

Eight Steps To Quality Improvement

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Session Goals

- Why Go Through a Process for Program Improvement (PPI)?
- How to Plan for Change
- Overview of the Eight Steps To Program Improvement
- How To Get Started

Why Do “Process for Program Improvement “(PPI)?

- Systematic examination of areas for growth and improvement
- Meaningful involvement of campers and staff
- Demonstrates to stakeholders your commitment to providing a quality setting and program
- Generates strategies and actions that is best for YOUR mission, goals, and philosophy
- Formal evaluation evidence documents effectiveness of your strategies and action plan

Planning For Change



Start With Organization-Specific Data



Use a Youth Development Framework



Focus on Intentionality and Accountability

- Look for Staff and Camper Buy-In
- Anticipate Change in Staff Skills
- Consider Your Camp's Structure
- Give Yourself Options

Community Action Framework for Youth Development

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**Build Community
Capacity and Conditions
for Change (E)**



**Implement Community
Strategies to Enhance
Supports and Opportunities
for Youth (D)**



**Increase Supports
and Opportunities
for Youth (C)**



**Improve Youth
Development
Outcomes (B)**



**Improve Long-
Term Outcomes
in Adulthood (A)**

A Word About Supports & Opportunities

Supportive Relationships

- Guidance, emotional & practical support
- Adult & peers know who they are & what's important to them

