

Nuts and Bolts of TeamSTEPPS™

Presented Through Frequently Asked Questions

1. The MEDCOM Patient Safety Center supports the DoD sponsored program called TeamSTEPPS that focuses on teamwork and communication among our healthcare teams in our MTFs. What is TeamSTEPPS?

Within the MEDCOM Patient Safety Program are several initiatives underway to ensure that safe, reliable care is delivered on every patient we serve. One of these is TeamSTEPPS, which stands for Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety.

Patient safety is a team activity. Teamwork involved the coordination, cooperation, and synchronization of activities necessary to support patients' needs. Teamwork is the glue that holds all of the care processes together across the continuum of care. All staff play a role in collectively caring for the patient and the patients' needs. Not just the core teams who come in direct contact with the patient, but all hospital, clinic or nursing home staff have roles and responsibilities in making the healthcare environment safe. Really, the life of a patient depends on effective teamwork.

TeamSTEPPS is an evidence-based teamwork system for improving patient safety through better communication and teamwork skills among healthcare professionals. Communication and other teamwork failures continue to be the leading cause of adverse events. Although teamwork is critical to the delivery of high quality care in today's complex, dynamic, high-risk patient care environment, most healthcare professions' curricula lack team training. TeamSTEPPS provides a comprehensive suite of ready-to-use training materials and tools aimed at producing healthcare teams that optimize process and patient outcomes through highly effective communication, coordination and other essential teamwork competencies.

Integrating these teamwork principles into daily practice, can truly change the culture and transform healthcare in the AMEDD and beyond! TeamSTEPPS is being adopted and spread, albeit at various paces, in both military and civilian healthcare organizations.

2. How was TeamSTEPPS developed?

The DoD senior leadership asked the Healthcare Team Coordination Program to develop the best medical team training system that would be utilized across all 3 Services--the Army, Navy and Air Force evaluating what had been done to date. It's been a six year research and development project. A panel of researchers, clinicians, educators, and human factors and teamwork experts initially proposed core team competencies. TeamSTEPPS was then developed, based on recommendations and guidelines from an extensive independent evaluation conducted by the American Institutes for Research. This curriculum was piloted over an 18 month time period spanning 24 facilities, in both DoD and civilian organizations.

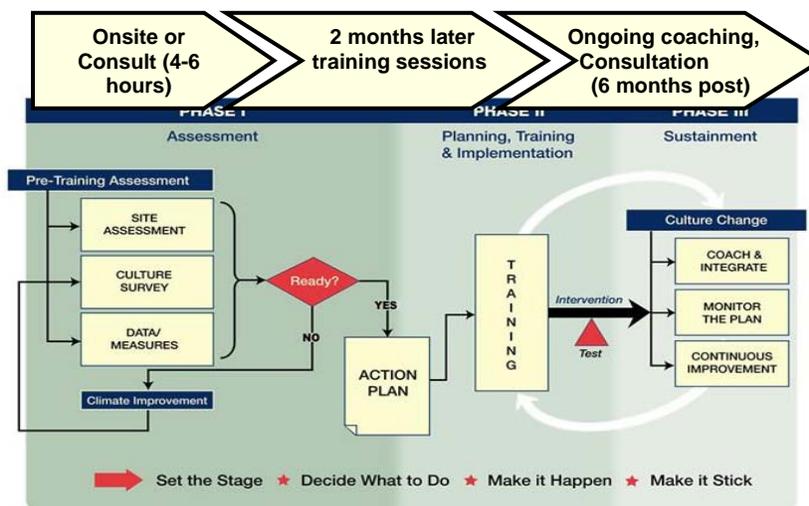
Feedback and lessons learned from hundreds of healthcare subject matter experts and users on the frontline in the field were an integral part of the development and validation process. Over 35 organizations contributed to these TeamSTEPPS resources. A strong sense of ownership and empowerment has been created using this engaged approach and relationship building.

4. Where has TeamSTEPPS been trained in DoD?

Since 2005, the TeamSTEPPS Initiative has been rolled-out to over 125 units in MTFs, worldwide from smallest ambulatory clinic to the combat theater. These are all in various stages of adoption, deployment and sustainment. More than 2200 participants have been equipped to train and coach their staff as they implement these new tools. Madigan Army Medical Center’s perinatal units are a model that could be replicated throughout MTFs.

