NIMDTA
Northern Ireland
Medical & Dental Training Agency

Quality Improvement & Audit

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Aim

To provide dental nurses with an understanding of quality improvement and the knowledge and skills to identify and carry out meaningful clinical audits in their practice which will benefit both patients and the clinical team.

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Learning outcomes

By the end of this session the successful delegate should be able to:

- Define quality improvement (QI) and explain its relevance in dental practice
- Describe the principles and benefits of clinical audit as a tool for improving patient care and team performance
- Identify areas for improvement within their own clinical environment using evidence-based approaches
- Plan and design a clinical audit, including setting standards, choosing criteria, and collecting data
- Interpret audit results and use findings to implement changes that enhance patient safety and service quality

GDC Development Outcomes: A, C

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Quality EXERCISE

What is Quality Improvement?

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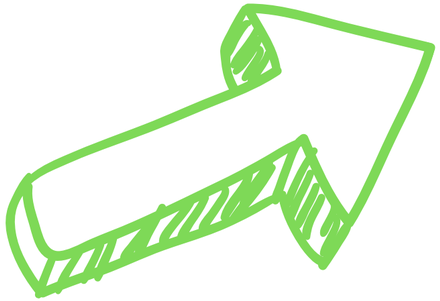

Quality Improvement is a systematic, continuous process that uses data and feedback to identify areas where healthcare services can be enhanced. It involves making small, measurable changes to improve patient outcomes, safety, and overall service delivery.

Relevance in Dental Practice

WHY?

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1. Enhances Patient Care

- Ensures treatments are safe, effective, and patient-centred.
- Helps reduce errors and improve clinical outcomes.

2. Supports Team Efficiency

- Encourages collaboration and communication among the dental team.
- Identifies workflow issues and streamlines processes.

3. Promotes a Culture of Excellence

- Fosters continuous learning and professional development.
- Builds a proactive approach to problem-solving and innovation

4. Meets Regulatory and Professional Standards

- Aligns with guidelines from bodies like the GDC and CQC.
- Demonstrates commitment to best practice and accountability.

5. Empowers Dental Nurses.

- Enables nurses to take an active role in improving care.
- Builds confidence in identifying and leading change initiatives.

How do we achieve this?

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Understanding Quality in Dental Care

- Quality in dental care means safe, effective, patient-centred, timely, efficient, and equitable treatment

Using Quality Improvement Tools

- Tools like PDSA cycles and cause-and-effect diagrams help identify and solve problems effectively

