

# HMRF grantee office hours: Continuous quality improvement

October 5, 2021, 2:00 – 3:00 ET

**OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE**

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

**OPRE**

**HMRF**  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

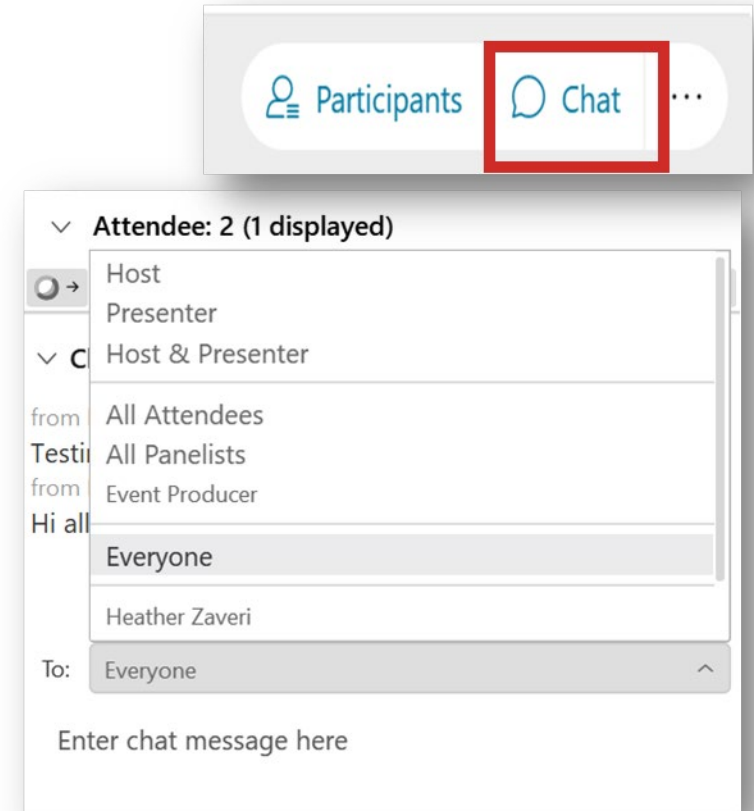


Mathematica  
Progress Together

**Build**  
Building Usage, Improvement, & Learning  
with Data in HMRF Programs

# How you can participate

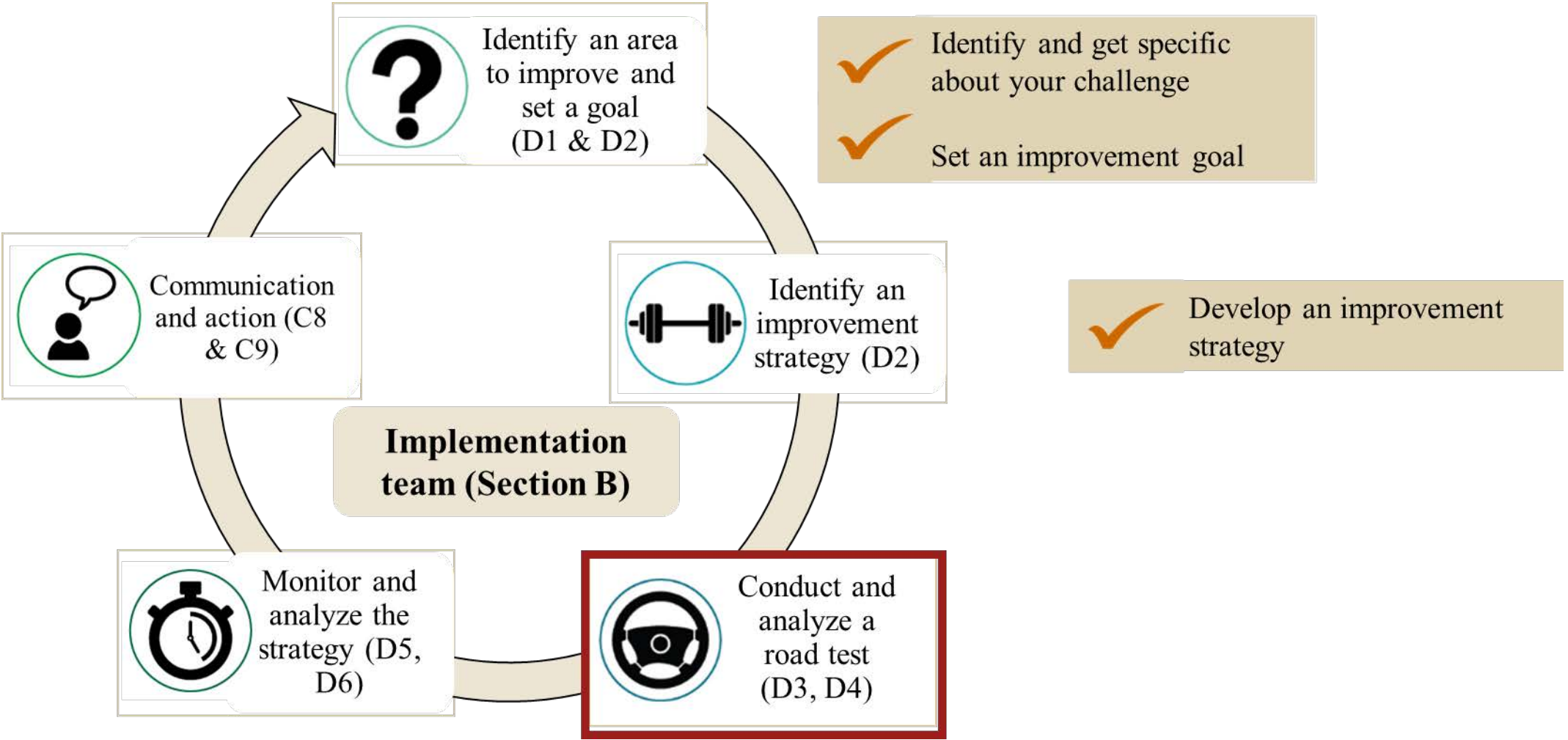
- / Use the chat to ask questions or share experiences
- / Respond to polls about specific CQI topics
- / **REMINDER: Never text or email client personally identifiable information (PII), including during office hours or when contacting the TA teams**



# Today's focus

- / **What is a road test?**
- / **Planning a road test**
- / **Conducting a road test**
- / **CQI plan submissions**

# Where are we in the CQI cycle?



# Where are we on the CQI template?

## Section D3

f. What type of feedback and information will you collect during the test?  
(Check all that apply)

Staff feedback through:

- Questionnaire
- Focus group
- Interview
- nFORM
- Other (please specify)

Client feedback through:

- Questionnaire
- Focus group
- Interview
- nFORM
- Other

Others' feedback:

