Open School

Video Activity: Solving Workarounds with Steve Spear

(http://www.ihi.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/resources/Pages/Activities/SteveSpearSolvingWorkarounds.aspx)

Steven Spear, DBA, MS, Senior Lecturer, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology, Senior Fellow, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Facilitator Instructions

- Review the learning objectives and description with your group.

- Watch the video together (6 min 10 sec).

- As a group, discuss your reactions to the video, using the discussion questions as a guide.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Define a workaround.

- Explain how workarounds can lead to problems within systems.

- Apply a framework that can convert workarounds into learning loops.

Description

What are workarounds? Why are they bad? How do we avoid them?

A couple weeks ago, we posed those three questions to MIT senior lecturer and IHI Senior Fellow Steve Spear. His answers, in a new animated video, highlight a toothache, catastrophes, and a methodology that transforms workarounds into learning loops.

Related IHI Open School Online Courses

- [QCV 101: Achieving Breakthrough Quality, Access, and Affordability](#)
- [PS 102: Human Factors and Safety](#)
- [PS 104: Root Cause and Systems Analysis](#)

Key Topics

Cost containment and reduction, efficiency and waste reduction, engage front-line staff in improvement, engage physicians in improvement, hospital operations, redesign processes and systems

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Discussion Questions

1. How would you define a workaround?

2. How can workarounds lead to catastrophes?

3. What are the four components of the framework that Steve Spear suggests using to remove workarounds? Which component is (or would you expect to be) the most difficult to integrate into your daily work? Why?

4. Can you identify one or more workarounds in your own personal or professional life?

5. How can you remove the workaround(s) you just identified from the system?

Interested in learning more about system design from Spear? Check out his course, QCV 101: Achieving Breakthrough Quality, Access, and Affordability, one of our most popular modules in the IHI Open School catalog.