

An illustration of a person in a white shirt and dark pants standing on a pink ledge, pointing towards the left. A small child in an orange shirt and dark pants stands next to them. The background is a light blue sky with a white sun partially visible behind the text.

# Path to Zero Peer Learning Session: Quality Improvement Foundations

Part 2: The Model for Improvement

June 21, 2023

An illustration of a light blue building with a red roof and a large green tree with a white light on its trunk. The building has a white archway and a small window with a white frame. The tree is positioned to the right of the building.

# Who We Are



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# Series Overview

## Part 1: Mindsets & Frameworks for Improvement

4 “Lenses of Curiosity” (a.k.a. Deming’s System of Profound Knowledge)

Complex v. Technical Challenges

Key Mindsets & Behaviors for Improvement

## Part 2: The ‘Model for Improvement’ (MFI)

The 3 MFI Questions

Aim statements

Types and purposes of measurement

## Part 3: Applying MFI in Your Work (and Life)

Daily look of applying continuous improvement: P-D-S-A, Process mapping,

Process mapping example(s)

# Today's Learning Objectives

1. Understand the model for improvement as the 'improvement theory' underlying Built for Zero's work
2. Break down each component of the model for improvement:
  - a. Components of an effective aim statement
  - b. Characteristics of a good measurement system
  - c. How to identify change ideas
3. Use examples to practice working with the model for improvement

# Today's Agenda

A Short History of Improvement Science & Built for Zero

The Model for Improvement

Aim Statements

Real-Time By Name Feedback

Types of Measures & Equity Considerations

Wrap-Up

# Why You Should Care



**Because none of our communities have ended all homelessness yet, so that means we've got to change something.**

**The question is what.**

# W. Edwards Deming: Founder of Improvement Science

**Q.** Why do complex systems so often produce such poor results for those they serve, even when the people involved sincerely want to do better?

**A.** Because they are bad at *learning*.





# What is Improvement Science?

- Improvement Science is a reliable, bottom-up method for improving any system as you go.
- Improvement Science replaces traditional planning strategies with *learning strategies*.

# What Do Improvers Believe?

- **The most important goal of any system is to learn**
- When it comes to learning, the faster the better
- Human beings are generally poor at predicting the future in advance
- Instead, we should take small actions quickly with a prediction in mind, and then revise our thinking in light of the outcomes

# Core Concepts of Improvement

- Every system is perfectly designed to **get the results it gets.**
- **Be curious.**  
*(this work is for improvement, never for judgment)*

# Knowledge for Improvement

## SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge basic to the things we do in life. Professional knowledge. Knowledge of work processes. Lived experience.