## Section D4

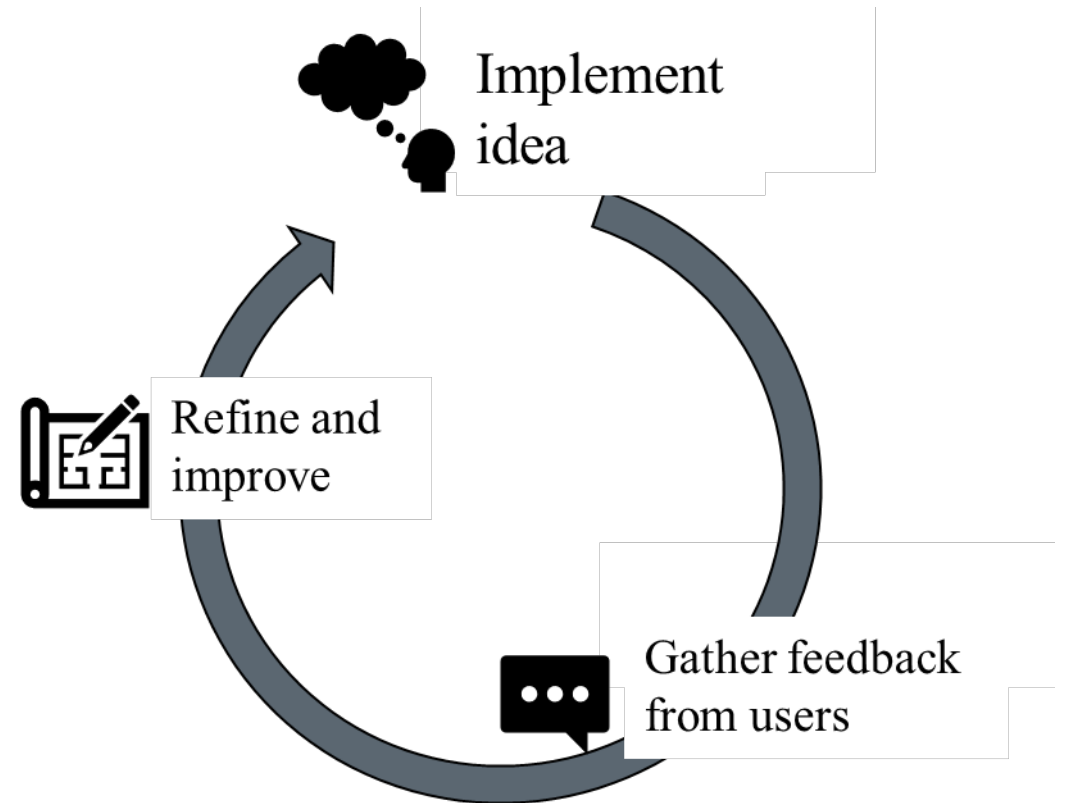
a. What seems to have worked *consistently* well and not so well? What was *inconsistent*?

b. What, if anything, was surprising, given expectations about how the new strategy would work?

# What is a road test?

# What is a road test and why conduct one?

- / **A process for trying out an improvement strategy before committing to it, in order to:**
  - Understand the strategy's feasibility
  - Understand the strategy's promise for improvement
- / **Starting small allows you to tweak and refine before scaling up and investing resources**

