Worksheet: Understanding your problem

A problem is defined as “a matter or situation regarded as an unwelcome or harmful and need to be dealt with or overcome” Oxford dictionary

What is your problem? ____________________________________________________________

Use the following questions to further understand your problem:

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<td>1. Whose problem, is it?</td>
<td>2. How big is the problem?</td>
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<td>(consider what does it look like from different perspectives? carers/patients/managers/clinicians)</td>
<td>(how many people are affected? how big is the gap being the evidence and practice? how can I measure this?)</td>
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<td>3. What harm is created?</td>
<td>4. Why is the problem there?</td>
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<td>(what are the consequences, what is the suggested impact of addressing the problem? is this an important problem to fix?)</td>
<td>(consider the evidence, the people, the inner (local and organisational) and outer contexts)</td>
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Don’t forget to consider what the evidence/literature says about your problem – is it the same or different to what you perceive?

Understanding the Problem Version 1
What is your refined problem: ____________________________________________________________

Additional Questions to consider…

- Do you need to collect more information to understand your problem?
- Have you considered all perspectives or do you need to talk to more people?
- How will you measure your problem to confirm it is a problem?
- Is it realistic to measure these outcomes considering your timeline and resources?
- If you were to address this problem, what would success look like? Have you considered this in your problem measurement?

It takes time to determine a problem but also to work towards improving the problem – if you or your team have multiple problems it might be worth re-plotting your problems on the frequency/impact matrix to prioritise areas to progress

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:
The worksheet provided by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement 5 Why’s finding the Root Cause to truly understand your problem can assist if in refining the problem further [http://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/Tools/5-Whys-Finding-the-Root-Cause.aspx](http://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/Tools/5-Whys-Finding-the-Root-Cause.aspx) or seek advice from a mentor or TRIP enthusiast