## SCIENCE OF IMPROVEMENT (SOI)

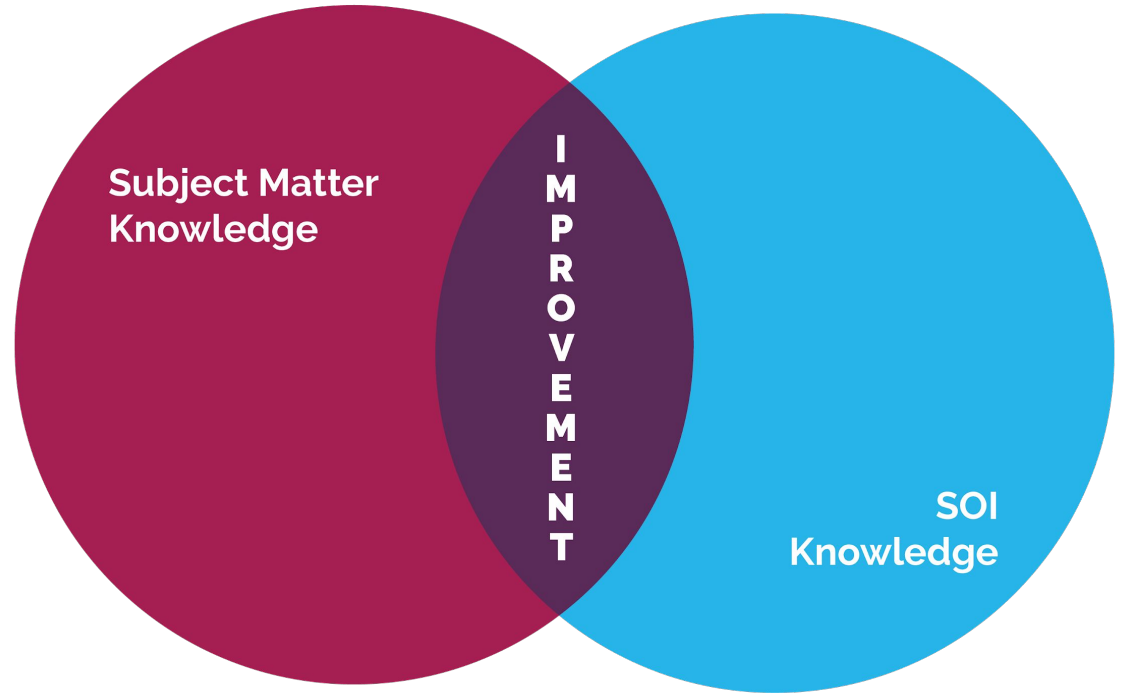
- The interplay of the theories of systems, variation, knowledge, and psychology.



# Knowledge for Improvement

## Improvement

Learn to combine subject matter knowledge and Structure of Intellect (SOI) knowledge in creative ways to develop effective changes for improvement.



# The Story of Zero



# Built for Zero

An international movement of more than 125 global communities working to measurably **end homelessness** one population at a time.



# HOMELESSNESS IS **SOLVABLE**

Communities in the Built for Zero movement are proving it.

**105**

communities are  
**participating**  
in Built for Zero

**147,000+**

**individuals housed**  
by Built for Zero  
communities since 2015

**14**

communities have  
**functionally ended**  
homelessness for a  
population

**64**

communities have achieved  
**quality real-time data**

**42**

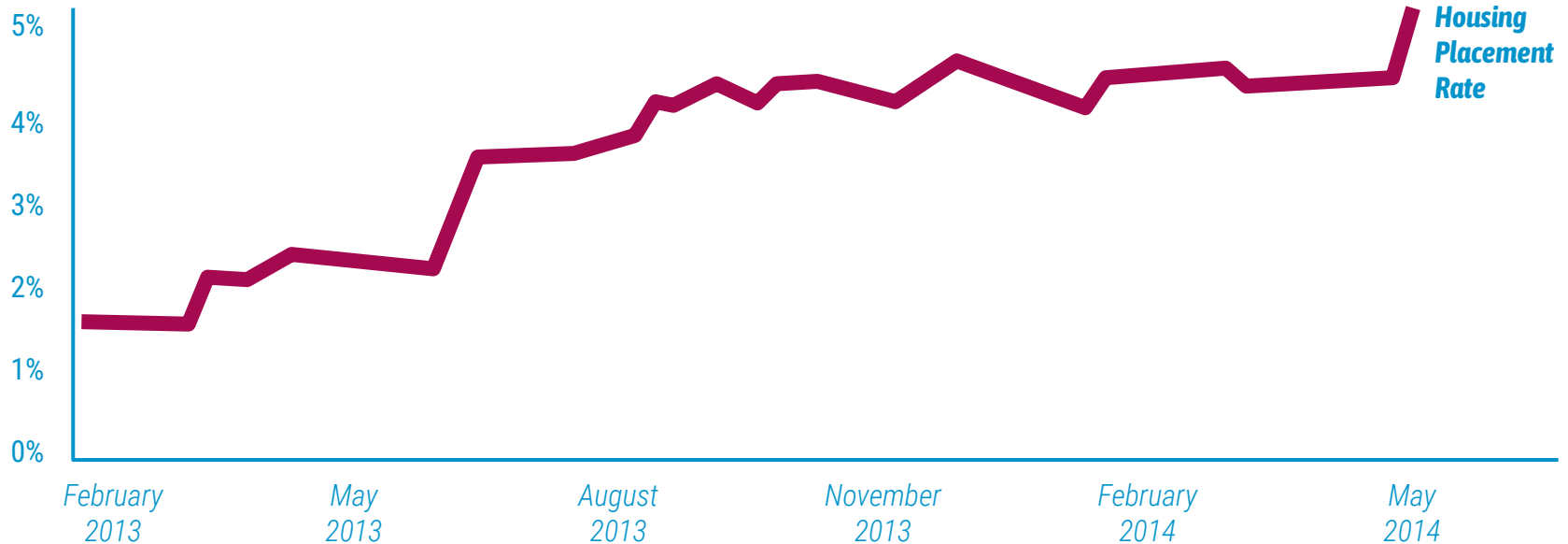
communities have achieved  
**a measurable reduction**