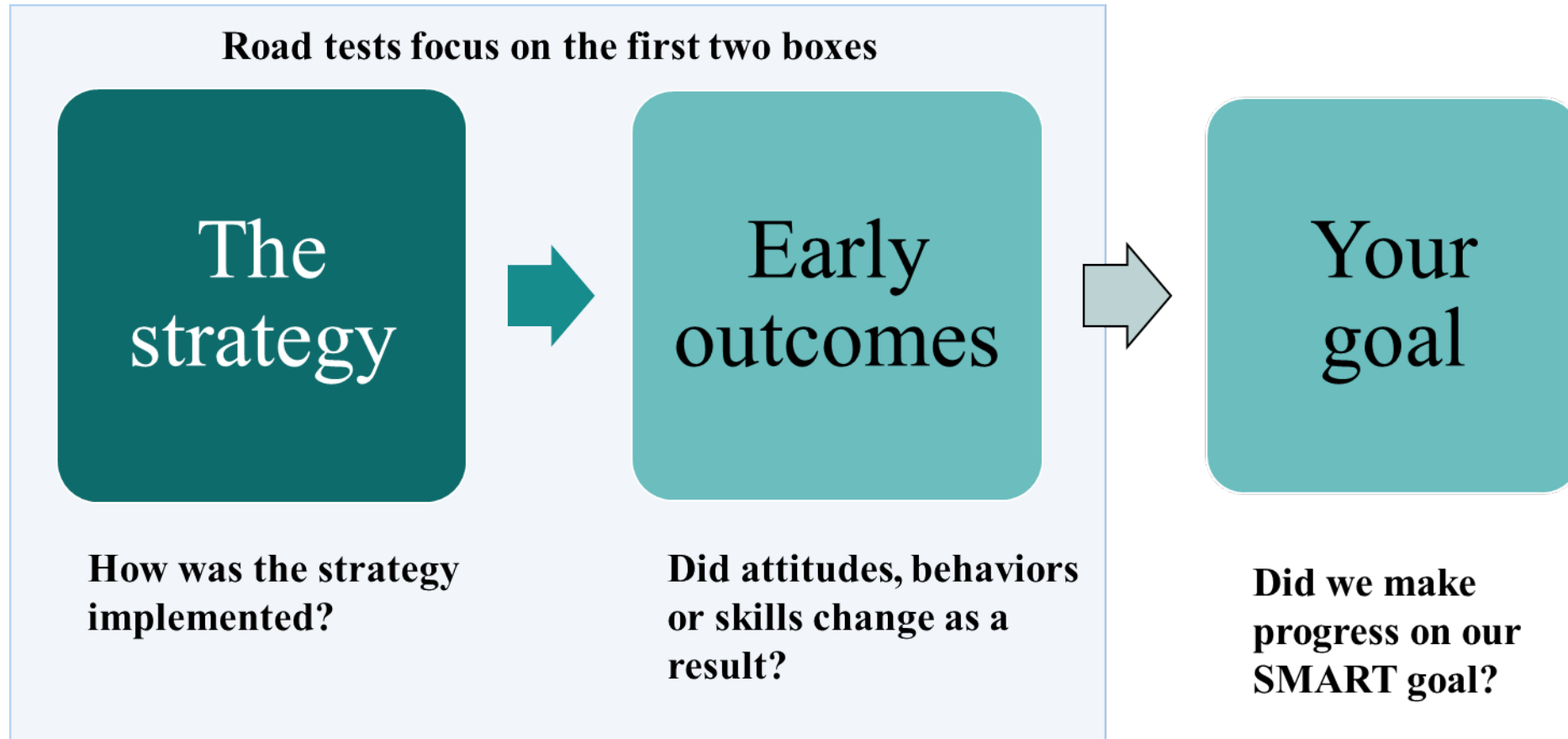


# Key characteristics of a road test

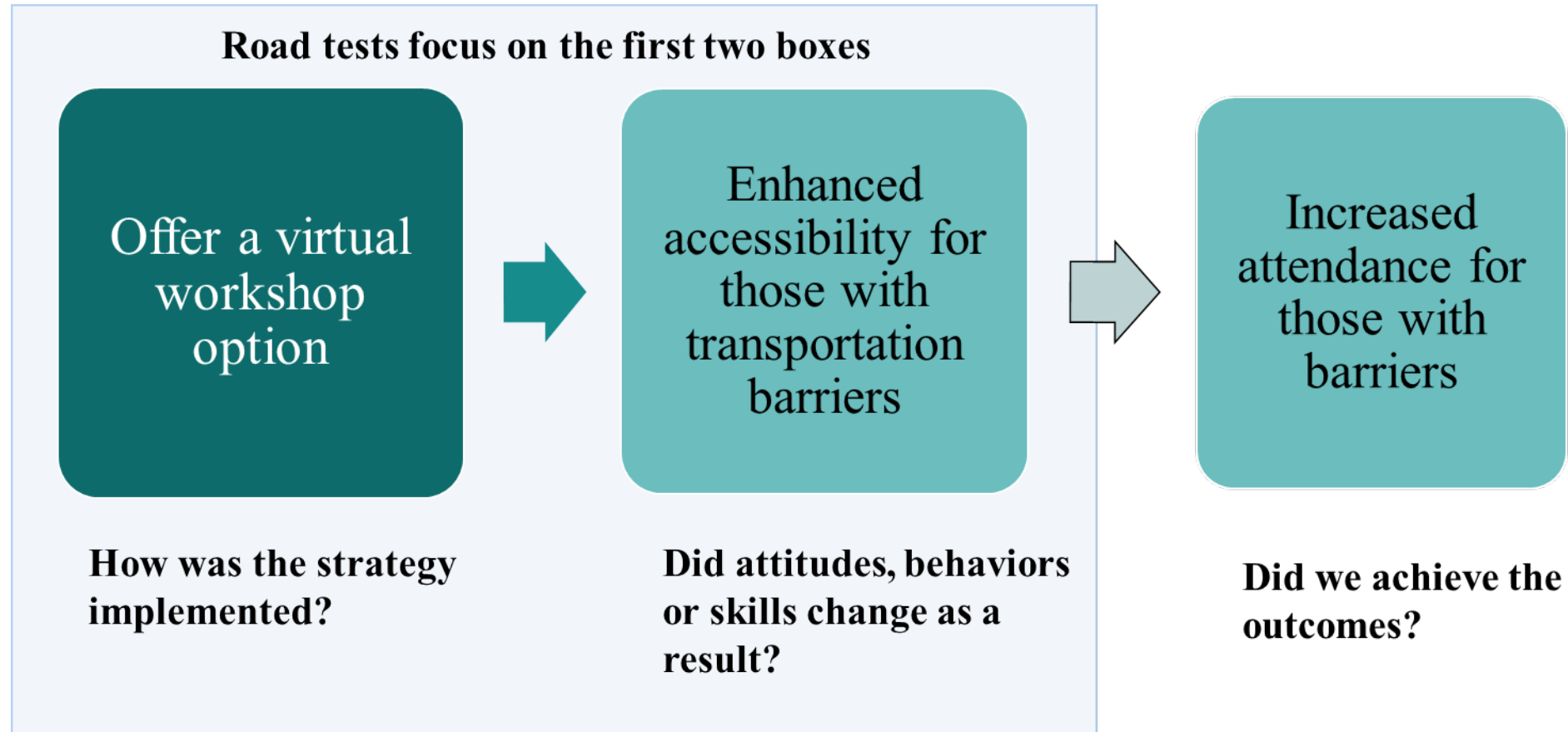
- / **Conducted on a small scale**
- / **Data-driven**
- / **Often involve two or more learning cycles**
- / **Grounded in the principle of “failing fast”**



