ACI NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation

GUIDE

How to Process Map

Clinical Program Design and Implementation

Collaboration. Innovation. Better Healthcare.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) works with clinicians, consumers and managers to design and promote better healthcare for NSW. It does this by:

- **service redesign and evaluation** – applying redesign methodology to assist healthcare providers and consumers to review and improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of services
- **specialist advice on healthcare innovation** – advising on the development, evaluation and adoption of healthcare innovations from optimal use through to disinvestment
- **initiatives including Guidelines and Models of Care** – developing a range of evidence-based healthcare improvement initiatives to benefit the NSW health system
- **implementation support** – working with ACI Networks, consumers and healthcare providers to assist delivery of healthcare innovations into practice across metropolitan and rural NSW
- **knowledge sharing** – partnering with healthcare providers to support collaboration, learning capability and knowledge sharing on healthcare innovation and improvement
- **continuous capability building** – working with healthcare providers to build capability in redesign, project management and change management through the Centre for Healthcare Redesign.

ACI Clinical Networks, Taskforces and Institutes provide a unique forum for people to collaborate across clinical specialties and regional and service boundaries to develop successful healthcare innovations.

A priority for the ACI is identifying unwarranted variation in clinical practice and working in partnership with healthcare providers to develop mechanisms to improve clinical practice and patient care.
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Further copies of this publication can be obtained from the Agency for Clinical Innovation website at **www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au**

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Contents

What is process mapping?

Process mapping is a tool used to create a visual representation of a process to allow it to be analysed and assist in identifying root causes of issues, problems or barriers to efficient, quality care. It provides an overview of the complete process, articulating each step, providing a greater understanding of what is actually happening in a process rather than what is thought to be happening.

The purpose of process mapping

The purpose of process mapping is to:

- Define current practice
- Allow all people in a process to view the whole process and understand each other's tasks
- Provide knowledge and evidence base to improve current workflow
- Identify issues systematically
- Allow greater standardisation
- Allow view of the 'bigger picture', which may assist to define the scope of your project from start to finish (i.e. start and end points).

Types of process maps

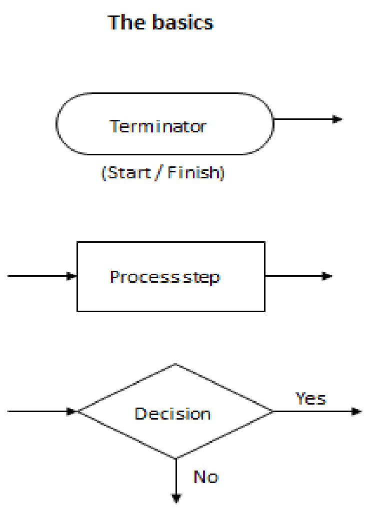
	Observation	***Facilitated session***
Use	• Difficult process • Limited understanding of a process	• Stakeholder engagement • Rapid process review
Strengths of approach	• Provides a greater understanding of what is happening in the process • Limits the opportunity for steps to be forgotten	• Quicker • Allows process owners to understand each other's role in the process
Lead by:	• Someone external to the process	• A facilitator or the project manager
Resource Intensity:	• Resource intensive only for the process observer	• Resource intensive for all process owners

How to map a process

The following steps provide guide for how to map a process:

1. Identify the scope of the process to be mapped, including patient group, start and end points.
2. Consider beginning by mapping the high level process and then then in more detail for more complex processes (medium and low level).
3. Work through the steps in the order they occur and ensure there is a logical flow.
4. Consider that due to different elements of the process there may need to be more than one stream. For example if there is a decision point, than the map may lead down different paths for each answer.
5. Document who completes each step of the process.
6. If the process was mapped by observation, validate the mapped process with the process owners.
7. In a group with the process owners, identify areas of variation and where issues arise.

The following symbols can be helpful to identify the beginning and end of a process, decision points and process steps.



Analysis of the process map

These are important to questions to consider when analysing the process:[1]

a. Are we doing the steps in the right order, how many are there?
b. Is the right/best person doing it?
c. How co-ordinated is it?
d. How many steps are in in the process?
e. Do you need all of these, or can they be reduced?

[1] *Health Care Improvement Scotland, Scottish Health Council*

f. What is the approximate time of and between each step?
g. Are there any wait lists or queues?
h. Where are possible delays and why?
i. Are there common issues?
j. Is the most appropriate person completing each step of the process?

Consider the consumer, carer and / or staff in the process:

a. What information do we give to patients at what stage? Is the information useful?
b. How many times is the patient or their documentation handed over from one person to another?
c. Which steps do not 'add value' for patients?
d. Where are the problems issues for patients?
e. Where are these problems issues for staff?

