

Q Exchange 2019 – Psychology 4 Improvement (P4I) Final Report – November 2020

Project Overview / Abstract

A fundamental precept of improvement science is to understand & influence human behaviour (Deming). However improvement literature & training often focuses on its technical aspects, neglecting its psychological or ‘people’ factors, despite improvement in healthcare being “20% technical and 80% human” (Godfrey). A long term aim for this work is:

“To develop a Psychology for Improvement community to lead, develop and role model the importance of Psychology for Improvement in delivering human-centred, sustainable improvement in health and care.”

More specifically the project wanted to co-produce:

- A body of curated knowledge about the psychology of improvement
- Practical resources that use psychological concepts to support change and are free for people to use and evaluate
- 3 networking events across the UK to disseminate resources and spread impact

It was important from the start that this piece of work in of itself, adopt psychological principles in order to co-produce its output. So whilst structures needed to be set up to support the project, it was more important that the work itself, the connections made and its future direction would be a rewarding and meaningful experience for all taking part.

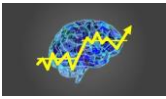
The literature around quality improvement is ever increasing, constantly borrowing from other fields of study in order to build understanding, not only around the methodology itself, but increasingly around the conditions within which quality improvement flourishes or fails. Specific work to understand psychology for improvement is relatively rare and there is a vast body of psychological literature to draw from. The challenge for the P4I Q Exchange team was to reflect on where the focus should lie in order to deliver useful outcomes for improvers. The following outline the key goals being focussed on as part of the P4I Dynamic Model, described in more detail later in this report.

- QI Journey of Emotions – understanding emotions during QI experience supporting wellbeing
- Body of Knowledge – what we already know and do not know
- Community of Practice – coming together to build psychological principles into QI

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a big impact on the delivery of this project, predominantly around delay in delivering the objectives above, (projected to be complete by March 2020), but also in the method of delivery, in that all interactions and events will now be conducted virtually. This has enabled the team to explore many different means to communicate and co-produce this work and this report will describe this journey and preliminary outcomes of this work.

Project Journey

It was important to the initial P4I project team that this work be co-produced in a way that not only harnessed creativity, expertise and passion for P4I, but that it was a connecting experience for those involved. The membership of the P4I team have included diverse perspectives from colleagues with different professional backgrounds across the UK. The geographical spread of the team has created its own challenges primarily around communication and getting together regularly to do this work.



The intention for this work from the start was to support those involved in QI, especially those leading or coaching for QI (Improvers), both within and beyond the Q Community.

Connecting Structures

Aside from the connections made between P4I team member organisations, a structure was set up to connect with each other and to support co-productive working within the team and with the wider P4I community. Connecting structures supporting the project include:

- **P4I Steering Group** – is made up of an eclectic mix of people from across the UK from fields including psychology, quality improvement, psychiatry, academia, leadership, mathematics and evaluation. Meetings every 6-8 weeks include two elements, a governance structure to oversee the work, and a workshop to take the work forward. Terms of Reference are available on request.
- **Psychology for Improvement Special Interest Group (SIG)** – a space for Q Community members interested in P4I to communicate, share their ideas and build a network.
- **Psychology 4 Improvement Q Exchange bid page** – provides an overview of the project, comments from those interested and a place to share regular updates.
- **Psychology for Improvement Community of Practice sessions** – to create a listening space for the wider community to share their thoughts around what P4I means. Initial call in April 2020, further listening spaces planned.
- **@Psychology4I Twitter Account** – a space to communicate with a network beyond the Q Community around learning events and to run Tweet Chats.
- **P4I Whatsapp group** – for the P4I team members to communicate with each other.
- **Q Community Special Interest Groups** – the P4I Q Exchange team have connected with the 'Human Factors' and 'Quality Coach Programme' special interest groups to spread P4I.
- **Psychology of Change** – Kate Hilton, author of the 'Psychology of Change' IHI White paper is a key partner in the P4I work.

