Identifying a challenge to address with CQI

Data Capacity and CQI TTA Team

August 25, 2026

Presenters

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Join us for future nFORM/CQI office hours!

Check out the HMRF weekly grantee digest every Wednesday

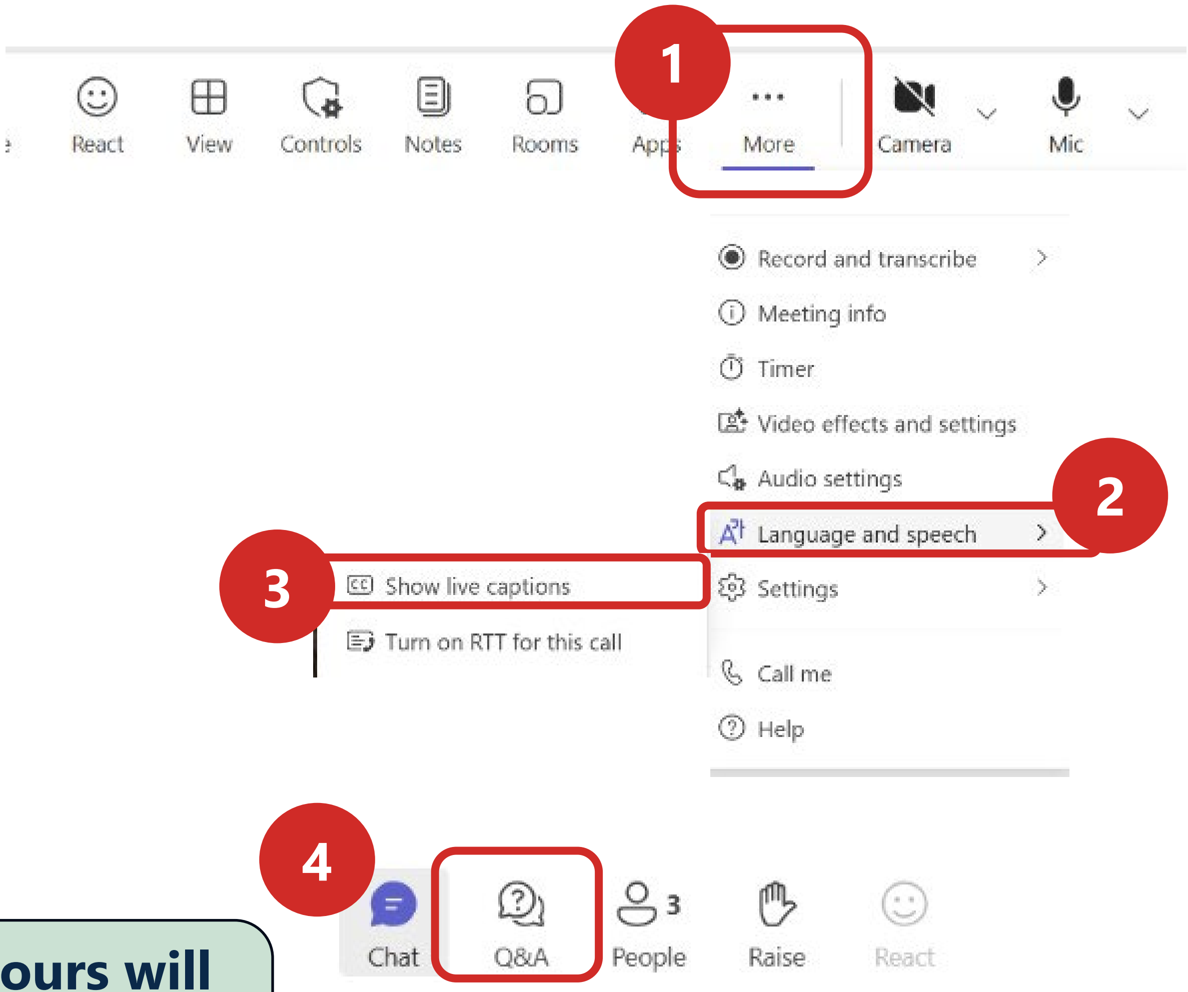
- Scroll down to "nFORM and CQI Announcements" to register for office hours and find links to the latest resources
- Click on the registration link in the weekly digest; follow the registration instructions and click the "Add to calendar" button on the upper right of the Teams registration page
- Contact us at nFORMCQITA@mathematica-mpr.com with any questions

