



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets Our Latest Newsletter (29/07/2019)



How can truly we have faith in something if it isn't perfect?

Tanned and dewy Tower Hamlets folks,

This week our Research Associate, Jack, goes all philosophical on the team, attempting to answer the question "what is EQUIP" (*gulp!*). To be fair, Jack is *always* philosophical. You ask him a question, he asks you what you want to get from the answer. So it's no surprise this piece should come from him. And I love it muchly. Please enjoy this week's musings. To be savoured.

As we are moving full-swing into a glorious soggy summer, I just wanted to take some time out to bring the focus back to the basics question of Improvement: what are we trying to achieve (and why)?

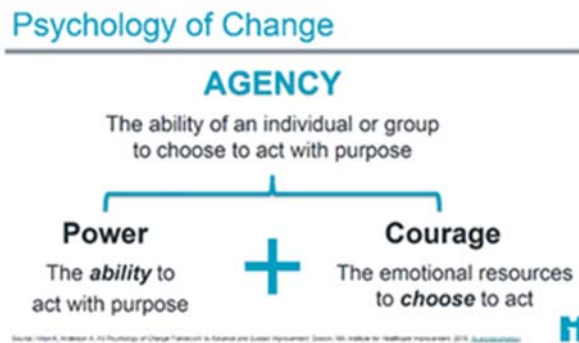
We recently celebrated our 2nd birthday, and over the fava bean bruschetta and asparagus tagliatelle, we paused to reflect. When trying to put the programme into a box, we frequently scratch our heads over the question, 'What is EQUIP?'

As someone new to improvement with an analytical background, initially I found this concept troubling. I raised this idea of inaccuracy to one of my favourite teachers in grad school. 'How can truly we have faith in something if it isn't perfect?'. He told me that statistics and the scientific enterprise are very much like a (partly) broken watch. A watch may be out of time, he said, but it is still useful.

As Mark Twain would have it, continuous learning is better than delayed perfection. By focusing on learning in action rather than planning for perfection, we can overcome the natural resistance to change normal to human psychology (IHI,

2018). Why does this matter? Having the opportunity to improve a situation gives us power, energy and optimism (IHI, 2019).

With this optimism, we also have focus and ambition – our work is ambitious in that it targets multiple layers of the system – from people, to practices, to the CCG overall. My experience with EQUIP so far has taught me that we *can* have hope, we *can* have agency (IHI, 2018), and we can make things better.



How should we respond to this energy and enthusiasm? How much doubt does continuous improvement truly deserve? From the perspective of a sceptic, I would invite reflection. At EQUIP we have always stressed a strengths-based approach to improvement. In bringing the fruits of QI to the world (Virginia's note: the *world?!?* Let's chat about ambitions, Jack...), our ultimate aim is to help the system, to bring joy to the hearts of staff, and improve patient care.

I've learnt to love run charts, have grown used to regular reverie about SPC, and strive to improve standards without limits. With the evaluation gathering pace, QI training has been highlighted as the key predictor in progressing improvement projects. Interested in bringing improvement analytics to your work? Come along to our very own [Data Masterclass training!](#) 15th October 2019. Learn from the best in the business from our colleagues at ELFT: Improvement Gurus, Chart wizards, LifeQI Ninjas.

Jack

References

Baldoza, K. Do we make QI too complicated? Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2019. (Available at HI.org), <https://bit.ly/2LCCg5f>

Hilton K, Anderson A. *IHI Psychology of Change Framework to Advance and Sustain Improvement*. IHI White Paper. Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2018. (Available at [ihi.org](https://www.ihi.org))

Agency. Our new favourite word. It's growing, and it feels great. Still not sure about the idea of bringing "the fruits of QI to the world", but what better place to exercise imperfection, power and courage than Tower Hamlets.

Virginia