# The Key Lesson of 100khomes

The 100,000 Homes Campaign proved that communities could increase their housing placement rates, but this did not automatically reduce homelessness. **Only one metric mattered: monthly housing placements.**



# Technical Approaches to Complex Problems

- Long-range planning or 10-year plans
- Standard operating procedures
- Embedded experts
- Pilot project obsession
- Summative evaluation followed by replication toolkits
- Criminalization and enforcement
- Meeting just to meet - but doing it weekly!

**SOUND FAMILIAR?**

# The Fundamental Question

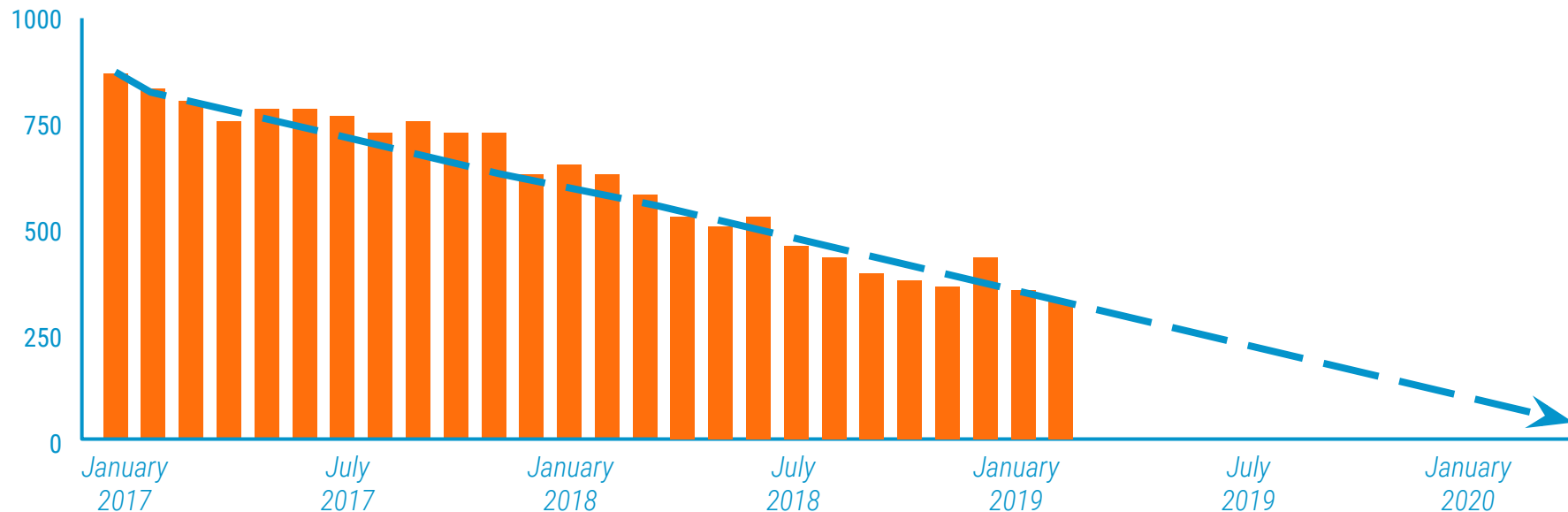
**Are all our programs + investments  
adding up to thing we really want:  
equitable reductions in homelessness over time?**