Project Structure

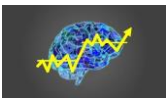
The P4I project was planned to take place across three phases; exploratory, delivery and evaluation.

Exploratory Phase – developing our aim and focus

This is where the P4I team came together primarily to get to know each other, sometimes through random coffee trials, also to share different perspectives, and agree the ultimate aims and focus of the P4I Q Exchange Project. This phase was characterised by building spaces to listen to each other and the wider community. These included:

- Blog 'Let's introduce ourselves' – sharing participants stories of how they came to be passionate about introducing psychology into quality improvement efforts.
- P4I Community of Practice (COP) session 1 – April 2020 – virtual thinking space with the wider Q Community to understand what P4I means to each participant.
- P4I Survey – survey used concepts from a review of the literature, the P4I COP and P4I SIG to assess what psychological principles are most useful in supporting QI.
- Regular P4I Steering Group workshops to explore direction of work. These workshops employed different methods such as Liberating Structures and Thinking Spaces to derive shared purpose
- Tweet Chats – exploring P4I with a wider community.

As a result of the work undertaken during the exploration phase, four key concepts were identified for further work. It was felt that, at least initially, that these would have the most practical and positive impact on improvers, and might form the basis for further work once the Q Exchange project was formally complete. These have also informed the P4I Dynamic Model (next section)



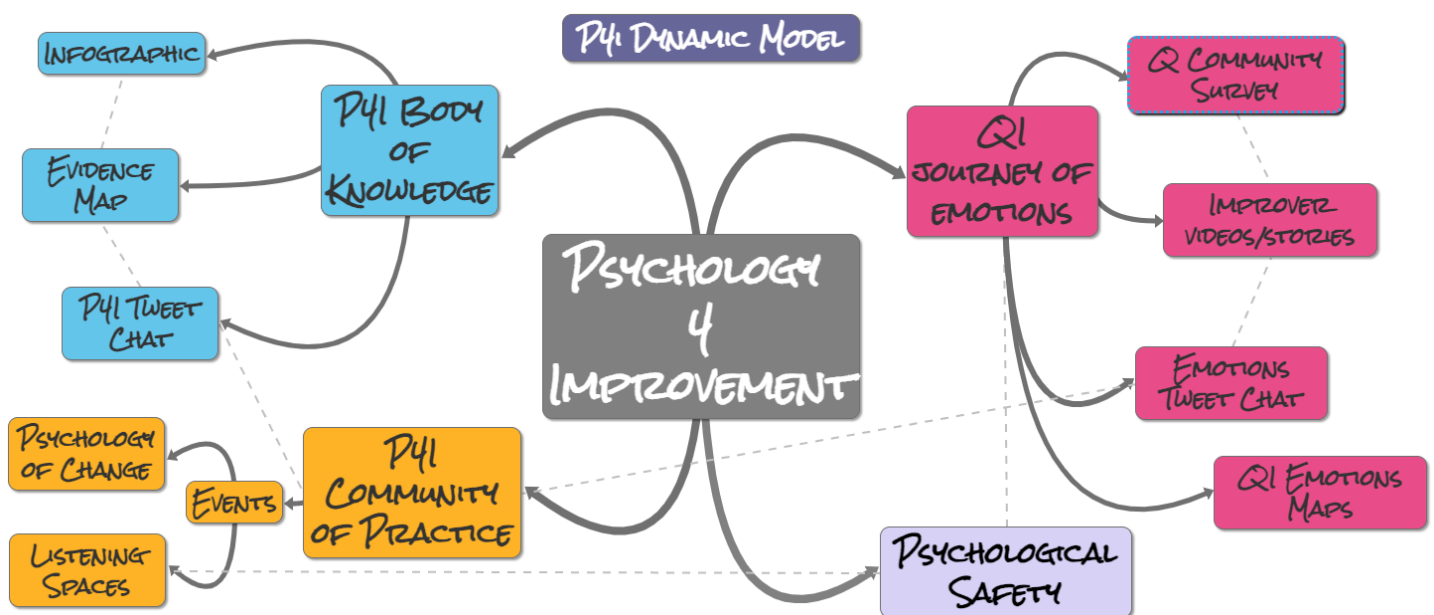
- Psychological Safety – teams that are psychologically safe are more able to engage with QI
- Relational Leadership – relationships are key to any improvement efforts
- Improver Experience – surfacing emotional journeys to build resilience and wellbeing
- IHI Psychology of Change – all QI is a change, sharing a practical model in support of change

