

Topic guide for In-Person Interviews

For prospective case studies – Site Visit 1

Approach

When selecting participants, individuals will be categorized as a member of either frontline/departmental staff or key system staff. Core topics will be discussed with both groups. Modular topics will be tailored to each group.

This guide is appropriate for the first visit to prospective case study sites, i.e. just before the Lean/TPS project(s) will be rolled out.

We have assumed one hour for each interview.

Objectives

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information on Lean/TPS projects that will be implemented in the immediate future. Specifically, we will obtain the following information:

- The role of the person being interviewed
- A description of the Lean/TPS implementation, including preparation for the project
- Lessons learned from Lean/TPS planning to-date
- Plans for assessing the impacts of Lean/TPS

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1.0. Introduction (7 minutes)

The purpose of these questions is to gain an understanding of the role and perspective of the person who is being interviewed and of how this individual and the department(s) and/or wider organization perceive quality improvement, in general. We also hope to gain a better understanding of the amount of experience in QI and with Lean/TPS. In the modular section, we want to gain a better understanding of how the department(s) and/or wider organizational structure and senior leadership support QI and what external factors affect the use of QI.

{Interviewer introduces himself/herself and gives some background on the project.}

1.1. Core Topics (to be asked of all individuals)

1.1.1. Individual Level

a) Please tell me about your current position.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o What is your title?
- o How long have you been in this position? At this organization?
- o What are your main / primary roles and responsibilities?
- o What types of experiences have you had with quality improvement initiatives? At this organization? At other organizations? With Lean/TPS?

1.1.2. Organizational Level

b) Please describe your department's and/or organization's quality improvement efforts. Please give me an example of a quality improvement effort that your department and/or organization has implemented recently. What about this effort was typical for your department and/or organization? What was atypical? Please tell me about that.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Does your organization have a system-wide or organization-wide quality improvement initiative?
 - o What prompted your initiative?
 - o What are the broad goals of the initiative?
- o Please describe your organization's experience with quality improvement activities or initiatives.
- o When did your organization begin in engaging in such initiatives

1.2. Modular Topics (to be asked of specific staff)

1.2.1. For Departmental Staff (to be asked of physicians, nurses, and other departmental/non-management staff)

a) Please describe your interactions with management and/or senior staff. Do you interact at least once or twice per month with senior and/or management staff in your organization? Specifically, with whom are these interactions? How much of these interactions involve or are about quality improvement activities and/or approach?

b) How often do you interact with other staff in your department? From your department, who do you interact with regularly? How much of these interactions involve or are about quality improvement activities and/or approach?

c) To whom do you report? Who has primary responsibility for the department? To whom do they report?

POSSIBLE PROBES

- o Who is in charge of your department? Of the physicians? Of the nursing staff?
- o Would you say you have formal and/or informal leaders? Which does each type of leader do? To what extent do they collaborate or compete/complement one another? Are there any leadership relationships that result in tensions or conflict?
- o When implemented in your department, who leads QI projects?

d) In your opinion, how much support do you receive from senior staff/organizational leadership to pursue or implement quality improvement activities at your level?

1.2.2. For Key System Staff (to be asked of senior leadership staff – e.g. CEO, Board member, etc.)

a) How is your organization (hospital and/or system) structured?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Who are the key stakeholders in your organization? Who participates in your board of directors? How supportive is the board of quality improvement and/or Lean/TPS initiatives? How do they demonstrate their support?
- o How, if at all, have your major stakeholders (including payers) been involved in QI efforts?
 - Does your board of directors request information on the quality of care delivered? Do they request information on QA and QI efforts?
 - Do your payers request information on the quality of care delivered? Do they request information on QA and QI efforts?

b) Please describe the major payers in your area.

c) Do payers offer any financial incentives or rewards for improving quality, reducing waste, or making your care delivery more efficient?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

Does executive compensation reflect quality? If so, how?

- What types of incentives? For how long?

d) Who are your major competitors?

- o What activities are your major competitors undertaking in QI?

e) Are there market, regulatory or other external pressures that encourage greater efficiency and increased quality of care?

2.0. Overall Structure and Motivation for Lean/TPS (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to gain a better understanding of why and how Lean/TPS was selected at an organizational level and to understand the motivations and goals for Lean/TPS implementation.

2.1. Core Topics (to be asked of all individuals)

a) How did you or your organization decide to implement Lean/TPS at the system or organizational level?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Who was involved in the decision to implement Lean/TPS? In the initial implementation of Lean/TPS?
- o What approaches did you consider when you were planning for your redesign / quality improvement activities?
- o When did you first begin to consider Lean as an approach?
- o How did Lean compare to these other approaches?
- o After selecting Lean, how, if at all, did you begin to implement it on the system level?

b) What were the overall department and/or organizational goals and time frame for the Lean implementation?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Are your Lean projects one-time pilot projects or part of a multi-year project?
- o How did you determine these goals?
- o Who set these goals?
- o Did these goals differ from the organizational level to the department level? If so, how?

c) How did you or your organization decide in which unit or department to first implement Lean?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Why did you decide to start implementation of Lean/TPS in these departments? How did you determine which Lean/TPS projects would be prioritized?

2.2. Modular Topics (to be asked of specific staff)

We do not anticipate specific modular topics for this section.

3.0. Details of Lean Implementation (30 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to gather information on the various Lean/TPS projects being implemented and on the details of each of these projects.