**And if not, how quickly would we know,  
and how quickly could we pivot?**

# The Challenge of Counting Down

Built for Zero is designed to help communities **count down to zero** — a more complex challenge that requires a clearly defined end state for communities to shoot for.

**To end homelessness, communities must measure many variables, not just one.**



# Definition: Improvement Theory

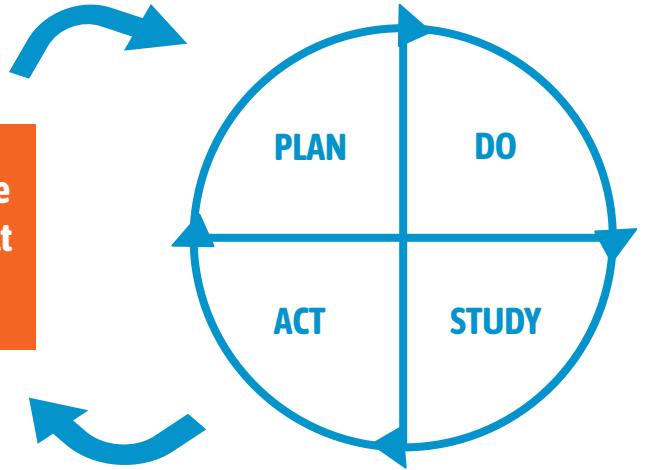
A system of linked ideas about how to improve some aspect of a system.

# The Shift from Technical Solutions to Iteration

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



*The Model for Improvement was developed by **Associates in Process Improvement** and taught to us by the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement**. Thank you!*