# What is the focus of a road test?



# What is the focus of a road test?



# Share with us

## / **Have you made any changes or adaptations to program processes so far?**

- Did you collect any information to learn how the changes were working?
- Did you make the change program-wide or start small?



# Planning a road test

# Planning a road test: three steps

1. Articulate your improvement strategy (Section D3a)

2. Create learning questions (D3b)

3. Develop a road test implementation plan (D3c-j)

# 1. Articulate your improvement strategy

/ **Get specific about the components of your strategy**

/ **Elements to specify (as applicable)**

- Schedule (duration and frequency of virtual workshop)
- Staff roles and responsibilities
- Technology requirements for clients and staff
- Plan for training and supports

## 2. Create learning questions

### / Why develop learning questions?

- Frames the scope of the road test
- Informs your data collection plan

### / What should learning questions focus on?

- **Implementation of the strategy:** How was it implemented? What were the challenges and successes? What are the recommendations for refinement?
- **Early promise:** Look back at your rationale, are you seeing the changes in attitudes, behaviors and skills that you expected to lead to change?

### / What shouldn't they focus on?

- **Effectiveness:** Was the strategy effective in achieving our goal? Did my strategy cause improvement?

# CQI template: Strategy and learning questions

## Section D3b

Please answer the following questions on how you will test the strategy.<sup>3</sup>

a. What is the strategy being tested?

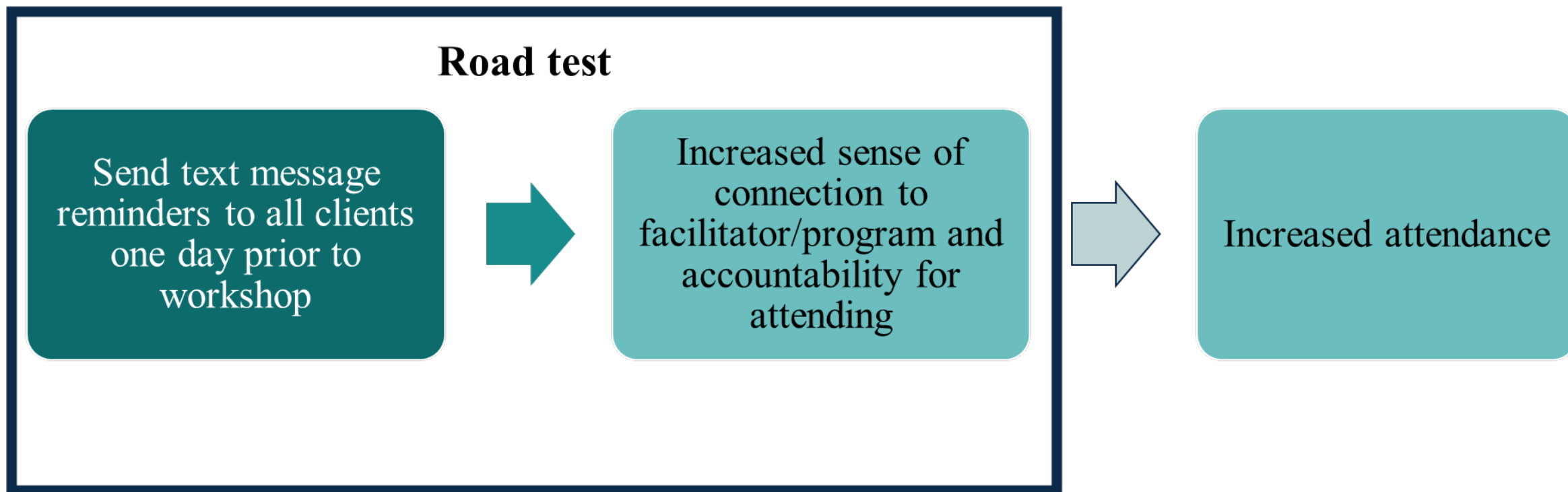
b. What are your learning questions for the road test?<sup>4</sup> For example, if testing calls before each workshop: How do families respond to calls before each workshop? How well are staff able to fit this task into their existing responsibilities?