Dive into the Performance Progress Report (PPR) during office hours on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 – 2-3:30pm eastern time

During this ACF-required session for all grants, the Data Capacity and CQI TTA team will provide detailed information on how to complete the PPR, including tips for reviewing numeric data and completing the progress narrative. OFA staff will highlight requirements and what FPSs look for when they review grants' PPRs. **Click here or scan the QR code** to register for the September 8, 2026 office hours.

Housekeeping

- Please mute your line
- Access closed-captioning by clicking the “More…” icon in top right corner, select language and speech, and click “show live captions”
- Use the Q&A to ask questions



Recording and slides from today’s office hours will be made available on the HMRF Grant Resource site at https://hmrfgrantresources.info/

Today's objectives

- Understand how to use nFORM and other program data to identify and prioritize challenges to address with CQI
- Learn how human-centered design approaches can help CQI teams explore root causes of a challenge

Today’s agenda

- Using data to identify CQI challenges
- Getting specific about the challenge
- Using human centered design (HCD) approaches to explore root causes
- Questions and answers

Using data to identify CQI challenges

Getting started with CQI cycles

You have been or will soon be delivering program services and are setting grant year 2 targets for key performance measures

Program launch		Starting CQI cycles	
Define what success looks like (e.g. set performance targets)	Deliver program services	Begin monitoring performance	Identify and learn about challenges

nFORM data sources to help monitor program performance

Performance Progress Report

Review and describe grant-year progress on key client enrollment, participation, and outcome measures, and program operations and challenges.

Query Tool

Use filters to tailor visualizations of client progress on key measures and compare populations, time periods, client groups, services, and outcomes.

Operational Reports

Run focused reports to manage day-to-day programming and monitor data quality for survey completion, workshop attendance, individual services, caseloads, and other activities.

Data Exports

Download all nFORM data except for PII to conduct deeper analysis, check data quality, identify patterns, and explore trends across program activities.

Pair nFORM data with feedback from participants, staff, partners, and others to understand what may be behind the numbers.

Other types of program data

Clients are your core focus so it's important to hear directly what they think of your program

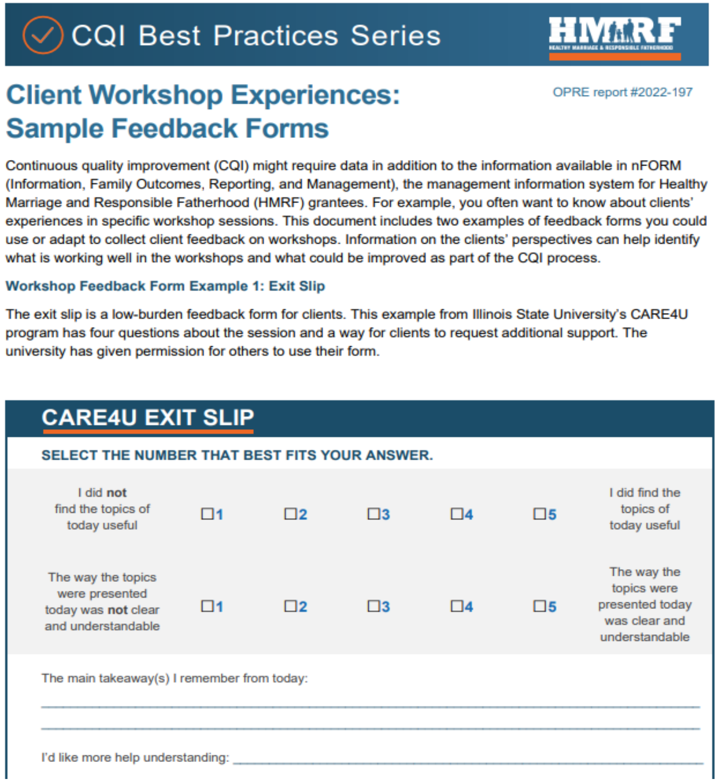
Tools for collecting client feedback

- Satisfaction questions on program exit surveys
- Online polls (virtual) or suggestion boxes/exit tickets (in-person)
- End-of-session focus groups or interviews