# Questions?

Stretch and Screen Break



# The Model for Improvement



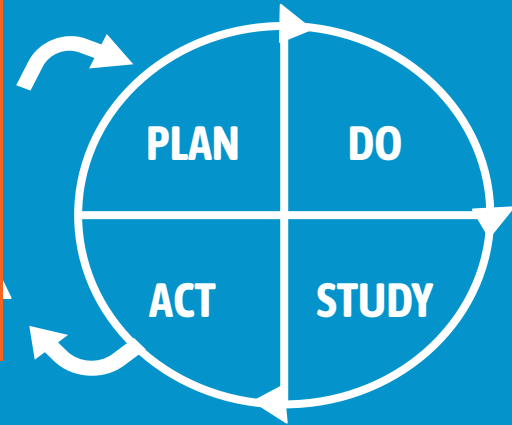


# The Model for Improvement

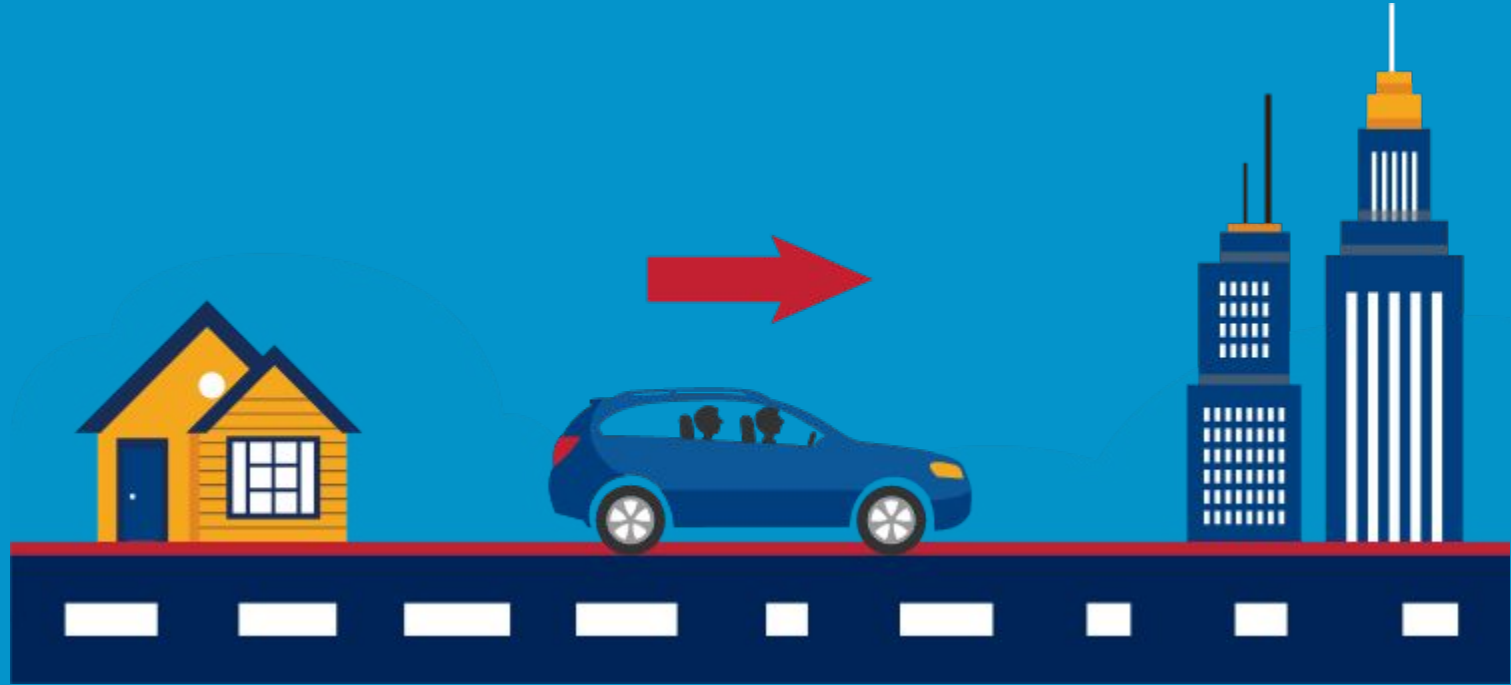
**Aim: What are we trying to accomplish?**

**How will we know a change is an improvement?**

**What change can we make that will result in improvement?**



# Think about your commute to work



# Improving your commute

**Aim: What are we  
trying to  
accomplish?**



## What does a “better” commute mean?

- Are we minimizing time? or stress?
- Do we want to spend more time outside?
- Do we want less driving/more walking?
- Are we willing to spend more money?
- What are the non-negotiables/constraints?

# Improving your commute

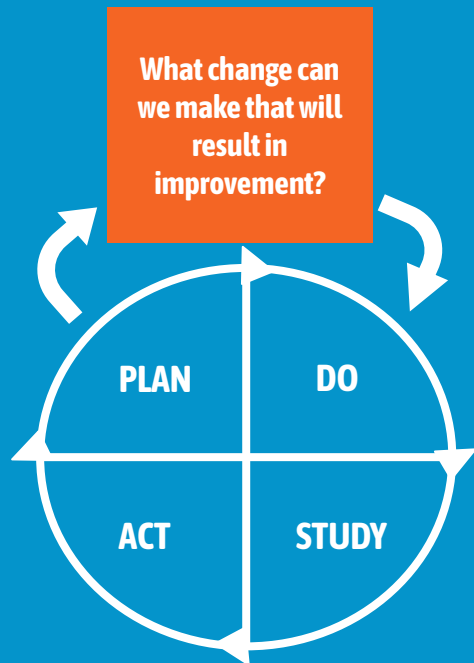
**How will we know a  
change is an  
improvement?**