Safety

- Physical & emotional

Youth Involvement

- Leadership
- Decision-making
- Belonging

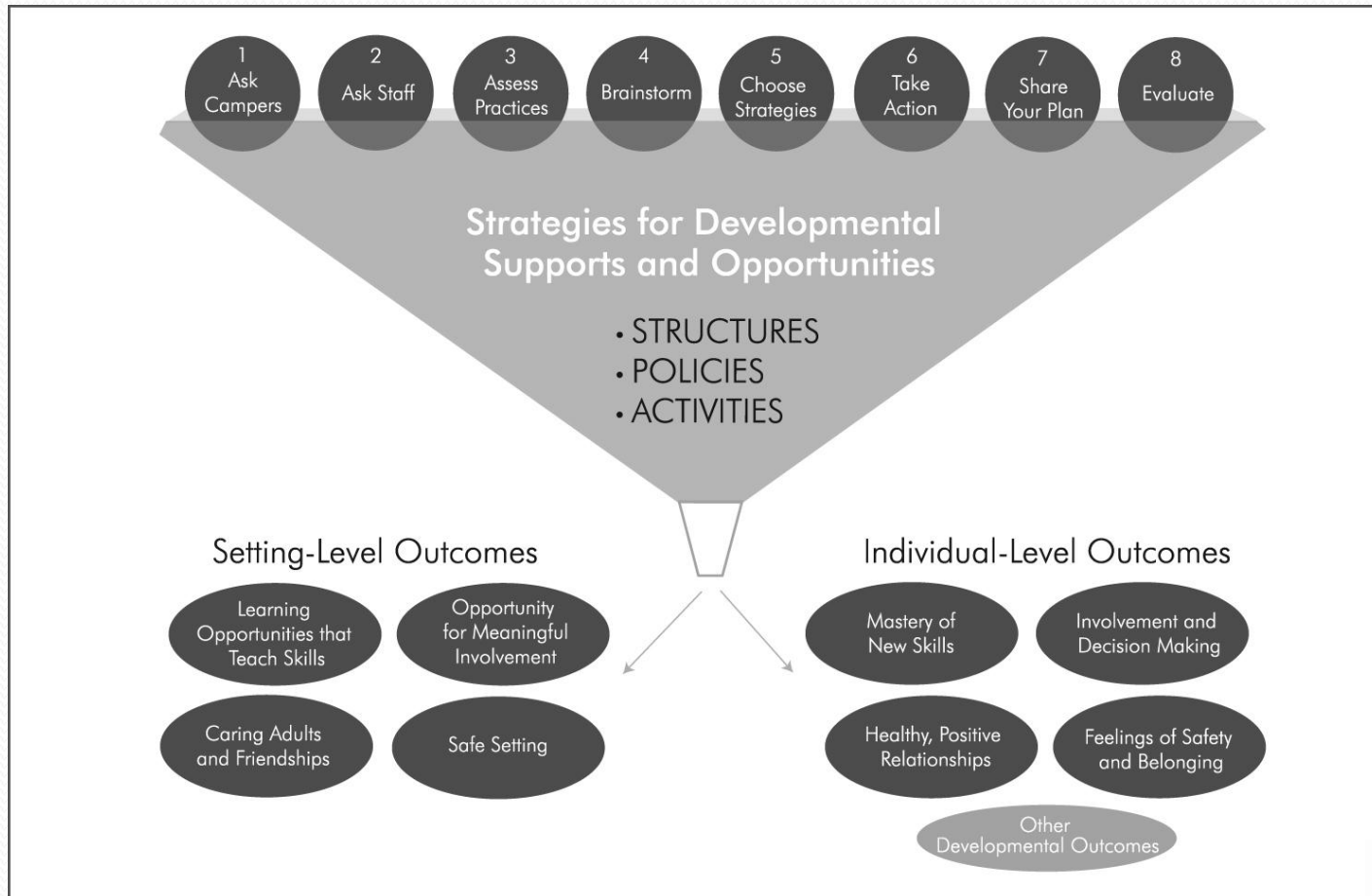
Skill-Building

- Challenging and interesting experiences that build a wide array of skills
- Experience sense of growth and progress

Eight Steps to PPI

- 1 Ask: Campers
- 2 Ask: Staff
- 3 Assess: Organizational Practices
- 4 Brainstorm: Strategies
- 5 Choose: Strategies and Develop Action Plan
- 6 Do: Take Action
- 7 Share: Action Plan
- 8 Evaluate: Take Stock

ACA Process for Program Improvement



PPI Planning Worksheet

Step	Method To Accomplish	Task Leader	Timeline	Needed Support
Ask Campers				
Ask Staff				
Assess				
Brainstorm				
Develop Plan				
Do				
Share				
Evaluate				

Step 1 and 2: ASK

Campers and Staff

- Gather perceptions about your target area from youth and staff
 - Interviews (focus groups)
 - Surveys
 - Observations
 - Email
 - Blogs
- Get at WHY they think their perception is true
- Ask what they think would be better

Step 3: ASSESS Practices

- Use a team approach (administrators and directors but also consider adding youth, seasonal staff, parents, Board members)
- Assess in light of your camp's Mission, goals, and philosophy
- Be specific with your details
- Check across practices to identify potential target areas for intentional action

Organizational Practices

- Organizational structures (S)
 - Low youth-to-staff/volunteer ratios
 - Safe, reliable, and accessible activities and spaces
 - Continuity and consistency of care of participants
- Organizational policies (P)
 - Ongoing, results-based staff- and organizational-improvement process
 - Flexibility in allocating available resources
 - Community engagement
- Organizational activities (A)
 - Range of diverse, interesting, and skill-building activities
 - Youth engagement in organizational decision making
 - High, clear, and fair standards

Step 4: BRAINSTORM Strategies

- Look at emerging areas for improvement based on:
 - camper input
 - staff input
 - assessment of organizational practices
- Don't limit ideas
- Encourage ideas that address all three S-P-A areas
- Encourage a broad range of strategies :
 - mission-focused
 - staff training
 - activities
 - camper planning
 - facility concerns
 - staffing patterns
 - programming/scheduling

Step 5: CHOOSE

Strategies for Action Plan

- Focus on specific area(s) of improvement
- Set realistic targets for improvement
- Consider your resources carefully
- Develop a multi-year plan for improvement
- Maintain fit with your philosophy, mission, and goals
- Gain support from your staff and campers by involving them in implementation planning

Step 6: DO

- Educate and train for needed actions
- Be flexible
- Do “check-ins” on progress (may need adjustments)
- Be supportive

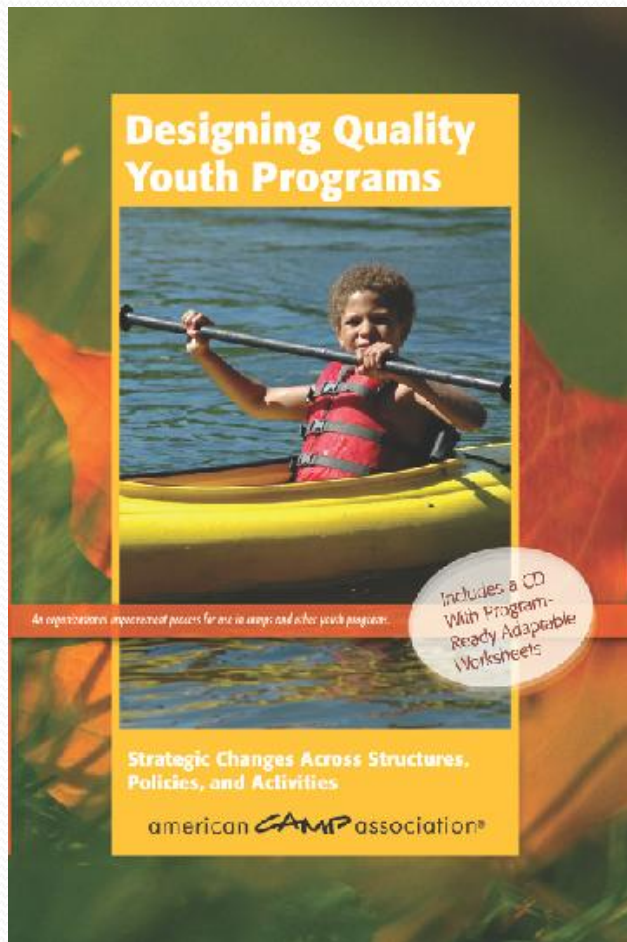
Step 7: SHARE

- Share action plan with key stakeholders (campers, staff, etc) to show that you listened and responded
- Allows you to “circle back”