Consider ways to collect periodic feedback from program staff and partners

- Focus groups and interviews
- Regular debriefs/check-ins

[HMRF resource site:](#)
Client Workshop Experiences: Sample Feedback Forms



CQI Best Practices Series HMRF

Client Workshop Experiences: Sample Feedback Forms

OPRE report #2022-197

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) might require data in addition to the information available in nFORM (Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management), the management information system for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grantees. For example, you often want to know about clients' experiences in specific workshop sessions. This document includes two examples of feedback forms you could use or adapt to collect client feedback on workshops. Information on the clients' perspectives can help identify what is working well in the workshops and what could be improved as part of the CQI process.

Workshop Feedback Form Example 1: Exit Slip

The exit slip is a low-burden feedback form for clients. This example from Illinois State University's CARE4U program has four questions about the session and a way for clients to request additional support. The university has given permission for others to use their form.

CARE4U EXIT SLIP

SELECT THE NUMBER THAT BEST FITS YOUR ANSWER.

I did **not** 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 **not** clear and understandable	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	The way the topics were presented today was clear and understandable

The main takeaway(s) I remember from today: ____________________

I'd like more help understanding: ____________________

What should programs look for in the data?

Target performance	• Are we meeting our performance targets? Where are we falling short?
Trends	• Is performance changing over time? Is the pattern persistent?
Differences	• Are there meaningful differences across sites, populations, facilitators, or cohorts?
Drop-off points	• Where in the participant journey are people disengaging or not completing services?
Implementation gaps	• Are we delivering the program the way we intended?
Recurring concerns	• What issues are participants, staff, or partners raising repeatedly?

From a data signal to a CQI challenge

1 Data Signal

Workshop participation drops after Session 2

What is happening?

Look: Compare performance to targets and look for patterns.
Use: nFORM data tools

2 Get Specific

Drop-off is greatest among participants in evening cohorts

Who? When? Where? How much?

Dig Deeper: Break the data down by relevant characteristics.
Use: nFORM data tools

3 Prepare to Investigate

Why are participants in evening cohorts dropping off after Session 2?

What do we still need to learn?

Next: Gather participant and staff perspectives and explore possible root causes.
Use: Targeted conversations, interviews, or other feedback.

Data helps identify where to look. Learning from participants, staff, partners, and others helps programs understand what may be behind the numbers.

Getting specific about the challenge

Let’s hear from you

What issues do you see with this challenge statement?

Workshop retention is a challenge

How can we make this challenge statement even better? What information would you add to it to help make it more specific?

What makes a challenge specific enough for CQI?

What
What is happening?

Who, When Where
Who is affected, and when/where does it occur

Evidence
What data show the challenge?

Why it matters
What is the impact?

Use this template: "[WHO] is experiencing [CHALLENGE/WHAT], particularly [WHEN/WHERE], as shown by [DATA/PATTERN/EVIDENCE]. This matters because [WHY IT MATTERS]."

Specifying your challenge for CQI

Too broad.

Workshop retention is a challenge

✓ WHAT   X WHO/WHEN/WHERE   X EVIDENCE   X WHY IT MATTERS

More specific, but not there yet.

Workshop participation drops after Session 2, especially among participants in evening cohorts.

✓ WHAT   ✓ WHO/WHEN/WHERE   X EVIDENCE   X WHY IT MATTERS

Specific enough for CQI

Participants in evening cohorts are less likely to continue attending after Session 2; only 45% continue to Session 3, compared with 70% in other cohorts, contributing to lower workshop completion among evening cohorts.