# Example: Stronger Families

- / Challenge: Program attendance**
- / Root cause: Clients lack a sense of connection to the program**
- / Strategy: Stronger Families facilitators will test a strategy to send reminder text messages to all clients one day prior to a workshop to encourage their attendance**
- / Rationale: The text messages will strengthen connections with clients and create a greater sense of accountability for attending**
- / Overall goal: Increased attendance**

# Example: Stronger Families



# Stronger Families: learning questions

Implementation	Early promise
How easy or hard was it for facilitators to send text messages to all clients before every session?	Do clients feel more connected to the facilitator through receiving texts? To the program?
Was one day prior an appropriate time frame? Do facilitators believe more or less time would have worked better?	Do the texts influence clients' feelings of responsibility for attending?

# What learning questions would you ask?

## / Scenario

- **SMART goal:** Increase average enrollment from 20 clients per month in Q1 to 35 per month in Q2.
- **A root cause of enrollment challenge:** Fewer events to get the word out about our program due to the pandemic
- **Strategy:** Build a Facebook page for the program and have staff and alumni promote through their networks
- **Rationale:** Developing an online presence is a way to expand awareness about our program, despite attending fewer in-person events

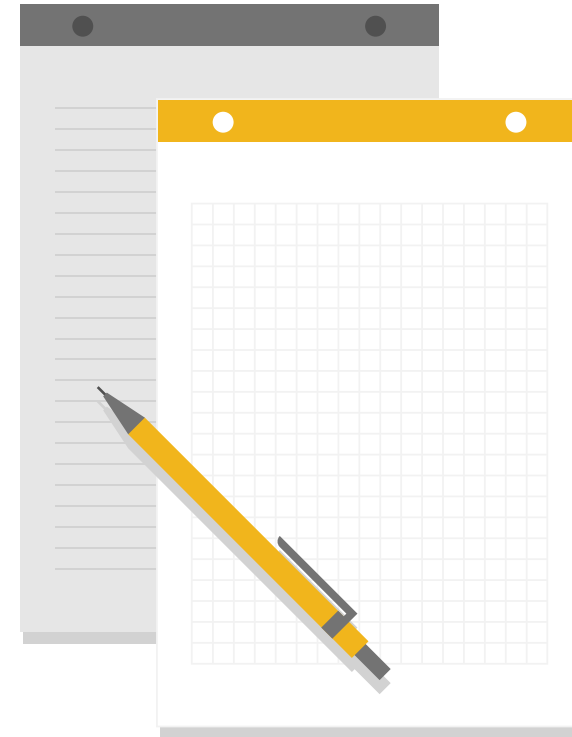
## / What would you ask?

- Remember that road test questions are about implementation and early outcomes, not effectiveness

# 3. Develop road test implementation plan

## / **Get specific about the logistics and expectations**

- When and how will you implement the strategy?
- When and how will you collect feedback?
- What type of feedback will you collect?
- When and how will you analyze the results?



