

QSEA 2014 Top 16 Tips in Mentoring Residents in QI/PS Work

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| Goal Setting | 1. Clarify the goals of mentoring. How will you and the resident define success?
2. For a given project, determine the relative value of these goals -- to improve care right now, or to teach someone to improve care, or both?
3. Have a clear timeline. Check in and set meetings on a regular basis.
4. Be a link between the learner and the organization. You cannot do this work in a vacuum - build or join a successful QI/PS team. |
| Connection | 5. Provide protected time for this work -- don't try to fit QI/PS work into the resident's already busy schedule.
6. Teach residents how to "tune in" when they go on service. No one expects residents to ignore clinical work, but QI work requires deliberate attention over time. Teach them to check email once or twice a day and give them tips for how to keep projects moving in small sound bites of communication and work. These will be lifelong skills. |
| Resources | 7. Scope the project correctly in terms of resources and ability -- smaller successful projects will be more valuable than larger more ambitious ones that fail. Don't start a project with residents unless you can set them up for success. |
| Project | 8. Whenever possible, let the resident choose the area/project that is to be worked on. A "top down-bottom up" approach to selection of QI projects where the bottom is resident interest and the top is what the department/hospital is interested in frequently works best.
9. Don't do the work for the residents....even though it is much easier to do so. Show them an example, give tips, but have them struggle to come up with the "words" themselves (i.e. words = problem statement, aim, measures) |
| Leadership | 10. Teach residents how to take their ideas for change and categorize them in the 4-quadrant "hi-easy-low-hard" diagram. This helps them visually differentiate and identify the quick wins from the high effort/low impact and high effort/high impact projects. Categorizing into these buckets can help channel and focus |
| Mentorship | 11. Give residents tips for organizing and running productive meetings - particularly in the beginning. This is often the hardest thing for residents to do given the different types of people and personalities required to change a system or process. Sometimes they will need you there as a decision maker or to prevent things from getting off track.
12. Look out for resident blind spots and protect! Common resident blind spots are not including a certain person or group in the project planning stage which can lead to failure to build consensus early on. |
| Presentation | 13. Give residents every opportunity to present, even if it is just sharing their project idea in front of their peers. Use this opportunity to build rich presentation and communication skills.
14. Normalize failure. Let them know it's happened to you. Making any change is an experiment and there is a significant chance of failure. Reframe failure as a potential positive: "we learned now what NOT to do." |
| Reflection | 15. Tell the resident/resident team frequently that what they are doing is really important. Validate their hard work. QI work is hard and coaches sometimes need to be cheerleaders too.
16. Give thoughtful feedback along the way; the more, the better. |