✓ WHAT   ✓ WHO/WHEN/WHERE   ✓ EVIDENCE   ✓ WHY IT MATTERS

From what we know to what we need to learn

What we know

- Who is affected
- When/where the challenge occurred
- What the data show
- Why it matters

Still need to understand the root cause(s)

- Why is this happening?
- What are participants, staff, and partners experiencing?
- What might be contributing to the issue?

That's where **human-center design (HCD)** can help.

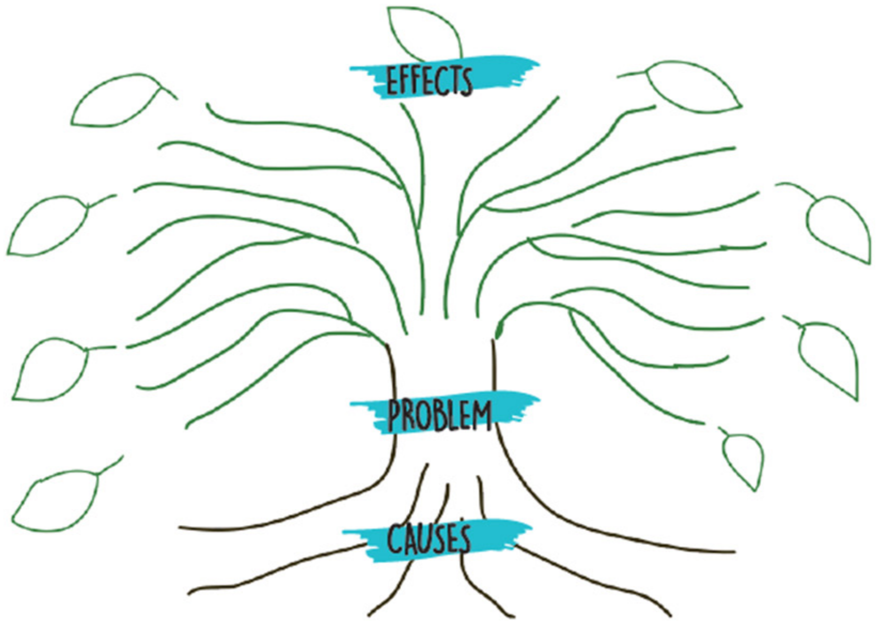
Using HCD approaches to explore root causes

Learning about the challenge: Identifying root causes

Root cause analysis: The process of breaking down challenges into discrete causes

Helps ensure that you're addressing the cause of a problem, rather than a symptom of it or what you see on the surface

Identifying discrete causes allows your team to develop targeted improvement strategies



HCD helps us understand the root causes of a challenge from the people closest to it

