Glossary

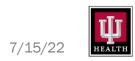| Term	Definition	Module for More Information
5 Whys	A tool that seeks the root cause of a problem by asking "Why?" five times (it can take fewer or more than five).	Gap Analysis Job Aid 5 Why's Template
6S	An organization system to improve the work environment by reducing waste, improving flow, and ensuring quality and safety. 6S stands for Sort, Set for Flow, Scrub, Safety, Standardize and Sustain.	6S Job Aid
7 How's	A technique that challenges thinking and encourages creativity by asking, "Can we think of 7 different ways how we could solve that cause?" or, "What are 7 ways that we could make this work?"	Develop Possible Solution Job Aid
Affinity Process	Helps find comparisons between groups and sorts them by organizing them into distinct common themes.	Affinity Process Job Aid
Balancing Metrics	Also known as "Watch Metric," these measures look at a system from different directions/dimensions and answer "Are the changes designed to improve one part of the system causing new problems in other parts of the system?"	Current State Job Aid Target State Job Aid
Brainstorming	A group discussion to produce ideas.	Develop Possible Solution Job Aid
Cause & Effect Diagram	A tool to help brainstorm and organize potential causes contributing to an outcome. Also known as a "Fishbone Diagram."	7 Quality Tools: Cause & Effect Diagram
Change Management	An intentional approach to support people through change.	Change Management portal page
Check Sheet	A simple, flexible and effective data collection and analysis tool that can be adapted for a wide variety of purposes. It is typically used to collect data in real time at the point of use and is structured to ensure all necessary elements of the data are captured.	7 Quality Tools: Check Sheet

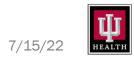|		
Common Cause	Normal to the process, variation is the natural or expected variation inherent in a process and typically falls within the statistical control limits.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart (Click on video)
Continuous Improvement	The ongoing improvement of processes, products, and services through the application of specific methods and tools to achieve incremental and breakthrough improvements. (Accepted definition by IU Health Transformation)	
Control Chart	A graph used to study if/how a process changes over time. Data are plotted in time order. A control chart always has a central line for the average, an upper line for the upper control limit, and a lower line for the lower control limit. Distinguishes between common and special causes of variation.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Countermeasure	A direct and immediate action taken to bring something back to the expected level of performance. Also see temporary and permanent countermeasure definitions.	Adjust and Rerun Job Aid
Containment Action	Temporary actions to prevent further issues or disruptions while the causes of the problem are investigated, and solutions are being developed.	Containment Job Aid
Current State	The current conditions of the problem (based on facts).	Current State Job Aid
Data	Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.	
Data Collection	The process of gathering necessary information to analyze.	Data Collection Plan Job Aid
Data Collection Plan	A document that captures the approach and details of collecting data that is necessary for analysis or problem solving, including what, why, where, how, and who will be collecting the data.	PDCA Problem Solving Overview
Decision Matrix	A tool used to arrange and display information when a decision needs to be made using several criteria and a list of options.	Decision Matrix Examples
Defect	An error that reaches the patient, flaws in the process that require rework. Examples include wrong patient, wrong procedure, redraws, and wrong medications, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
DOWNTIME	Refers to the wastes in healthcare that make up the acronym of DOWNTIME: Defects, over production, waiting, non-potential, transporting, inventory, motion and excess processing.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid

Driver Diagram	A visual tool that displays the main causes (or drivers) of a problem or desired outcome, and the associated "change ideas" related to each driver.	Driver Diagram Template
Error-proofing	A quality assurance technique to ensure quality is built into a process.	
Excess Processing	One of the wastes in healthcare revealing unnecessary/redundant steps. Examples include asking patients for their information more than once, ordering more labs than needed, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Experiment or Experiment Cycle	A carefully planned procedure to test a hypothesis. Also known as a "test of change," each test of change is a PDCA cycle itself within the larger problem solving cycle (plan the experiment, do the experiment, check the results, and act).	Run Experiments Job Aid
Fishbone Diagram	A tool to help brainstorm and organize potential causes contributing to an outcome. Also known as a "Cause & Effect Diagram."	7 Quality Tools: Cause & Effect Diagram
Flow Chart	A flow chart is a visual representation of the sequence of steps and decisions needed to perform a process. Each step in the sequence is noted within a diagram shape. Steps are linked by connecting lines and directional arrows. Also known as a "Process Map."	7 Quality Tools: Flow Chart
Force Field Analysis	Used in the planning phase of a project to compare the positive and negative aspects to look at the plausibility of success.	Force Field Analysis Job Aid
Gap Analysis	Determines the gaps between the current state and target state.	Gap Analysis Job Aid
Go and See	Focused observation and discussion of the specific processes in the place that it occurs. It includes observation and discussion with those that are actually performing the work.	Problem Statement Job Aid
Handoff Diagram	Used to trace the movement of each piece of information within a process, showing the touches between either major process steps or team member roles within the process.	Handoff Diagram Job Aid
Histogram	A histogram is a graphical display of data using bars of different heights. In a histogram, each bar groups numbers into ranges. Taller bars show that more data falls in that range. A histogram displays the shape and spread of continuous sample data.	7 Quality Tools: Histogram
Hypothesis	An idea being suggested for testing to see if it might be true.	Develop Possible Solution Job Aid

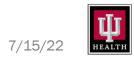|		
Hypothesis Statement	A logical statement to reflect what we expect to happen. It should be clear, direct, testable through experimentation, and worded in a cause and effect format.	Develop Possible Solution Job Aid
Inter-rater Reliability	The degree of agreement among raters and shows how much uniformity and consensus exists in the ratings given by various people.	Understanding Customer Value Job Aid
Interrelationship Diagram	Used to identify and communicate logical and sequential connections between factors or components of a problem.	Interrelationship Diagram Job Aid
Inventory	One of the wastes in healthcare that identifies things waiting to be used or obsolete items. Examples include stock of medical or operational supplies and specimens waiting for analysis, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Lagging Indicators	An outcome metric (measurement) that looks back after something has already occurred.	Current State Job Aid Target State Job Aid
Leading Indicators	A metric (measurement) that looks forward.	Current State Job Aid Target State job Aid
Lean	The application of concepts to deliver improved value to patients/team members by eliminating waste. (Accepted definition by IU Health Transformation)	
Lower Control Limit	Representing a 3 x sigma downwards deviation from the mean value of a variable. A line on a Control Chart which is three standard deviations below the mean or centerline.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Motion	One of the wastes in healthcare that identifies excessive human motion within a workspace. Examples include people reaching, bending, searching for supplies, patients, other team members, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Multi-voting	A technique that narrows a large list of possibilities to a smaller list of the top priorities and allows an item that is favored by all to rise to the top.	Multi-voting Job Aid
Nominal Group Technique (NGT)	A technique used to generate ideas on a particular subject. Ideas are recorded from each member of the group, discussed, and prioritized.	Develop Possible Solution Job Aid
Non-Potential	One of the wastes in healthcare. Examples include unused or untapped potential/creativity of team members, not working to the top of a license, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid

Non-Value Added (NVA)	Anything that takes time or resources, but does not add value to the patient (from their perspective). Examples include delays, unnecessary work, duplication, expense, and breakdowns in communication.	7 Quality Tools: Flow Chart
Outcome Metrics	These measure the voice of the customer or patient and answer "How is the system performing? What is the result?"	Current State Job Aid Target State Job Aid
Overburden	A form of waste that occurs when humans or equipment are pushed through their natural limits. Also seen as "unreasonableness." This occurs when the human element of a work process is not safe, stress free, or engaging.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Over Production	One of the wastes in healthcare where we produce too much and/or too early. Examples include creating forms "in case" they are needed, producing more labs than needed, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Pareto Chart	A Pareto chart is a type of chart that contains both bars and a line graph, where individual values are represented in descending order by bars, and the cumulative total is represented by the line.	7 Quality Tools: Pareto Chart
Permanent Countermeasure	These are action(s) which address the root cause(s) and will prevent the problem from resurfacing.	Adjust and Rerun Job Aid
PICK Chart	A simple grid used to compare potential solutions according to the factors of impact vs. the ease of implementation.	PICK Chart Template
Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA)	A repetitive four-stage model, based in scientific method, for continuous learning and improvement. It is also known as the Deming Cycle or Deming Wheel. (Accepted definition by IU Health Transformation)	PDCA Problem Solving Overview
Problem	Any deviation from the accepted standard or a gap between actual and desired state.	Problem Solving
Problem Solving	A structured methodology used by teams to solve issues or make improvements.	Problem Solving
Problem Statement	A concise description of an issue to be addressed or a condition to be improved upon.	Problem Statement Job Aid

