

Open School

Video Activity: Examining, Diagnosing, and Treating Systems

(<http://www.ihl.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/resources/Pages/Activities/SteveSpearExaminingDiagnosingAndTreatingSystems.aspx>)

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Facilitator Instructions

- Review the learning objectives and description with your group.
- Watch the [video](#) together (8 min 33 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:

- Explain a process clinicians can use to improve the systems in which they work.
- Identify at least two ways systems can fail.
- Give at least one example of how a health care organization fixed a broken process.

Description

Clinicians are involved in diagnosing and treating patient's problems every day. What if these same clinical skills could be applied to another type of problem — problems within the systems of care in which they work? By examining symptoms such as miscommunication, poor coordination, and unnecessary risk, how could they improve experiences for themselves and those around them?

In a new IHI Open School video resource, MIT senior lecturer and IHI Senior Fellow Steve Spear explains why he thinks seven steps needed to care for patients are essentially the same as those needed to fix systems of care. He also shares common trouble areas and gives an example of a successful improvement.

Related IHI Open School Online Courses

- QVC 101: Achieving Breakthrough Quality, Access, and Affordability
- QI 106: Mastering PDSA Cycles and Run Charts
- QI 202: Quality Improvement in Action: Stories from the Field

Key Topics

Redesign processes and systems, reliable processes, workforce satisfaction and retention, quality improvement, efficiency and waste reduction, engage front-line staff in improvement, engage physicians in improvement, innovation and idea generation, handoffs, teamwork, central line infection, hospital operations, hospital operations: flow – moving patients, information, and materials through hospitals.

Facilitator, show [the video on this page](#). For your group's discussion after the video, feel free to adjust these questions and/or add your own.

Discussion Questions

1. Of the seven steps Steve lists in his process — problem, examination, diagnosis, plan, implementation, follow-up, repeat — which do you think is the most challenging to complete? Why?
2. What barriers exist to applying the process Steve teaches?
3. Steve mentioned the importance of a good “baton pass” to get work done. Can you think of any times you’ve seen dropped baton passes in your daily work? How can you address them?
4. Do you think you can apply the process Steve Spear shares to fix a system in your work? Why or why not?