LISTEN

Learn directly from participants, staff and partners

MAP

Understand the experience or process from beginning to end

MAKE SENSE

Use what you learn to identify potential root causes

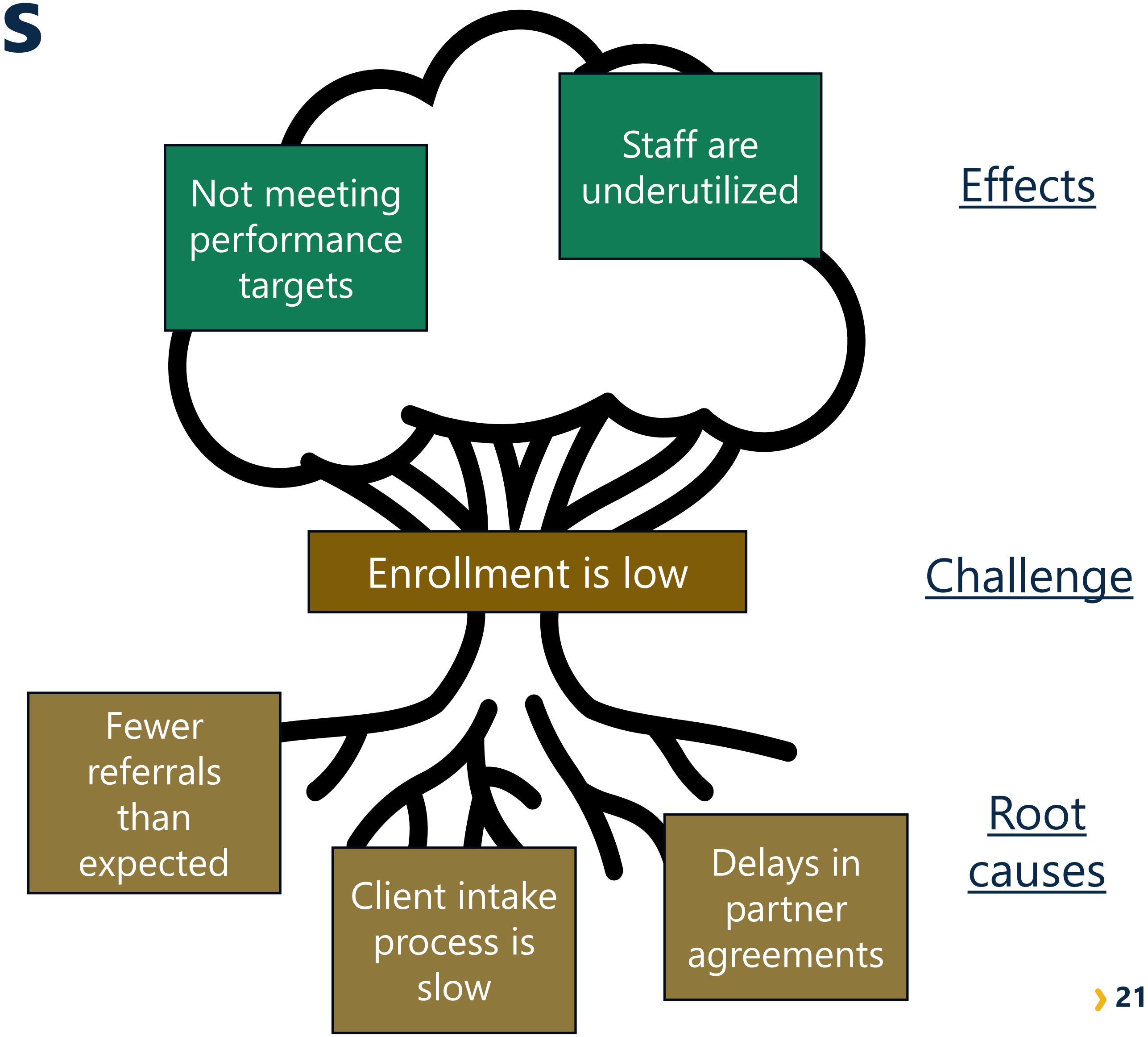
The goal is to go beyond what we think we know and uncover what we may be missing

Problem tree analysis

Goal: Break down a high-level challenge into its causes and identify the effects of the challenge

- A visual tool for documenting various root causes to your main challenge
- Can highlight how root causes may be interrelated

Next steps: Prioritize root causes to determine a focus area for improvement work



Map the journey to identify where things may be breaking down

Enrollment ❯ Attends Session 1 ❯ Attends Session 2 ❯ Continues attending

Zoom in on the challenge pathway

Misses session
- What contributes to missing a session?
- Are there particular barriers for evening participants?

Staff follow-up
- What happens after someone misses?
- Is staff follow-up consistent and timely?
- What makeup or catch-up options are available?

Compare experiences

Returns | **Does NOT return**

What differs between the experiences of participants who return and those who don't?
- What helps participants return?
- What gets in the way of returning?

Keep asking "why?" to move from what you learned to what may be driving the challenge

Define the problem	Participants who did not return described difficulty catching up.
Why is it happening?	Participants weren't sure what they missed or how to make it up.
Why is that?	Follow-up and catch-up support varied across staff.
Why is that?	Staff did not have a shared process for responding when participants missed a session.
Why is that?	Expectations and procedures for re-engaging participants after an absence had not been clearly defined.
Possible ROOT CAUSE	No clearly defined, consistent re-engagement process after missed sessions.