Improving the process

When attempting to improve a process the following items should be considered:

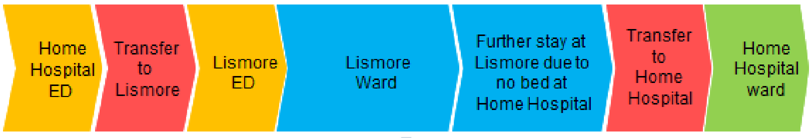
- Waste or redundancies in the process
- Staff experience and appropriateness of activities and tasks
- Improved patient flow and access
- Improved patient experience.

Appendices

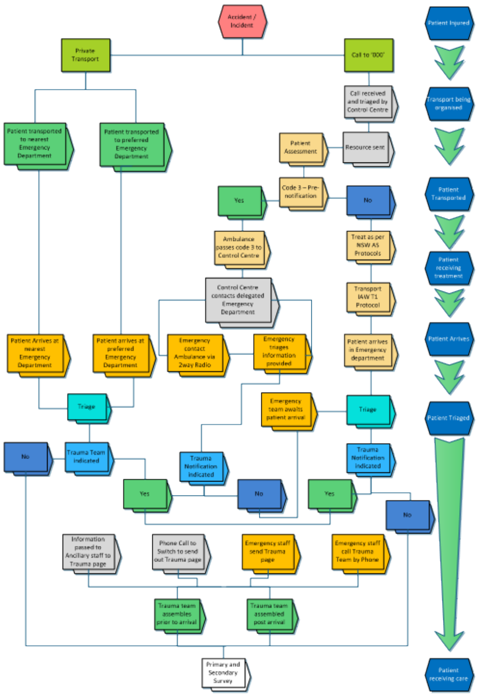
Appendix 1: Types of Process Maps

There are three (3) types of process mapping high level, medium level and low level:

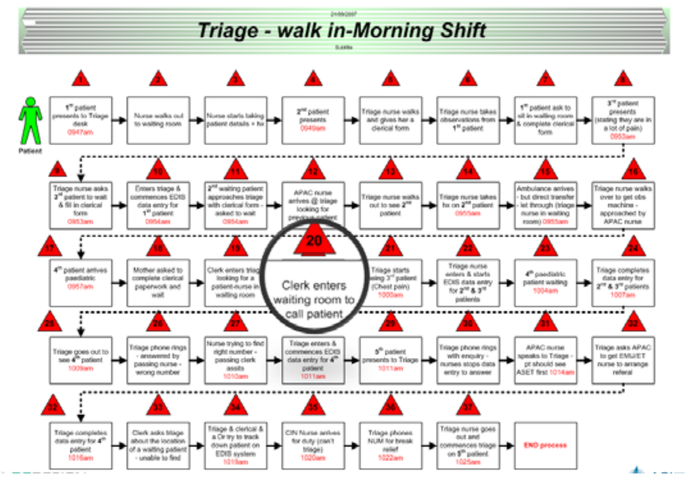
1. *High level process map*



2. *Medium level process map*



3. *Low level (detailed) process map*



Appendix 2: How to run a facilitated session

Preparation

- Identify who should be involved. This may include members of the multidisciplinary team including non-clinical staff involved in the specific process being mapped. Consider meeting with individuals before to brief them about the process

- Organise a venue with appropriate facilities (need to be able to stick up lots of mapping paper) and consider catering if appropriate/possible

- Send out invitations in advance (being mindful the level of notice that may be required for clinicians to reorganise their clinical commitments)
- Materials for the session: Large sheets of paper, marker pens, post it notes, butchers paper, sticky tape, blue tack
    - Optional: A 'talking wall' for post-it notes provides an opportunity for individual written contributions by staff who may feel unable to speak due to lack of time, assertiveness, or because the matter is sensitive.
- Develop an agenda, this may include:
    - Overview – “Why are we here?”
    - Introduction to process mapping
    - Give an example of a process map: (i.e.: ask people to think of a common process they do every day, for example it could be getting ready for work)
    - Group process mapping exercise – see 'Building a Process Map' (below)
    - Walking the pathway
    - Next steps- (e.g. solution design)

The session

- The role of the facilitator is to keep people focused, capture and clarify the steps identified by the participants. The success of the process mapping exercise is heavily dependent on the facilitator, so it is important to consider who is the right person to do this.

- Introductions and agree and set the ground rules.

- Ask the participants to record individually their perspective on each step of the process (focus participants to concentrate on what happens 'most of the time'.)

- Ask Participants to stick the post-it notes onto the wall; duplicate steps should be placed under one another.

- Organise the post-it notes and check with the group for consensus

- As participants work through this process any issues that are generated should be captured on the “parking lot” flipchart, as they will prove to be valuable later.

- The facilitator should go through each step and agree/check with the group for understanding.

- Once people share a common understanding of the current process, it is important to agree upon the next steps. This may be that more work is required to understand the process or it is to anlalyse the process map.