, freeing capacity for TeamSTEPPS.

- Consider **identifying which units are prime candidates for TeamSTEPPS** by applying the following matrix. First, identify the capacity of various units to handle the change as well as their level of readiness. Then determine the level of teamwork required within the units. Use this information to determine a roll-out plan or sequence within the institution. Units that are both ready and require greater teamwork are logical candidates for an early launch.

	Less Capacity/Readiness	Greater Capacity/Readiness
Higher Need for Teamwork	Careful about timing (postpone)	Prime candidate
Lower Need for Teamwork	Do not proceed	Less urgency

- For any effort, especially those where the institution may not be at a high level of readiness, consider **starting small** rather than launching an organization-wide effort.
 - Gather leadership support and buy-in for a targeted effort
 - Select a specific unit considering both their readiness and need for enhanced teamwork; (the unit selected should not be the easiest one to start with nor the most difficult)
 - Identify “champions/change agents” within the unit from both physician and nurse areas; make sure they clearly understand the rationale for the effort and their role
 - Identify a problem the unit has that it wants/needs to fix (What keeps you up at night? What can we fix?); focusing on a problem that the unit already wants to address can help keep them motivated
 - Select a specific TeamSTEPPS tool or process (or two) that will best address that problem and also be the most effective for that unit (something that will fit into their current processes)
 - Provide training to the unit on teamwork and how to use the tool/process
 - Reinforce the use of the tool/process through on-going coaching and leadership support/recognition
 - Measure how the tool/process is being used and how the problem is being addressed; capture successes and recognize when adjustments are needed
 - Identify and apply lessons learned from this unit to begin the process with another unit
 - Discuss additional opportunities for this unit

- **Try to identify “champions”** from both the physician and nurse areas. Champions will help support the effort, encourage others, and maintain energy. Both physician and nursing champions are important but without a physician champion, the effort is less likely to succeed.
- **Involve “key influencers”** in the process. Key influencers can be leaders but they can also be staff. Which individuals tend to have the greatest influence on the other team members? Who do team members look to when deciding if something is useful or a waste of time? Ideally, you’d like them to be champions, but even if they aren’t champions at the beginning of the effort, try to find ways to involve them in decisions (e.g., which problems to address, which tools to use). Research has shown that participation in change efforts is related to subsequent success (Lines, 2004).
- **Identify current safety/quality initiatives** (e.g., Lean Six Sigma) that may be occurring within the institution and identify how TeamSTEPPS can fit with or reinforce that on-going effort. What is the purpose of that effort and how might a TeamSTEPPS tool/process support that purpose? This ties the new team behaviors to an existing initiative. Identify the measures that are being utilized for the safety/quality initiatives and determine whether any can be linked to TeamSTEPPS. One caveat is to avoid linking TeamSTEPPS with an extremely unpopular or unsuccessful effort.
- Identify ways that the TeamSTEPPS behaviors can be **incorporated into existing work processes** within the organization or unit. For example, feature how TeamSTEPPS behaviors can be used during normally occurring handoffs to enhance information sharing and patient safety. Connecting TeamSTEPPS to regular work processes and requirements can make better teamwork part of “doing our job” rather than an unrelated or academic concept.
- **Seek behavioral commitments from leadership:** ask them to help launch the effort, agree to follow-up on progress, reinforce key behaviors, exhibit the behaviors themselves, etc. Sometimes leaders don’t “sponsor” efforts effectively because they don’t know what they need to do...so coaching them can help them be better sponsors. A study of change efforts in 225 organizational change efforts showed that leader commitment is closely related to organizational success (Sirkin et al, 2005).

Emphasize the on-going effort required to reinforce the TeamSTEPPS tools/processes over time. This includes the need for team meetings, huddles, debriefs to discuss and reinforce the learned concepts as well as the need for coaches to provide team or one-on-one feedback regarding the use of the tools/processes. This is important because more learning occurs on the job than in classrooms (Tannenbaum, 1997) so coaches and supervisors are a key factor in ensuring on-going learning and reinforcement of training (Tracey et al, 1995; Salas, 2009).