Empathy interviews

WE KNOW FROM THE DATA

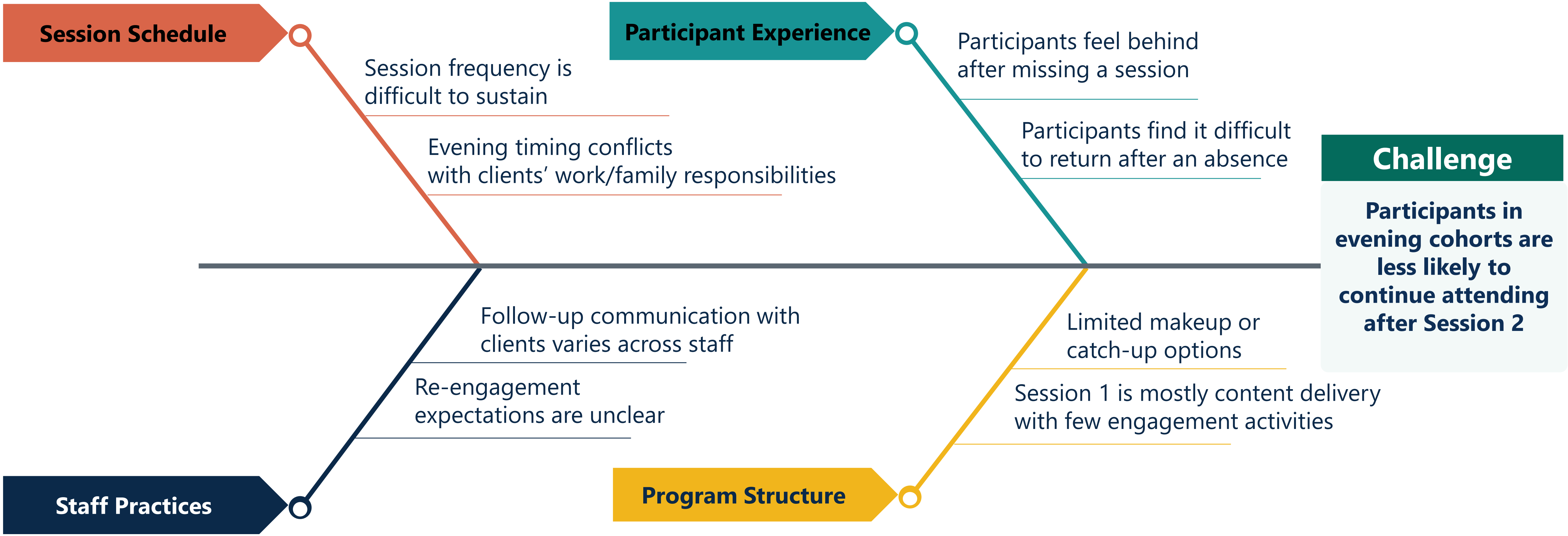
Participants in evening cohorts are less likely to continue attending after Session 2