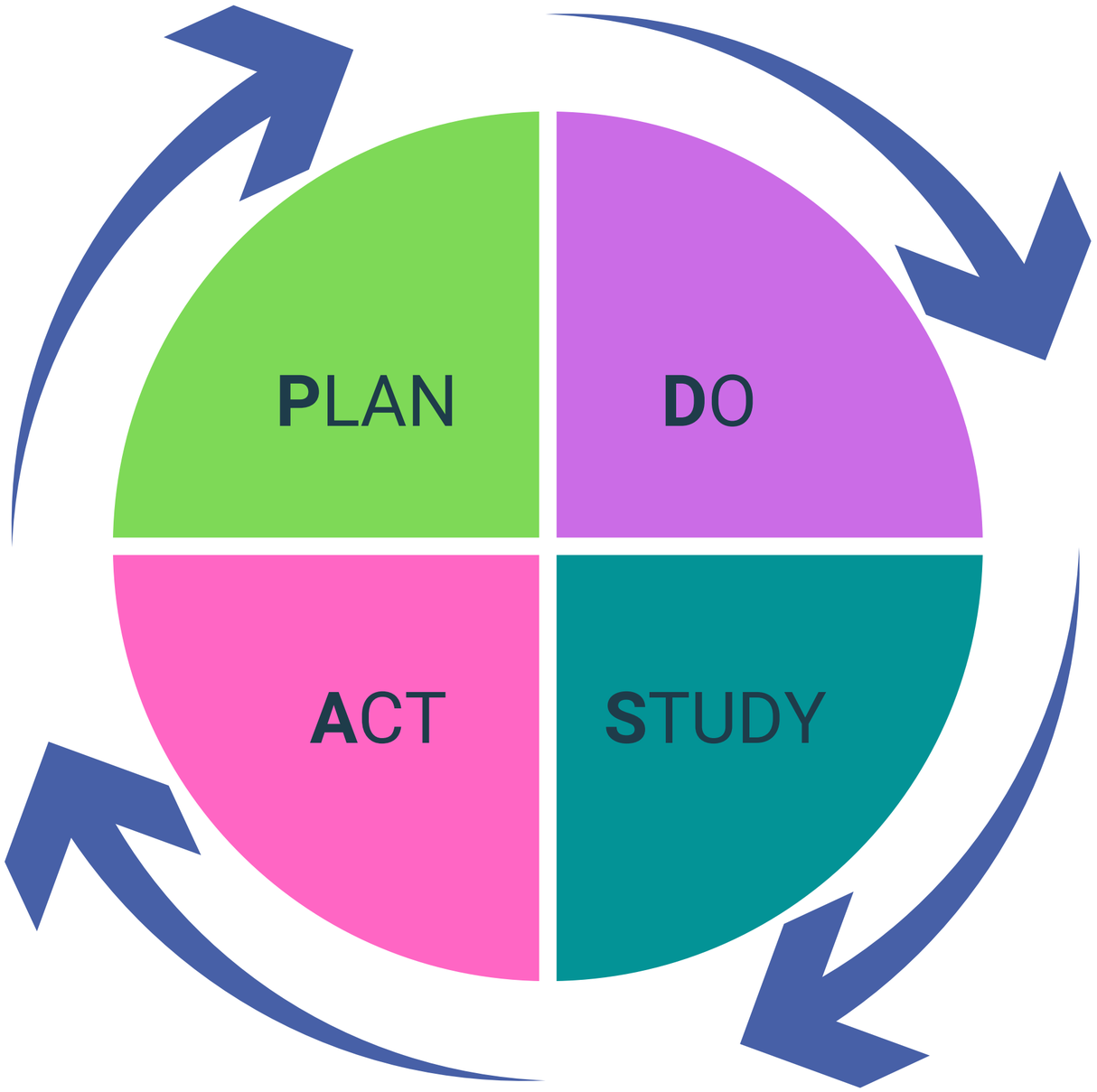
Team Involvement in Improvement

- Engaging the entire dental team encourages ideas and solutions for continuous quality improvement

Measuring and Sustaining Progress

- Collecting data and making small regular changes fosters a culture of continuous improvement

PDSA cycle



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The Clinical Audit Cycle

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The audit cycle is a structured way to check if we're doing what we should be doing:

Identify the Topic

Choose an area important to patient care (e.g. infection prevention & control).

Set Standards

Use national/local guidelines to define what "good" looks like.

Collect Data

Review a sample of procedures.

Compare with Standards

Are we meeting the expected level of care?

Make Improvements

If not, identify why and plan changes.

Re-audit

Check if the changes worked and sustained improvement.