Delivery phase – curating resources and events

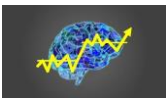
The delivery phase is where curated knowledge and resources are shared with the wider Q Community and beyond. Initially this was to be shared via three face to face events, however due to the COVID Pandemic these plans have changed. Much of the learning will be shared via screen to screen virtual events, however the P4I team have had to explore other avenues to share ideas and learning such as developing P4I webpages and have already delivered those below.

- P4I COP Event – Virtual event including presentations from international speakers Kate Hilton, Anna Burhouse, Benna Waites and the ABCi Team, recordings of which are available on the Q Community website
- P4I Tweet Chat – garnering over 800 tweets which have been analysed into key themes
- QI Emotions Tweet Chat – garnering over 500 tweets, yet to be analysed
- P4I Blogs – Three blogs have already been published linked to the P4I work, including ‘P4I: Let’s Introduce Ourselves’, ‘What has changed to make change happen so quickly’, ‘Psychology 4 Improvement (P4I) Community of Practice’ and soon to be published ‘P4I Tweet Chat’

P4I Dynamic Model – As a result of the learning from the exploratory phase, the P4I team have developed a model describing the influences plus resources and sharing events that the P4I Q Exchange team have set as goals to achieve by March 2021. This model is illustrated below.



- QI Journey of Emotions
 - To build a library of QI project personas linked to emotional journeys that are peculiar to the experience of those coaching or leading quality improvement efforts. We will achieve this by:
 - Tweet chat exploring the journey of emotions through QI
 - Videos/stories of emotional journeys
 - Q Community P4I Survey
 - QI Emotional Maps - links with existing Bevan Exemplar journeys (future work)



- Body of Knowledge
 - To build a body of knowledge around psychological principles linked to QI. Initial work to include:
 - Preliminary literature review
 - P4I Tweet Chat & analysis, expressed as an infographic
- Community of Practice
 - To start building a community with an interest in incorporating psychological principles into QI work. We will bring together people across the Q Community and beyond as part of:
 - A series of Psy4I listening events, a methodology to build psychological safety
 - One day event – ‘IHI Psychology of Change’ Kate Hilton

Evaluation phase – did we deliver and was there any impact?

The P4I team were keen to take up the offer of evaluation support from the Evaluation Special Interest Group and were pleased when an offer was accepted to join the P4I Steering Group. Whilst much of the data will be collected during and the P4I work, the final evaluation results will not be available until soon after March 2021. The evaluation will answer the following questions to assess the progress of the P4I work:

1. Have we achieved our three P4I goals by 31.3.21?
2. What impact have we made so far in the Q Community and beyond?
3. What have we learnt along the way about how best to develop and role model the importance of Psychology for Improvement in delivering human-centred, sustainable improvement in health and care?
4. What could we do even better in the future?

The evaluation approach will employ both qualitative and quantitative data to make final conclusions. The P4I Evaluation Plan is available on request.