3.1. Core Topics (to be asked of all individuals)

I would like to now focus on the Lean/TPS activities in the [XX] department. [Clinical staff and most low to mid-level managers will be asked about projects within their own departments. High-level managers and technical staff with a grasp of organization-wide policies and practices will be asked about the organization as a whole. Interviewers will receive instructions in advance about whether to refer to a single department or the organization as a whole.]

- a) Please describe the plans for implementing and rolling out the Lean/TPS projects in your organization or department.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o Is the focus of these projects on clinical or administrative processes? Why did you select this focus?
- o Do you plan to implement these projects one by one or all at the same time? Will they be implemented in phases or not?
- o When will Lean/TPS implementation occur in your department?
- o How will Lean/TPS be implemented initially?
- o What staff will be involved in the planning for this project? What staff will be involved in the implementation of Lean/TPS? How will the staff be involved? [If applicable], how were staff selected to be involved? How much, if any, experience did these staff have in using Lean/TPS or in quality improvement activities?
- o How, if at all, was the leadership for Lean/TPS planning and implementation assigned? Please describe this process.
- o What training and/or resources were provided to staff? Resources might include external coaches, consultation with other successful teams, time assigned just to Lean, extra staff, IT support, etc.

- o Please describe the tools or Lean techniques which will be used. Why did you select these specific tools and techniques? Will all projects use these same tools and techniques? Why or why not?

b) What are the objectives for Lean/TPS implementation? What, if any, data will you collect to determine if these objects are being met? What measurements will you use /what will you measure to gauge the success or failure of Lean/TPS? Please tell me how you will collect the data to measure the success or failure? To whom will you report results?

c) Looking at the process to date of planning for Lean/TPS implementation, what problems or barriers have you faced?

Interviewer should probe on the following challenges:

- o at the system level (e.g., lack of visibility and resources),
- o at the project team level (e.g., competing demands),
- o at the department level (e.g., lack of leadership, challenges of implementing in a residency practice, disruption of patient flow),
- o at the individual physician or staff level (e.g., some resistant to intervention),
- o at the patient level (e.g., types of patient seen, negative response to intervention overall or aspects of it).

POSSIBLE PROBES (for each challenge):

- o Did you or your staff anticipate these problems? If so, please describe.
- o Who tackled these challenges? Was a particular staff member assigned to address the challenge?
- o How did you seek overcome these challenges? What did you do specifically? How successful were these efforts? Please describe the issue.

d) Looking at the process to plan for Lean/TPS, what were the 2 or 3 greatest facilitators?

- o What helped you and/or your department develop your Lean/TPS project(s)?

Interviewer should probe on the following facilitators:

- o at the system level (e.g., visibility and resources),
- o at the project team level (e.g., expertise; coaching;),
- o at the department level (e.g., leadership, type or size of practice),
- o at the individual physician or staff level (e.g., enthusiasm about intervention),
- o at the patient level (e.g., types of patients seen, positive response to intervention overall or aspects of it).

POSSIBLE PROBES (for each facilitator):

- o What resources made Lean/TPS easier to plan for at the organizational/departmental/or project level?

- o How was it that you had access to this / these resources?

3.2. Modular Topics (to be asked of specific staff)

3.2.1. For Departmental Staff

- a) How, if at all, did staff react when they heard Lean/TPS would be implemented in their departments? Was there a specific staff person to champion this effort? How were they told of this decision? What types of questions did they ask?
- b) How did you first react when hearing of the organization's decision to implement Lean/TPS in your department? Why did you feel this way? Did you play a role in this decision? Please tell me about that.
- c) What type of support did you receive from the senior management/leadership when implementing Lean/TPS in your department? Support might include staff, training, additional staff, time assigned to Lean/TPS, IT support, or other resources. Please tell me about this/these.

3.2.2. For Key System Staff

- a) How were departmental or "frontline" staff told about the organization's decision to implement Lean/TPS? To the best of your knowledge, how did they first react when they heard of this decision? What types of questions did they ask?
- b) In your opinion, how does the departmental/frontline/non-management staff view Lean/TPS? To what extent do they support or not support Lean? Are they excited about Lean/TPS or not? Do they feel positively or negatively? Please let me why you think this.
- c) What infrastructure is needed to support the Lean/TPS implementation on the department or organizational level? Please explain.
- d) What, if any, resources (training, monies, staff) will departmental staff receive in order to implement Lean/TPS?

4.0. Perceived Impacts of Lean (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to gain information the expectations for Lean/TPS and the perceived impacts.

4.1. Core Topics (to be asked of all individuals)

a) In your opinion, what impacts will Lean/TPS have in your department or organization?

Interviewer should probe on the following impacts, as necessary:

- efficiency,
- patient safety,
- quality of care
- cost
- patient satisfaction
- job satisfaction
- external parties/stakeholders/payers/competition
- other departments or aspects of the organization, such as IT, etc.
- contribution to learning, ability to solve problems and do QI in the future.

b) For all of these outcomes, what methods, if any, will you use to measure the impact? Are you currently collecting data on these outcomes? How long do you anticipate collecting these data?

c) [For outcomes that are not being collected] Why did you opt to not collect information on these outcomes?

- Are data available on these outcomes?
- Do you believe that Lean will impact these outcomes? Why or why not?

ed) How will you define the overall success for Lean/TPS? Please tell me about this.

4.2. Modular Topics (to be asked of specific staff)

We do not anticipate specific modular topics for this section.

5.0. Closing (3 minutes)

a) Do you have any additional thoughts you'd like to share with us about Lean/TPS in your department and/or organization?

Thank you for your time.