## **What measures will we use?**

- Time spent commuting decreases?
- # of morning meetings I'm late to decreases?
- # of daily steps walked increases
- Self-rating of happiness increases

# Improving your commute



## What change can we make?

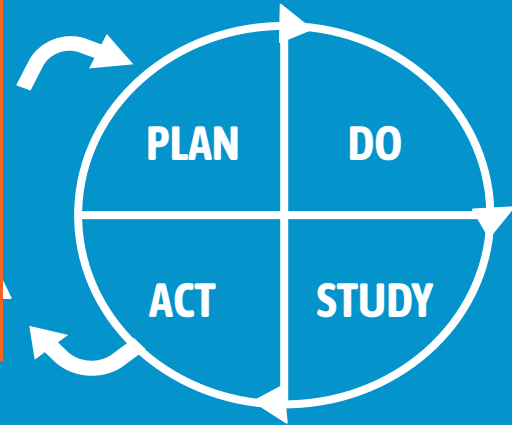
- Leave 30 minutes earlier to avoid traffic
- Take a different route
- Take public transportation
- Bike to work
- Carpool with others
- ~~Move~~ Test the commute from a different neighborhood

# The Model for Improvement

**Aim:** What are we trying to accomplish?

**How will we know a change is an improvement?**

**What change can we make that will result in improvement?**



Sample Improvement Area:

**Reduce length of time from resource match to lease-up**

You want to reduce the length of time from identification to housing, but there are many parts of that process. You begin by choosing one segment—match to lease-up—and working to shrink *its* length of time. You decide to test the change with two or three navigators, in order to shrink the change and see what worked at a small scale.

# Reduce time from match to lease

**Aim: What are we  
trying to  
accomplish?**



Improve average length of time from resource match to lease-up to less than one week by May 31, 2022.



# Reduce time from match to lease

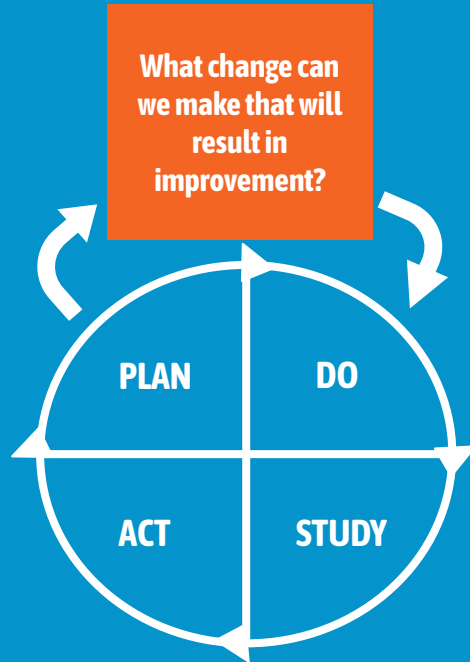
How will we know a  
change is an  
improvement?



## What measures will we use?

- Average length of time from resource match to lease-up drops below one week.
- Disaggregated by race and by project.
- Balancing measure: Housing placement rate.