Audit Cycle

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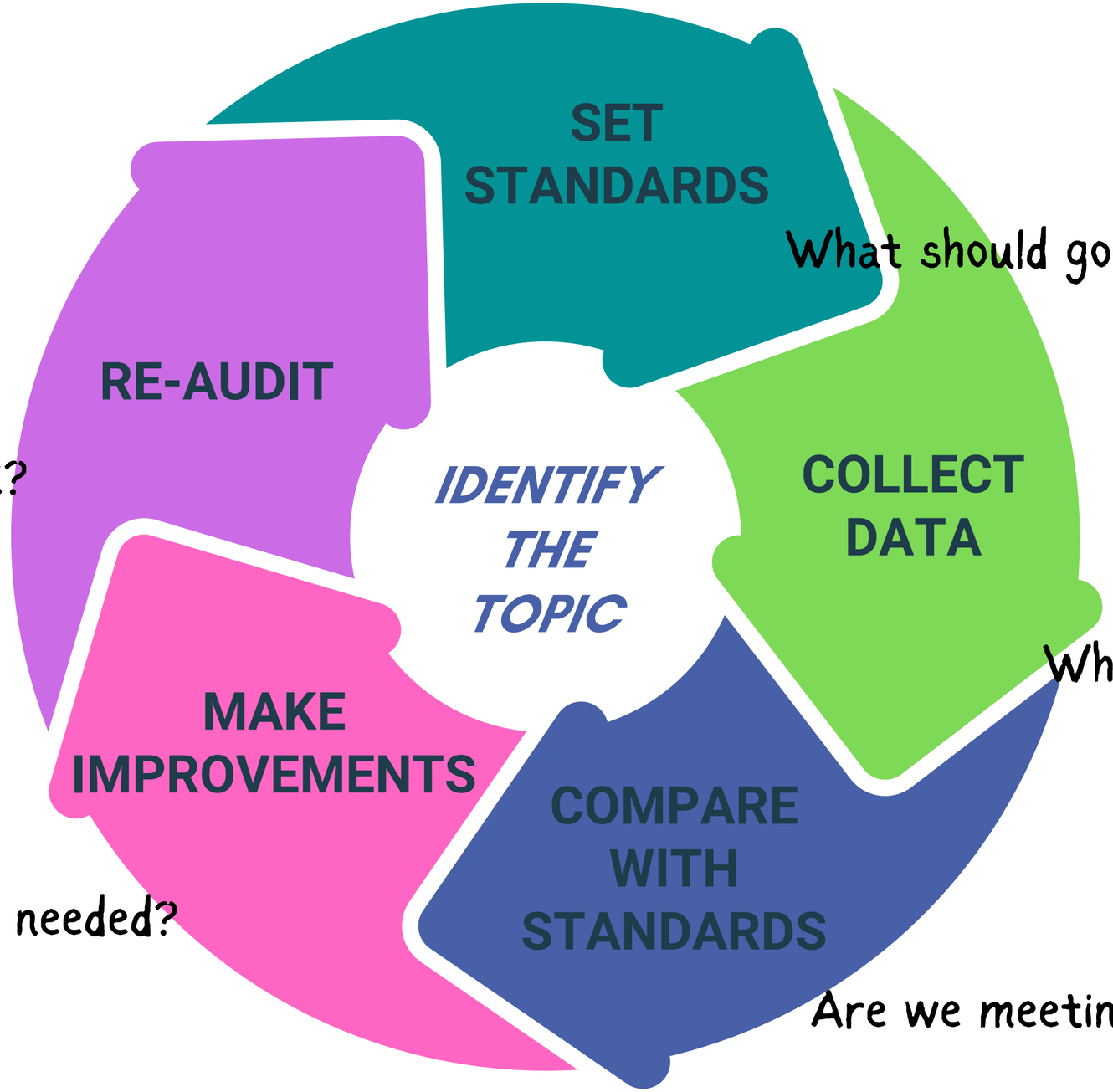

What should good practice look like?

What's happening now?

Are we meeting expectations?

What changes are needed?

Did the changes work?

Audit cycle

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What do you need to do?

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Complete the Infection Prevention and Control audit in relation to one of the following sections:

- Hand hygiene
- Sharps disposal
- Decontamination of instruments

Keep it simple!

Provide evidence of quality improvements you have made as a result of an audit.

Example

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- **Identify a topic** — *Hand hygiene*
- **Set standards** — *Check national and local guidelines*
- **Collect data** — *Decide what and how to record data using an audit tool e.g. simple checklist*
- **Compare with standards** — *Is there a difference?*
- **Make changes** — *Provide feedback to the team and implement changes*
- **Re-audit** — *To maintain standards and not become complacent!*

Remember it's a cycle!

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Remember:

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S JOB!

Questions?

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