Step 8: EVALUATE

- Collect data from campers and staff about same perceptions from first survey, interview, etc.
- Compile and compare to initial targets for improvement
- De-brief on what strategies “did-did not” work
- Make program decisions based on evidence
 - To incorporate successes into the program
 - To adjust and retry strategies
 - To eliminate ineffective strategies

What Next?



- Research-based (ACA's youth development "supports and opportunities" study and Program Improvement Project)
- Focuses on a step-by-step process for organizational improvement (across structures, policies, and activities)
- On-line web-based support course suitable for staff training



Designing Quality Youth Programs

Introduction

Welcome camp directors! The journey of improvement you are considering is a rewarding experience to be shared with your youth participants, staff, and other key stakeholders. It is not necessarily quick and easy. Just like a refreshing and nourishing rain, it is time to capture the individual ideas and help them flow together as one positive force for change in your program.

This is the online supplemental resource for the American Camp Association's new workbook *Designing Quality Youth Programs: Strategic Changes Across Structures, Policies, & Activities*. The goal of this module is to provide you with additional opportunities for reflecting and developing a journey of improvement for your program by utilizing the American Camp Association's step-by-step process.

You may view the eight steps of ACA's program improvement process sequentially, or in any order you choose. The recommended steps are: Step 1 - Ask Youth Participants; Step 2 - Ask Staff Participants; Step 3 - Assess; Step 4 - Brainstorm; Step 5 - Choose; Step 6 - Do; Step 7 - Share; Step 8 - Evaluate.

How to Navigate This Module

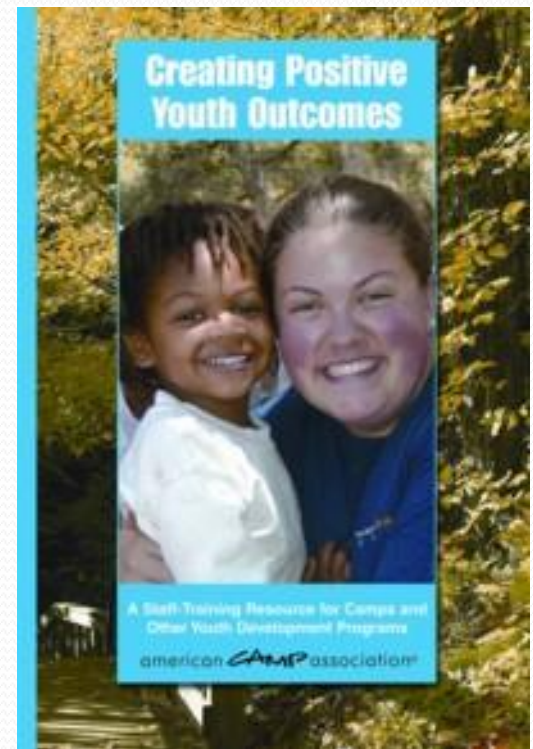
- ◆ *Navigate through each step by following the instructional text in this color.*
- ◆ Click the NEXT button located in the bottom right corner of the screen to progress within each step. Once you complete a step, select another step to explore by clicking on a droplet below.
- ◆ There are audio files that can be played within each step. Be sure to have your speakers on and your volume up to hear the audio.

Before you begin your journey, click the next button to learn more about the Program Improvement Process.

[INTRO](#)[ask youth](#)[ask staff](#)[assess](#)[brain storm](#)[choose](#)[do](#)[share](#)[evaluate](#)[next](#)

Additional ACA Evaluation Resource: Creating Positive Youth Outcomes Tool Kit

- A 7-step process for program evaluation to help you increase positive youth outcomes. A book and resource CD include:
 - **the evaluation outline,**
 - **examples of goals and objectives you might target,**
 - **a facilitator's guide for staff training,**
 - **copy-ready checklists and worksheets,**
 - **forms for refining targeted outcomes, and**
 - **youth survey tools designed and used by ACA for youth outcomes research.**



Questions?

- Contact Deb at dbialeschki@acacamps.org
- Go to www.acacamps.org/research