

CQI: A Snapshot for Club Leadership



Continuous quality improvement, or CQI, is a cyclical process of developing and improving the quality of a Club's operations, programs and outcomes. The CQI process can be used to improve the quality of Club programming, identify community needs, diversify funding streams or to make other improvements to organizational performance.

The CQI Cycle

Improve:

Implement the action plan, monitor and measure progress, celebrate successes and identify any desired changes before beginning the cycle again.



Assess:

Determine your focus area then review available data and stakeholder feedback to understand how your Club is performing.

Plan:

Using the data collected during the "Assess" phase, determine improvement areas and develop an action plan collectively with staff.

CQI engages your team to foster a culture of learning, with the belief that we can always do better. Every Boys & Girls Club or Youth Center, no matter the size or resources, can make CQI activities part of its practice. The process is versatile and can be used in many different areas of operations at the Club, from Club site programming to organizational operations to Board performance. *At its core CQI is collecting information for the purpose of making an informed decision, then acting on it.* Let's look at how organizations currently use CQI:

Case Study A: Addressing Hiring Shortages & Improving Staff Retention

Club A is experiencing staffing shortages and is looking to diversify their hiring pool and retain current employees.

During the **Assess** phase, Club A collects:

- Employee retention & hiring trend data for the organization.
- NYOI Staff Survey

- Exit interview summaries from previous employees.
- Population and hiring data from their local community.

During the **Plan** phase, Club A reviews their selected data as a team, and finds:

- Previous employees commonly expressed a lack of professional development opportunities and little team or managerial support as a central reason for leaving the Club.
- Local hiring data showed the Club’s job postings were not reaching their target audience.

Based on these findings, Club A developed an action plan to increase professional development opportunities to assist with staff retention, and research ways to gain interest in job postings and attract desirable candidates.

During the **Improve** phase, Club A made and monitored the following improvements:

- Worked to develop a mandatory onboarding guide for all new employees.
- Created a professional development calendar informed by staff interests and requests.
- Worked with site directors and managers to develop a system for regular coaching, employee check-ins and team meetings to foster a collaborative culture.
- Adjusted position descriptions to better reflect the fun and supportive culture the Club desires to create and removed access barriers like education requirements that were not necessary to finding success at the Club.

At the end of their CQI cycle, Club A re-checked key datasets to measure success, and had a 25% increase in the number of applications. When surveyed, new employees said that the Club’s onboarding trainings prepared them well for their work, and long-time employees expressed greater satisfaction with increased planning and collaboration time.

Case Study B: Increasing Safety & Program Quality

Club B is looking to improve the safety and quality of programming at their sites, as well as increasing frequency of attendance and member retention:

During the **Assess** phase, Club B collects:

- Attendance & participation information from their membership tracking software.
- Program quality data using the [Youth Program Quality Assessment \(YPQA\)](#).
- Safety Assessment
- Club Experience data from the NYOI Survey

During the **Plan** phase, Club B reviews their selected data as a team, and finds:

- Sites with lower YPQA scores had lower frequency of attendance, and lower Club Experience scores under “Fun” and “Sense of Belonging”.

- Sites generally scored well on the Safety Assessment, those that did not meet the staff to youth ratio requirements had lower Club Experience scores.

Based on these findings, Club B developed an action plan to increase their staff to youth ratio and provide professional development and coaching to frontline staff to increase the quality of how they interact with members and the programs they provide.

During the **Improve** phase, Club B made and monitored the following improvements:

- Hired additional staff to meet acceptable staff to youth ratios, where possible.
- Restructured program schedules to accommodate appropriate staff to youth ratios where hiring was not possible.
- Provided the [Youth Work Methods](#) series to all frontline youth workers, providing staff with strategies to increase fun and sense of belonging with members.

At the end of Club B's CQI cycle, Club A re-checked key datasets to measure success, and were successful at reaching an acceptable staff to youth ratio. Frontline staff implemented the practices learned in the youth work methods series, increasing scores on the YPQA and members reported a greater sense of belonging and fun, when surveyed using [Pulse Checks](#).

You can get resources to support your Club's work at every phase of the CQI cycle at [CQIToolkit.org](#).

CQI MYTHBUSTERS

Myth: CQI is a new program from BGCA.

Fact: CQI is not a program, but an improvement process that is used in many fields, including healthcare, leadership practices, social services, manufacturing and more. For Boys & Girls Clubs, CQI is used to improve organizational practices and systems and program quality.

Myth: CQI is something we only need to do once.

Fact: CQI is an ongoing cycle of improvement. After finishing an Assess, Plan, and Improve cycle (and having a celebration for all the hard work done!), another cycle should begin to build upon your success and target other areas. Ultimately, CQI should become a regular part of your organization's calendar, allowing you to improve year after year.

Myth: CQI should be part of performance reviews.

Fact: The focus of CQI is to learn and improve, and it should not be punitive. Research¹ shows that individuals demonstrate the greatest performance improvement when they feel comfortable being

¹ Surr, Wendy (2012). "A New Approach to Accountability: Creating Effective Learning Environments for Programs," *Afterschool Matters*, Vol. 15, pp. 38-47, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ980207.pdf>; see also Harris, M., & Tayler, B. (September 2019). "Don't Let Metrics Undermine Your Business," *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2019/09/dont-let-metrics-undermine-your-business>

transparent about strengths and weaknesses, can problem solve as a team, and receive support to reach goals, instead of punishment for missing them.

Myth: CQI is only for large Club organizations with lots of resources.

Myth: CQI is too difficult for my large Club organization.

Fact: No matter your Club's size or resources, CQI is for you. Regardless of the focus areas for improvement, CQI cycles can and should be implemented at both the organizational level and at the individual site level. Creating a core CQI team to coordinate efforts may be helpful to manage the processes.

Myth: Only senior leaders at the Club should engage with CQI.

Fact: In the CQI process, staff at all levels of the Club work together to assess current youth development practice, program planning and delivery, and other systems such as safety or community outreach; make improvement plans with the data they've collected; and improve through coaching and targeted training. Involving a broad range of staff levels is a great tool for staff retention, because it will help build professional skills and increase engagement. You can find tools for facilitating team discussions on the CQI Toolkit.

Myth: We don't have time to do CQI.

Fact: CQI is a proven way to improve Club operations, and ultimately leads to better youth outcomes. Not only can your CQI cycle be as broad or as narrow as makes sense for your Club's time and capacity, in the long term, it will save you time with improved processes and efficiencies.

CQI Resources

BGCA has resources to support each phase of the CQI process. These include

- [CQIToolkit.org](https://www.cqitoolkit.org), our Continuous Quality Improvement hub. On the toolkit you'll find templates, videos, training links and more, including how to prepare to begin your CQI cycle and how to reflect when you complete. COMING SOON Organization-level resources
- **CQI Training Series.** Combining instructor-led and self-directed sessions, this series will help you and your Club make the most of your time and resources. See course descriptions, registration links and scheduling information at [CQIToolkit.org](https://www.cqitoolkit.org). Dates posted seasonally. COMING SOON Organization-level specific sessions
- **Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.** Through our partnership, BGCA provides training, certification, and tools from Weikart at no cost to support your program quality improvement goals. These include the Youth Program Quality Assessment tool, Program Quality Assessment Basics ([virtual instructor-led and self-guided through SLU](#)), External Assessor Reliability Training, and Youth Works Methods sessions ([live instructor-led and self-guided through SLU](#))
- **CQI Consultations.** Schedule a consultation with a member of the CQI team at bit.ly/BGCAYDConsultations