

Topic guide for In-Person Interviews

For prospective case studies – Site Visit 2

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 second visit to prospective case study sites, i.e. approximately 6 months after Lean/TPS has been implemented.

We have assumed one hour for each interview.

Objectives

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information on Lean/TPS projects that have been implemented recently. Specifically, we will obtain the following information:

- A description of the Lean/TPS implementation, including how, if at all, implementation has changed
- Lessons learned from Lean/TPS planning to-date
- Impacts of Lean/TPS
- Sustainability of Lean/TPS
- Dissemination 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 will only ask questions in 1.0 if the interviewee has not been included in the in-person interviews from Site Visit 1 (e.g., because of a staff change, change in role, etc.).**

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 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. 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.

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

I would like to now focus on the Lean/TPS activities in the [XX] department. [The projects that will be addressed are the projects discussed during Site Visit 1, and any changes to specific projects or overall plans during the intervening period. 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) What projects have been completed in this department? Please describe the completed projects.

- b) Please describe the implementation of Lean/TPS projects in your organization or department. How, if at all, did implementation change from the original plans? Please tell me a bit about the reasons for the deviation from the original plan.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o How was Lean/TPS implemented initially?
- o What staff were involved in the implementation of this project? How were 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, did the leadership for Lean/TPS implementation change? 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 were used. Were these tools the original tools you intended to use? Why did you select these

specific tools and techniques? Did all projects use these same tools and techniques? Why or why not?

c) Thinking back on the lean work you have done in your unit (including all Lean/TPS projects), what were the 2 or 3 greatest challenges?

POSSIBLE PROBES (for each challenge):

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

Interviewer should probe on the following challenges:

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

d) Thinking back on the lean work you have done in your unit (including all Lean/TPS projects), what were the 2 or 3 greatest facilitators?

- What helped you and/or your department implement and/or make progress with your Lean/TPS project?

POSSIBLE PROBES (for each facilitator):

- What resources made Lean/TPS easier to implement on the organizational/departmental/or project level?
- How was it that you had access to this / these resources?

Interviewer should probe on the following facilitators:

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

e) Please describe any surprises or unintended consequences (positive or negative) of the intervention and its implementation (e.g., staff morale improved or got worse, found new ways to utilize advanced practice nurses) surfaced during the implementation process? If so, please describe.

f) If you had to describe your experiences of planning for Lean/TPS projects to other potential Lean/TPS users, what would you say were your “lessons learned?”

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

2.2.1. For Departmental Staff

a) How, if at all, did staff react during Lean/TPS implementation in their department? Was there a specific staff person to champion this effort? What types of questions did they ask?

b) 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.

2.2.2. For Key System Staff

a) 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.

b) What infrastructure was needed to support the Lean/TPS implementation on the department or organizational level? Please explain.

c) What, if any, resources (training, monies, staff) did you give to departmental staff in order to implement Lean/TPS?

3.0. Impacts of Lean (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to gain information on the impact of Lean/TPS. Specifically, we would like to know about both anecdotal information and systematic data collected on the impacts of Lean/TPS. Similarly, we hope to gain a better understanding of the organization’s view on the business case for Lean/TPS.

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

a) In your opinion, how did Lean/TPS progress for each project, in each department, and within the organization? In general, has Lean/TPS been successful?

- o Please provide a description of the most successful Lean/TPS project or initiative.

- o Please provide a description of the least successful Lean/TPS project or initiative.
- o How many other Lean/TPS projects conducted would you consider to have been successful? How many, in your opinion, were not successful?

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o How do you know this?
- o How do you define “success” for Lean/TPS?
- o Returning to your original goals, have these been met?
- o Would others in organization describe Lean/TPS as a success or not? Please tell me about this.

b) Please describe the impacts or outcomes of Lean implementation. What has changed since Lean/TPS implementation? Have these changes been positive or negative? Please describe these impacts.

ec) In your opinion, is there a business case for Lean implementation? Why or why not? By business case, we mean whether Lean/TPS works and results in enough benefits to the organization in a sufficient time frame for this organization and others to continue to pursue it.

- o How could you know if there is a business case for Lean/TPS implementation?
- o What kind of data do you collect?
- If NONE, will you collect this data in the future?

Interviewer should probe on the following impacts/aspects of the business case, as necessary:

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

d) For all of these outcomes, what methods did you use to measure the impact? Are you still collecting data on these outcomes? How long do you anticipate collecting these data?

e) Have any of these results undergone independent review? Have any of these results been published? If so, where?

f) Please tell me how, if at all, these results have been validated.

g) [Prior to interview, interviewer should review notes from Site Visit 1 interviews on perceived/expected impacts of Lean] Did you expect Lean to have an impact in this way? Have your initial expectations of Lean changed at all since having implemented it? Please describe this.

[If impacts differ from Site Visit 1 notes] Originally you mentioned that you expected Lean to impact [outcome]. Has Lean impacted [outcome]? How does this differ from your original expectations? What developments seem to have led to this unexpected result?

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

We do not anticipate specific modular topics for this section.

4.0. Sustainability/Dissemination of Lean (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to gain a better understanding of if Lean/TPS has been sustainable for each project and across the department and organization. We also hope to gain information on how Lean/TPS is being disseminated to other interested parties.

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

a) To date, is Lean/TPS still being implemented in your organization? Specifically, in what departments or units is Lean being implemented? How does your organization determine which departments should next implement Lean/TPS?

b) Over what time period have improvements from projects been sustained? Have the successes or improvements decreased over time, remained the same, or continued to improve? Why do you say this?

c) What do you think are the challenges to the sustainability of Lean/TPS in both the department and the organization? What about things that facilitate sustainability?

d) How, if at all, have you been involved in the sharing of information about Lean/TPS work and spread of Lean/TPS techniques? Please consider dissemination to other staff, other departments within your organization, other organizations, and/or the general public.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- o How, if at all, did individuals or other organizations react to what you told them about Lean/TPS? Please tell me about this.

- o Have other departments or organizations adopted the information you have disseminated? Have the practices been spread and implemented?

e) Based on what the project team has learned to date, what are the insights and/or lessons learned for your own system and practices as well as others? If you were advising others about Lean and its implementation, what would you most want them to know? What should they be aware of, what should they do, what should they NOT do?

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? Decision to pursue, implementation, sustaining it?

Thank you for your time.