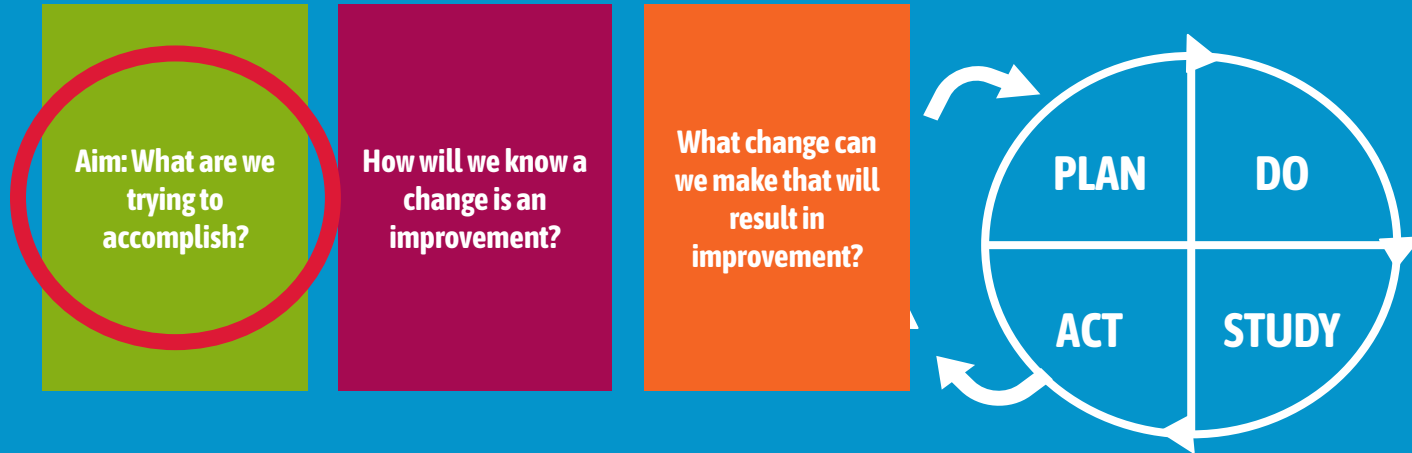
# Reduce time from match to lease



## What change can we make?

- Change day of week for case conferencing meeting.
- Change pre-work for case conferencing meeting.
- Invite housing navigators to case conferencing.
- Invite housing providers to meeting.
- What else?

# The Model for Improvement - Aims



# Components of a Strong Aim Statement

## **ACTION VERB**

(eg. reduce, increase, solve, provide, build)

+

## **SPECIFIC**

**PROBLEM** (eg. youth homelessness, truancy, getting up on time)

+

**NUMBER** (eg. percentage or number)

## **SPECIFIC UNIVERSE OR POPULATION**

(eg. **your city**, kids under 5, the work week, etc.)

+

## **BY WHEN?**

(eg. **September 1, 2023**)

# Example: Returns to Homelessness

**Metropolis will reduce returns to homelessness to 5% of the Active List (or 15 people) per month, whichever is larger, by September 1, 2023.**

**Action:**  
Reduce

**Specific Challenge:**  
Returns to homelessness.

**Number:**  
5% of Active or 15  
people

**Universe or Population**  
Metropolis

**By When:**  
September 1, 2023

# The Need for Clear Operating Definitions

- Knowledge is not objective — we all impose pre-existing values and aims onto every system or result
- If we don't nail down what we all mean by the words in our aim, we may disagree about whether we have achieved, *or whether new ideas are necessary at all*
- Vagueness in our aims makes it impossible to decide whether any given strategy idea is relevant

# Criteria of a Strong Operating Definitions

- All key terms are measurably defined
- Definitions can be applied the same way by anyone
  - (The random observer test: “How likely would a random observer be to reach the same conclusion as you about whether your aim had been met?”)
- Definitions are *usable* and don't make the aim so complicated that it's impossible to measure
- Doesn't have to be 'right' or 'wrong,' just *clear*.

# Example: Length of Time Homeless

**Gotham will reduce returns to homelessness to 5% of the Active List (or 15 people) per month, whichever is larger, by May 31, 2024.**

## ***'Gotham'***

90%+ of Gotham Providers representing  
90% of people.

## ***'Returns to Homelessness'***

Return from permanent housing to homelessness within one  
year of being housed.

## ***'5% of the Active List'***

- 5% of the mean count on the actively homeless list for the three months before May 31, 2024.



**Now you try it!**

**Work to scope an effective aim related to something in your daily life in small groups.**