- Preliminary evaluation feedback -

- P4I Community of Practice (COP) (April 2020) – >35 attendees with almost 200 comments. Feedback included:

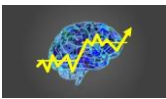
‘really great to connect and loved the virtual COP’

‘It’s actually been great to connect with other humans’

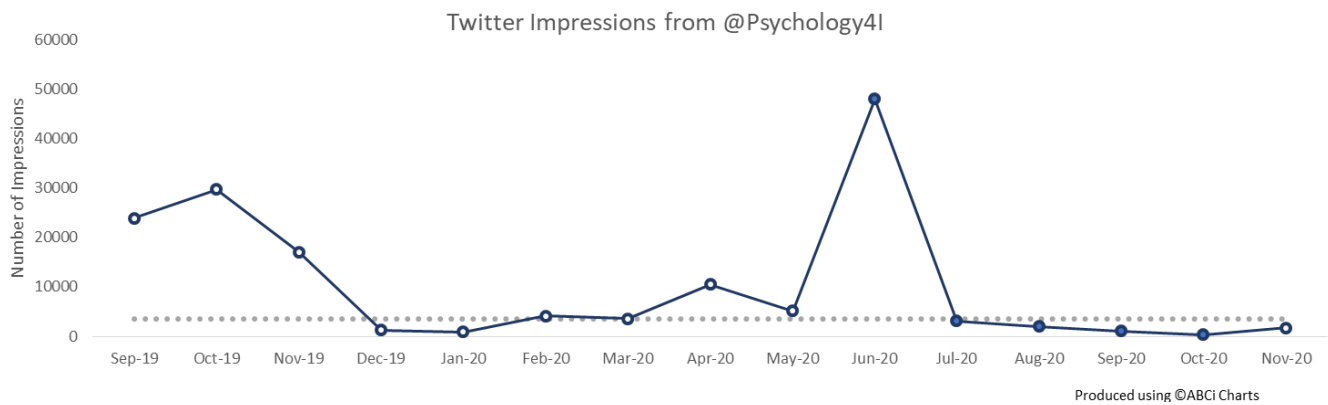
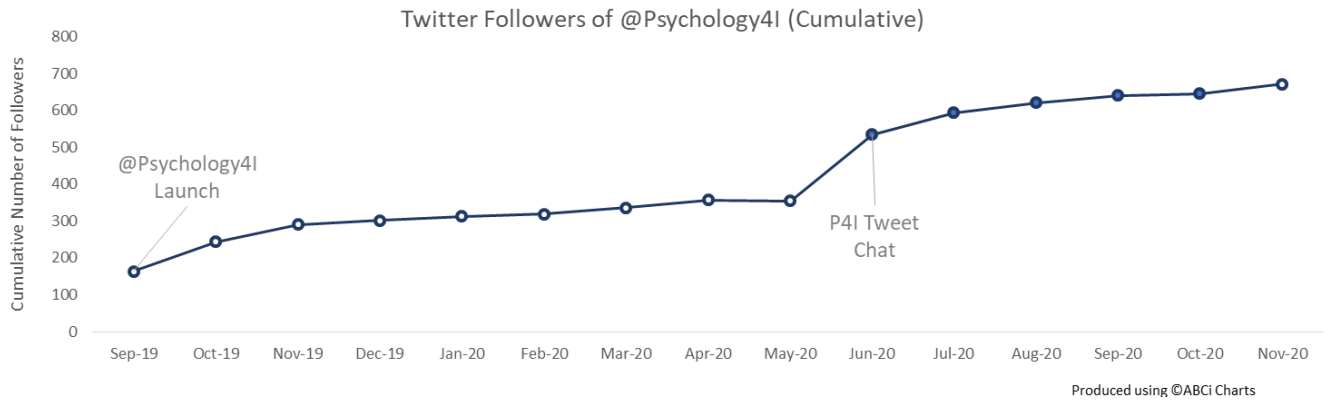
*‘I’ve really enjoyed the range of contributions from everyone.
Nice to see that there are also common threads of experience.’*

*‘I loved the speakers input but also all the attendees,
and the organiser who made this happen,
thank you from the bottom of my heart’*