# Feedback and information sources

- / Questionnaire/exit tickets
- / Interviews/focus groups
- / Observations
- / nFORM
- / Administrative data collection

## Sample exit ticket

[Insert Program Name Here]  
EXIT SLIP

**CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST FITS YOUR ANSWER.**

I did <b>not</b> find the topics of today useful	1	2	3	4	5	I did find the topics of today useful
The way the topics were presented today was <b>not</b> clear and understandable	1	2	3	4	5	The way the topics were presented today was clear and understandable

# Data collection tips for a road test

- / **Keep it short—focus on what you're trying to learn**
  - Avoid asking questions out of curiosity alone!
- / **Match the question form to the method**
  - If you want to understand perceptions, interviews/focus groups may be best
  - To understand frequency, use a survey or nFORM data
  - If you want to understand behaviors, an observation might best
- / **Consider what is feasible to track with minimal burden**
- / **Be clear about who is responsible for each data collection activity**

# CQI template: Road test plan

## Section D3

c. When and how will you implement the strategy?

d. When will you start the test?

e. When will you complete the test?

f. What type of feedback and information will you collect during the test?  
*(Check all that apply)*

Staff feedback through:

- Questionnaire
- Focus group
- Interview
- nFORM
- Other *(please specify)*

Client feedback through:

- Questionnaire
- Focus group
- Interview
- nFORM
- Other *(please specify)*

Others' feedback:

*Please specify who and how*



# Example: Stronger Families

Learning question	Data collection activity	Data collection plan	Analysis plan
How easy or hard was it for facilitators to send text messages to all clients before every session?	Facilitator debrief meeting	At the end of the testing phase (after session 3)	Highlight common challenges across facilitators, as well as strong practices/innovations and unexpected developments
Was sending texts one day prior an appropriate time frame? Do facilitators believe more or less time would have worked better?	Facilitator survey	At the end of the testing phase (after session 3)	Analyze responses to understand extent to which facilitators agree with one-day prior policy
Do clients feel more connected to the program through receiving texts? Increased accountability?	Brief student survey (~5 question)	At the end of session 3	Analyze responses to determine whether clients report a strong sense of connection and increased accountability

# Conducting a road test

# Conducting a road test

## / **Critical ingredients of success**

- Efficient coordination
- Active leadership
- Communication about efforts, successes and challenges

## / **Designate one person to coordinate the road test**

- Keep staff on schedule with strategy implementation
- Ensure staff have access to feedback forms for clients
- Address questions and note challenges that arise during the road test to bring back to the CQI team

# Analyzing results and assessing success

## / **After each cycle, team should consider:**

- What seems to have worked consistently well and not so well? What was inconsistent?
- What was surprising?
- How might we build on strengths and address or resolve challenges?

## / **Overall goal is to refine the strategy to make it work better**

- If a challenge is identified, brainstorm ideas for improving the strategy
- Decision: Adopt, Adapt, Abandon

# Share with us

**/ Consider the program changes and adaptations you thought about or shared at the start of today's office hours. Is there anything you would do differently to learn about those program changes?**



# CQI plan submissions to your FPS

## / September 30

- Identify CQI **implementation team**
  - o [April](#) and [May](#) office hours
  - o [CQI Implementation Teams Tip Sheet](#)

## / December 31

- Plan for first **road test (through section D3)**
  - o [June office hours](#) and [Using nFORM to investigate programmatic challenges tip sheet](#) (*in development*)
  - o July office hours and [Guiding CQI with SMART goals tip sheet](#)
  - o August office hours and [Identify an improvement strategy tip sheet](#) (*in development*)
  - o Today's office hours session (planning a road test)

# Open Q&A

# Additional questions?

## / **For more resources:**

- HMRF Grant Resources (<https://hmrfgantresources.info/continuous-quality-improvement>) contains CQI template, tip sheets and other CQI resources

/ **Next office hours on October 26, 2021, from 2-3pm ET**

/ **Submit questions to [hmrfcqi@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:hmrfcqi@mathematica-mpr.com)**