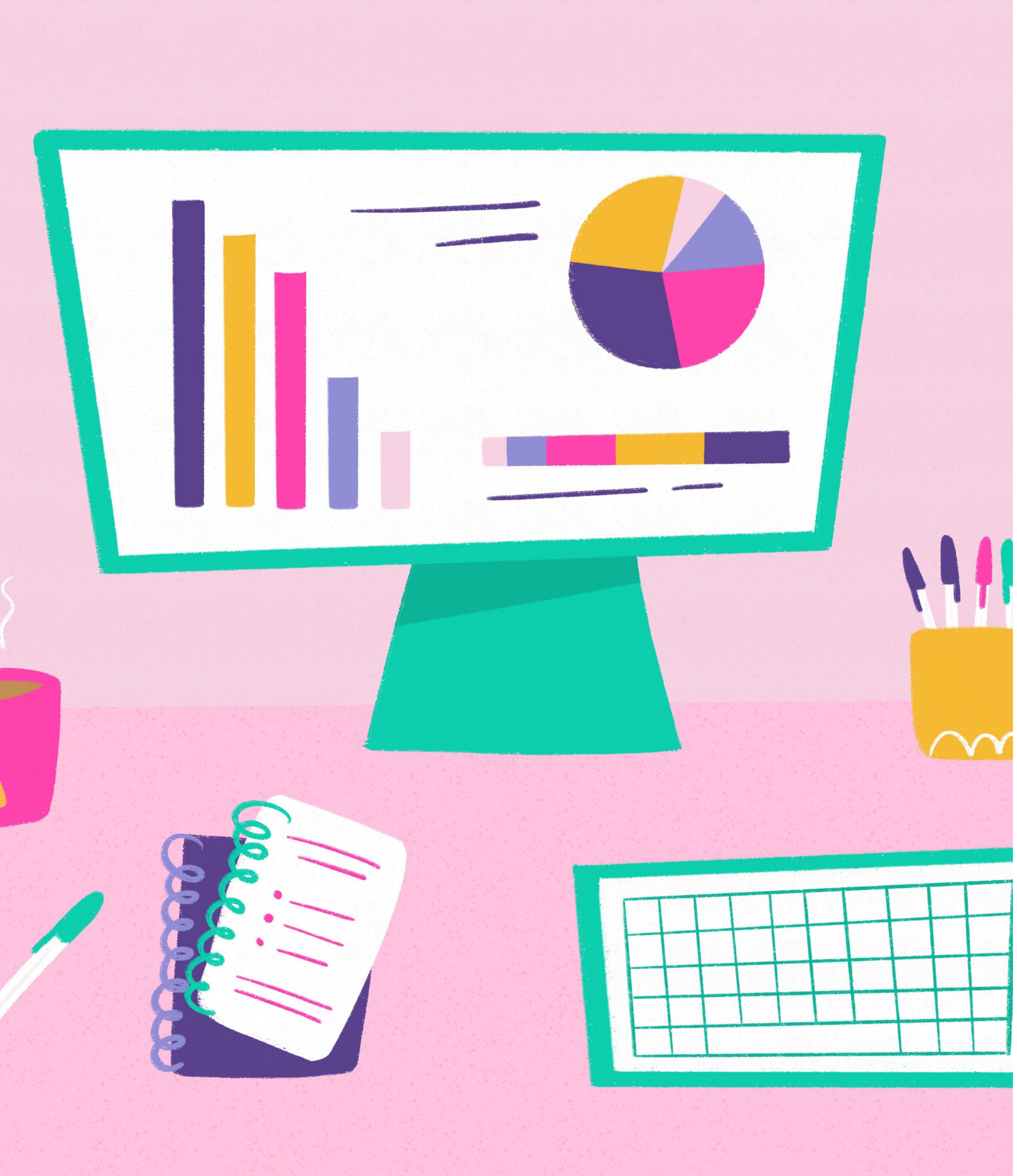
WHAT WE CAN ASK...

- What changed or became difficult after the first few sessions?
- How does the session schedule, when and how often you meet, work for you?
- What parts of the sessions feel most useful or engaging to you?
- What would make it easier to continue participating?

Empathy interviews, brief conversations, focus groups, or pulse questions can help uncover experiences that are not visible in nFORM data.

Bring together what you learned to identify potential drivers





Reflections in the chat

What is one challenge in your program that you would like to better understand?

Who could you learn from, or what could you explore, to better understand what may be driving that challenge?

Questions?

Wrap up

Office Hours officially on Microsoft Teams as of 8/25

All nFORM and CQI resources on HMRF Grant Resource site at https://hmrfgrantresources.info/

After reviewing resources, contact the data capacity and CQI TTA help desk with any questions at **nFORMCQITA@mathematica-mpr.com**

Data security reminders

- Never text or email personally identifiable information (PII) like client names – including to the help desk
- Never take screenshots of client PII from nFORM
- Everyone who interacts with client data should watch the **Keeping Data Secure training video** and review **Module I of the nFORM user manual**

Don't forget to register for the ACF-required **September 8th PPR Office Hours!**