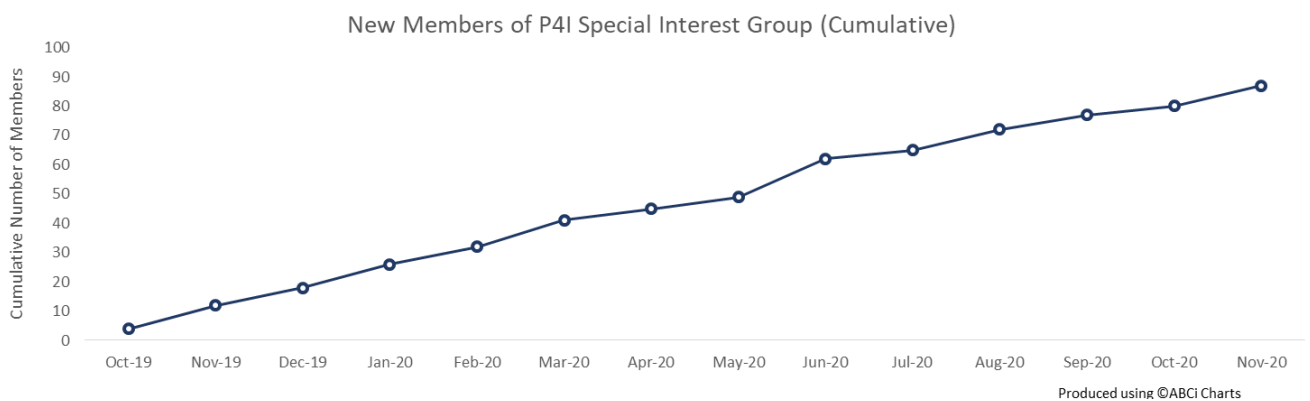
- P4I Q Exchange Ideas page – 88 comments excited about the project and sharing resources and ideas.
- P4I Tweet Chat (June 2020) - Over 60 participants generating 555 tweets and over 900k twitter impressions within the hour. Even more participated in the 24 hours that followed, reaching a total of 805 tweets and 121 participants.
 - As a result of this event 89% of participants said that they found participating in the tweet chat useful, especially around learnt new things, connecting with new people and encouraging further reading to learn more about P4I



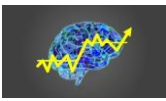
- Exploring QI Journey of Emotions Tweet Chat (November 2020) - Over 40 participants generating 409 tweets and over 1.1 million twitter impressions within the hour. Even more participated in the 24 hours that followed, reaching a total of 527 tweets, 64 participants and 1.4 million impressions. Analysis yet to be undertaken.
- Twitter @Psychology4I– 678 followers, >4k visits, >150k impressions, 1012 mentions, 157 tweets



- Psychology for Improvement SIG - steady growth to include 114 members at time of writing this report



This has been such an important piece of work that has the potential to change the way people approach quality improvement. The P4I team have been particularly proud of the support and engagement that they have had from the wider QI community and beyond, also, in the light of difficulties of geography and the COVID pandemic restrictions, how this work has maintained its momentum, creating positive relationships across the boundaries. This work will undoubtedly continue beyond the scope of the Q Exchange.



Learning

There has been an enormous amount of learning from the P4I work undertaken so far and this will be clarified as part of the evaluation process currently being undertaken. From the P4I team point of view, some of the predominant learning has been around how to interact and work together when both geographically at different ends of the country and during a pandemic. The following illustrates some of the learning derived from running this work that may be useful to others engaging in similar projects.

Enablers - There have been many enablers that have allowed this work to continue, not least the passion the team and community have exhibited towards incorporating psychological principles into QI.