Process Map	A process map is a visual representation of the sequence of steps and decisions needed to perform a process. Each step in the sequence is noted within a diagram shape. Steps are linked by connecting lines and directional arrows. Also known as a "Flow Chart."	7 Quality Tools: Flow Chart
Process Metrics	These measure the voice of the workings of the system and answer "Are the parts/steps in the system performing as planned?"	Current State Job Aid Target State Job Aid
Range	The difference between the lowest and highest values.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Red Tag Area	Used during the 6S process, a red tag area creates a place where items can be moved temporarily that are unnecessary, or their use and need are unknown.	6S Job Aid Red Tag Template
Root Cause Analysis	A process that helps find the ultimate cause of a problem—the true reason the problem is occurring.	Gap Analysis Job Aid
Run Chart	A graph of data over time.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Scatter Diagram	A graph in which the values of two variables are plotted along two axes, the pattern of the resulting points revealing any correlation present.	7 Quality Tools: Scatter Diagram
Scope	Clarifying what is clearly within bounds of what should be included (departments, part of process, etc.) so a problem can be solved quickly and effectively.	Current State Job Aid
SIPOC	A tool that helps determine who should be involved when considering a change in a process.	SIPOC Job Aid
Spaghetti Diagram	A visual representation of the movement of people and/or materials through the process.	Spaghetti Diagram Job Aid
Special Cause	A cause that arises from specific circumstances which are not an inherent part of a process. An outlier or point outside the control limits of a control chart indicates that a special cause may be present.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Stable Process	A process that is within statistical control, that is, does not contain any special cause variation.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Standardization	Reaching a consensus and documenting the current "best known way" to produce a product or service.	Standardize and Share Job Aid

Target State	Identifies and determines the specific desired outcome(s) of the problem solving activity.	Target State Job Aid
Temporary Countermeasure	Containment measures put in place until a permanent solution can be developed and implemented.	Adjust and Rerun Job Aid
Transporting/ Transportation	Moving patients for treatments and tests, moving supplies/specimens/equipment, hand carrying items that can be transported otherwise.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Unevenness	A form of waste due to fluctuation in schedule and demand. When needs and demands are out of their natural variation due to over-consumption, delays, lack of standardization, handoffs, lack of skills and training, etc.	Waste-Unevenness and Overburden Job Aid
Upper Control Limit	Upper control limit representing a 3 x sigma upwards deviation from the mean value of a variable. A line on a control chart which is three standard deviations above the mean or centerline.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Value	When a product or service has been perceived or appraised to fulfill a need or desire (as defined by the customer) it is said to have value or worth. Components of value may include quality, utility, functionality, capability, timeliness, price availability, etc.	Understanding Customer Value Job Aid
Variation	A change in data, characteristic, or function caused by one of four factors: special causes, common causes, tampering or structural variation.	7 Quality Tools: Control Chart
Voice of the Customer (VOC)	The desires and expectations of the customer, which are of primary importance in the development of new products, services, and the daily conduct of the business.	Understanding Customer Value Job Aid
Waiting	One of the wastes in healthcare that involve a delay in performance of an activity or process. Examples include patients in the waiting or exam rooms, waiting for results from the lab or radiology, etc.	Waste-DOWNTIME Job Aid
Waste	Any action that adds time, effort, or cost, but no value. Any problem that has more than the minimum variation or overburdens people will always lead to waste.	Waste
Watch Metrics	Also known as "Balancing Metric," these measures look at a system from different directions/dimensions and answer "Are the changes designed to improve one part of the system causing new problems in other parts of the system?"	Current State Job Aid Target State Job Aid

Additional terms on https://asq.org/quality-resources/quality-glossary