5. How are caregivers trained on teamwork?

Within the Healthcare Team Coordination Program are a virtual team of expert instructors working with Service headquarters to identify MTFs and assess their organizational readiness. These instructors, along with the support of the patient safety managers and the MTF change teams, provide the knowledge and skills to initiate and facilitate a TeamSTEPPS initiative. Bases on the adult learning theory, this incorporates didactic and practice-based sessions (simulation) focusing on a phased approach to implementing and sustaining. This includes performing a site assessment, engaging leadership, developing an action plan, evaluating the impact o quality and safety of care and manage organizational change. Following training, coaching and consultation are critical to help both change teams with their initiative and encourage point of care performance coaching.



Some of our facilities decide to implement one TeamSTEPPS tool within one unit until it becomes part of everyday behavior and others are focused on multiple tools. Change is local and one size does not fit all.

6. How does TeamSTEPPS fit with other quality improvement programs?

TeamSTEPPS aligns with DoD healthcare quality improvement programs, some facilities are using the clinical microsystem framework, some are incorporating select TeamSTEPPS tools into their *Lean Six Sigma* project and others are using TeamSTEPPS as their annual AFSO-21 project. Communication, teamwork proficiency, and systems-based process improvement skills are equally important components in successful implementation of many healthcare processes. There are three foundational competency areas for success:

- *Clinical/Technical*
- *Teamwork*
- *Systems-based Continuous Process Improvement*



When MTF leaders promote staff excellence in these three areas and foster an environment free of punitive responses and open to organizational change, transformation to a culture of safety is possible.

Staff equipped with teamwork competencies, accelerate organizational success with healthcare process improvement efforts and other leading national patient safety initiatives.

7. How does TeamSTEPPS contribute to cultural transformation in an organization?

Communication failures are identified as a key contributing factor in events leading to preventable patient harm. However, “communication” is a very broad, non-specific term. TeamSTEPPS defines specific types of communications and provides healthcare (HC) teams with a simple, common language with which to discuss (and identify solutions for) a variety of communication and other teamwork failures. Healthcare personnel often operate in silos. Different HC professions use different communication styles (e.g. MDs versus nurses). TeamSTEPPS provides a common language for communication, empowers each team member to speak up, and establishes every individual as an important member of the team. The culture shifts from hierarchy-driven to team-driven.

TeamSTEPPS provides HC staff with simple actions (behaviors) to practice and implement in any clinical settings. TeamSTEPPS trained staff literally “acts their way into a new way of thinking”.

8. What competencies are taught in TeamSTEPPS?

TeamSTEPPS promotes competencies in four core areas:

- Team Leadership – the ability to direct and coordinate activities of team members, assess team performance, assign tasks, develop team knowledge and skills, motivate team members, plan and organize, and establish a positive team atmosphere;
- Situation Monitoring (or mutual performance monitoring) -- the capacity to develop common understandings of the team environment and apply appropriate strategies to monitor teammate performance accurately;
- Mutual Support (or back-ups behavior) – the ability to anticipate other team members’ needs and to shift workload among members to achieve balance; and
- Communication – including the efficient exchange of information and consultation with other team members including the patient.

9. What are the outcomes of a TeamSTEPPS Initiative?

TeamSTEPPS is not just training but a systematic approach, structured to identify barriers through providing tools to optimize better outcomes. Over time, change is facilitated when teamwork principles are integrated into daily practice, ultimately, creating a safety net for the healthcare delivery system and achieving a cultural transformation.

BARRIERS	TOOLS and STRATEGIES	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Inconsistency in Team Membership■ Lack of Time■ Lack of Information Sharing■ Hierarchy■ Defensiveness■ Conventional Thinking■ Complacency■ Varying Communication Styles■ Conflict■ Lack of Coordination and Follow-Up with Co-Workers■ Distractions■ Fatigue■ Workload■ Misinterpretation of Cues■ Lack of role clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Brief■ Huddle■ Debrief■ STEP■ Cross Monitoring■ Feedback■ Advocacy and Assertion■ Two-Challenge Rule■ CUS■ DESC Script■ Collaboration■ SBAR■ Call-Out■ Check-Back■ Handoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Shared Mental Model■ Adaptability■ Team Orientation■ Mutual Trust■ Team Performance■ <i>Patient Safety!!</i>

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DoD Patient Safety web site: <http://dodpatientsafety.usuhs.mil/teamstepps>