- Technology has enabled communication, the team employing any number of platforms in creating ways to do this including: Twitter, Zoom, Teams, Jamboard, Trello, Survey Monkey and Slido. For instance running a Thinking Space via Zoom worked really well, deriving rich and meaningful ideas around P4I.
- Different tools and methodologies have also been used to enable learning and include: thinking spaces, liberating structures, surveys, thematic analysis and shared purpose.
- Having a team to take care of logistics has been useful – so that the P4I steering group itself can concentrate on making decisions and doing the work.

Virtual Working - can work, but it needs time and effort to bring about the same benefits as face to face working, this was particularly relevant when building relationships.

Relationships - Early on in the process the team realised that many didn't really know each other or understand the differing perspectives toward this work. In response the team realised that it was really worth investing time to get to know each other and to share each other's stories which has made the journey through this work flow more easily.

Psychological Safety – Uncertainty and interdependence were factors in this work – fostering a climate of psychological safety was key to sharing ideas and building relationships.

Shared Purpose – The wealth of ideas and approaches to building resources for P4I were over-whelming, and it became clear early on that developing a shared purpose was of paramount importance. What was so interesting was that, despite the diversity of ideas, the group did share a core understanding of what this work should achieve.

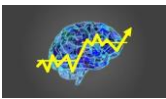
Co-production – the strength of this work lies in its co-production and advice to other Q members who might want to work on similar projects where the end result is not clear from the start, is to allow plenty of time for relationship building, exploration and discussion before embarking on the delivery phase.

Leadership – Relational leadership has been a key enabler for this work, different members of the P4I group volunteering to lead different elements of the P4I dynamic model.

Tweet Chats - have been an eye-opener for the team, not least because of the wealth of information that can be gleaned over a short period of time but also in how, following a mapping exercise, this seemed to correlate with much of the existing evidence base.

Communication Plan

The plan is for the P4I work is to continue beyond the duration of Q Exchange funding and the team will be seeking to discuss this with the Q Community. The P4I team have already liaised with the Q Community around mapping the P4I network via Kumu and are taking advantage of the Network Weaving training.



The P4I project will continue to be promoted via the connecting structure outlined in the introductory section of this report, but in addition to this, resources will be shared via P4I webpages, yet to be set up.

Communications around the P4I project will also be shared via the Community of Practice events planned before March 2021, these will be advertised via the Q Community events page and the connecting structure above.

Next Steps / sustainability

At the time of writing this report there are several activities planned for the coming months including:

- Listening Spaces – In modelling a methodology for building psychologically safe environments for QI to take place – these provide a safe space for improvers to share their thoughts and ideas.
- QI Journey of Emotions tweet chat analysis informing survey – exploring the emotions improvers experience during QI work
- Psychology of Change 1 day virtual event – Kate Hilton to run a one day session in March 2021

The P4I Team would love to continue working with the Q Community to build on the work undertaken as part the Q Exchange P4I project and there are already plans to map the P4I SIG via Kumu. Whilst there is a wealth of separate knowledge around psychology and quality improvement, the evidence bringing these together is limited. The work of the P4I Team represents the tip of this enormous iceberg and a tentative outcome for this work might be to understand where the gaps are, and to articulate where meaningful research might be undertaken. The P4I team would welcome further discussions with the Q Community of how they might support further work.

References

Godfrey MM, Andersson-Gare B, Nelson EC, Nilsson M, Ahlstrom G. *Coaching interprofessional health care improvement teams: the coachee, the coach and the leader perspectives*. J Nurs Manag (2014) 22:452–64

Deming W. Edwards (1993). "4". *The New Economics for Industry, Government, and Education*. Boston: MIT Press.

Links to online P4I resources

- [Psychology 4 Improvement Q Exchange idea page](#)
- [Psychology for Improvement Special Interest Group](#)
- Blogs
 - [P4I: Let's Introduce Ourselves](#)
 - [What has changed to make change happen so quickly](#)
 - [Psychology 4 Improvement \(P4I\) Community of Practice](#)
 - P4I Tweet Chat – awaiting publication
- P4I Twitter account - [@Psychology4I](#)