

CQI Tip Sheet: Peer Teach-Backs

At the request of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Mathematica visited 17 Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grantees in the 2015 cohort in spring and early summer 2019 to learn more about implementation of their grants. We talked to leaders and staff members from grantee and partner organizations about their experiences, successes, and challenges implementing their HMRF services. During the site visits, we learned about ideas and tools several grantees were using to monitor and improve their programs. This continuous quality improvement (CQI) tip sheet describes one such tool.



Health care providers developed the teach-back method to confirm whether a patient understands what is being explained to them. If a patient understands, they are able to “teach-back” the information to the nurse or doctor accurately. The method has also been used as an education tool for medical staff. For example, an educational program designed to increase nurses’ knowledge of heart failure self-care included teach-back role-play. The program increased nurses’ knowledge, and the increases were sustained over time (Mahramus et al. 2014).

Two HMRF grantees we visited used a similar teach-back method as a peer learning tool. This method enabled facilitators to confirm their mastery of curriculum content and to give presenters and their peers an opportunity to improve skills by observing and actively learning from one another.



The teach-backs happened during regular staff meetings held with facilitators (either in-person or virtual) or as part of ongoing facilitator training. One facilitator would present a curriculum module or component to the others, who would then give constructive feedback.



Presenters would rotate over time and choose which module to present. Alternatively, a supervisor might assign a presenter and module, to enhance the presenter’s skills or focus on a module or topic that was timely or needed strengthening for the program.



This program improvement strategy can be a useful supplement to other ongoing training activities provided by curriculum developers or others. Ongoing training is recognized as a best practice for maintaining fidelity to program models.



If you have any questions about CQI, including identifying strategies for supporting staff, please do not hesitate to contact the HMRF CQI technical assistance team at hmrfcqi@mathematica-mpr.com. We are happy to help!