

Work process interventions

What are they?

- Work process interventions are tools for process improvement that go beyond traditional technical analyses and interventions to also address the relational dimensions of the work process
- They help to build mutual respect, trust and psychological safety; alignment around shared goals; knowledge about each other's work that creates systems awareness
- Together these create capacity to actively manage task interdependence with feedback using timely, accurate, problem solving communication.

What are they used for/ Purpose?

- Work process interventions are a crucial part of the Relational Model of Change
- Make the relational core of the work process visible and discussable so needed improvements can be identified
- Together technical and relational tools help workers reflect on their work and have the conversations they need to improve work processes and achieve their desired performance outcomes

Technical approaches to process improvement

- ◆ Total quality management
- ◆ Quality improvement
- ◆ Lean/six sigma
- ◆ High reliability
- ◆ Improvement science

Addressing technical issues is necessary - but not sufficient

“We’ve been doing process improvement for several years, and we think we’re on the right track. But we’ve tried a number of tools for process improvement, and they just don’t address the relationship issues that are holding us back.”

- Bob Hendler, Tenet Healthcare Systems

Relational issues are part of process improvement

- Need multiple perspectives to solve system problems
- Change may create loss and grief and therefore will require a relational response
- Successful change requires commitment, not just compliance, so shared goals are essential



Baker, N. J., Suchman, A., & Rawlins, D. (2016). [Hidden in plain view: Barriers to quality improvement](#). *Physician Leadership Journal*, 3, 54-7.

Process improvement can be relational

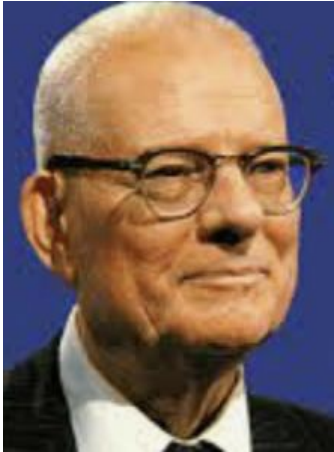
When used in a participatory, experimental way, supported by relational interventions, these technical approaches help to build relational coordination

- Total quality management
- Quality improvement
- Lean/six sigma
- High reliability
- Improvement science

[See the Catalyst Lean Journey for a relational approach to process improvement](#)

Gittell, J. H. (2016). [Work process interventions](#). *Transforming relationships for high performance: The power of relational coordination*. Stanford University Press.

A relational approach to process improvement
was part of the original vision by Deming



Relationships of shared goals,
shared knowledge and mutual respect
*create a culture that supports
process improvement*

W. E. Deming (1986). *Out of the Crisis*. MIT Press.

Work process interventions are key to Relational Model of Change

