

Peer Coaching in Healthcare Quality Improvement

I. What is quality improvement peer coaching in the nursing home setting?

It is a methodology that uses peer to peer learning in the nursing home setting between nursing home QI leaders and colleagues to improve the quality of their quality improvement work. The primary goal is the better integration of QI practices in to the everyday work in nursing homes and to make this work more engaging, using state-of-the-art QI strategies and by utilizing evidence based and other best practices (e.g., QAPI and Advancing Excellent resources).

II. How will nursing home quality improvement peer coaches do this?

1. By having colleagues pair up and co-plan QI activities with their coaches.
2. Coaches may model or collaborate with their peers to demonstrate what effective skills might look like.
3. Spend time listening or observing their colleagues work and sharing feedback on what went well and what could be improved.

III. Why should we adopt peer coaching?

In other professions such as education, effective learning often comes from working with a trusted colleague. The Pennsylvania Quality Improvement Demonstration Project wants to learn more about facilitating the coordination of effective peer coaching learning/teaching dyads.

IV. What are some of the likely components of effective coaching?

1. **Strengthening Coaching Skills** – we will likely want to emphasize the need for communication and collaboration skills that contribute towards a relationship of trust between coach and peer. Coaches can be taught to avoid the dependency forming traps such as “giving advice” or “telling their peers what to do” (i.e., let’s leave this to the paid consultants!). A key feature of the coaching relationship is likely to be the ability of the coach to help their colleague to *think more deeply*. Coaches learn how to develop and use the skill of “inquiry”– (i.e., using questions) which is designed to encourage QI professionals to more closely examine opportunities that may be latent or just beyond their awareness.
2. **QI plan design** – Coaches will likely help their colleagues combine QI tools with staff engaging strategies in planning and organizing their quality improvement activities. The goal is to bring about some structure and infuse a sense of excitement and enthusiasm to make the QI activities more organized, engaging and relevant.
3. **Best practices and tools** – will foster a greater appreciation for incorporating best practices and tools (e.g., QAPI and Advancing Excellence) can enhance quality improvement practices.

V. What is the likely impact of peer-to-peer QI Coaching?

Once our leaders develop these skills they will be successful in helping nursing home QI professionals by:

1. Better integrating best practices and evidence based resources when they plan their QI activities.
2. Develop QI programs which will better engage and activate the nursing home staff in quality improvement activities.