

Session 7: Cultural practices; QI root causes – problem definition

Key Takeaways:

- Clearly defining the problem to be solved is a critical first step in any quality improvement project. This often entails choosing from among multiple problems that could be addressed.
- A good problem statement describes the issue that needs to be addressed without offering theories on potential causes or solutions.
- The narrower the scope and more specific the description, the easier it will be to identify root cause(s) and to solve the problem deemed most important.
- Religion, culture, beliefs, and ethnic customs can influence how patients understand health concepts, how they take care of their health, and how they make decisions related to their health.
- Asking about patients' religions, cultures, and ethnic customs can help clinicians engage patients so that, together, they can devise treatment plans that are consistent with the patients' values.

Key Concepts:

Cultural Practice	The manifestation of a tradition or custom within a particular culture.
Problem Statement	A concise and focused description of the issue that needs to be addressed by the problem-solving team
Leading with Solutions	The practice of allowing theories about causes or solutions to influence the definition of the problem to be solved.

Further Reading:

[Consider Customs, Cultures, and Beliefs](#), AHRQ

[Culture Vision™](#) is a database that gives healthcare professionals access to culturally competent patient care.

Writing a Problem Statement: <http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/qi-problem-statement-instruction-sheet-en.pdf>