Module 8

Supervision and System Support for Quality Services

Essential Ideas to Convey

- ❑ Supervisors play a critical role in high-quality service provision.

- ❑ Each organization is a dynamic open system, consisting of interconnected and interacting elements.

- ❑ Health care is "in active exchange with its environment and influenced by such external factors as donor priorities, the political climate, and the sociocultural and economic context of the community. Beyond the organization lie many additional factors that affect services. Outside environment may influence the organization's standards, services, and even structures. The recognition and management of external influences are tasks for the organization's leaders."

> —Jennings, V., et al. 2000. Analyzing the organizational context for a positive client-provider interaction: A leadership challenge for reproductive health. *MAQ Paper* Vol. 1, No. 1. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/INFO Project.

- ❑ Sustainable quality improvement requires a more comprehensive systems approach, which helps to address the full range of issues and factors affecting the health system.

- ❑ The systems approach intervenes at the level of the health system and enables supervisors to play an active role in ensuring high-quality provider performance and service provision.

Session 8

Supervision and System Support for Quality Services

Objectives

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- Explain what systems support sustainable quality and performance improvement within the facility, the larger health system, and outside the health system

- Analyze the environmental context in which the health system operates

- Describe the roles of supervisors to strengthen the systems involved in service provision and to bring additional resources from the external environment

Materials

- Resource: Links to the Larger System

- Resource: Environmental Factors That Affect the Health Care System, page 65

- Participant Handout 8.1: Supervision and Systems Support for Quality Services

- Participant Handout 8.2: Environmental Factors That Affect the Health Care System

- Cards/candies to use to divide the participants into small groups

- Flipchart paper

- Flipchart 8A: Questions for Group Work

- Markers

- Masking tape

Advance Preparation

Write Flipchart 8A:

Session 8

> **Flipchart 8A**
>
> **Group 1**
>
> - What systems must be in place to support sustainable quality and performance improvement, at all levels (i.e., at the facility level, at the district level, etc.)?
>
> - What can supervisors do to make sure that all systems involved in service provision operate properly?
>
> **Group 2**
>
> - What external sectors have an influence on how the health system operates?
>
> - What is going on in the external environmental sectors that affect your country's health system (i.e., economic, transport, education, etc.)? What types of reforms might take place in different sectors, including health-sector reform?
>
> - What can supervisors do to ensure support for high-quality provider performance and service provision in such a complex environment?

Session Time

1 hour, 10 minutes

Training Activities. . . . . **Time**
    A. Systems approach . . . . 1 hour, 10 min.

Session 8 Detailed Steps

Activity A: Systems Approach: Small-Group Work/Discussion/Presentation
(1 hour, 10 minutes)

1. Present the learning objectives for the session.

2. Tell the participants that it is important for supervisors to have a clear understanding of how the health care system operates, from the facility level up to the district, regional, and country levels.

3. Explain that during the next activity, the participants will be asked to reflect on how their site or district operates, to ensure sustainable improvement of the quality of services and of provider performance. What systems must be in place at the site level and higher? What environmental factors affect how they operate? (For example, what are the current regulations? How strong is the country's economy? How are resources distributed?) How do all of those processes affect the health system and the quality of health care? And what is the role of supervisors in ensuring high-quality service provision and provider performance in such a complex environment?

4. Divide the participants into two groups. (If the group is large enough, divide the participants into four groups and assign two groups to work on the same tasks.) Reveal Flipchart 8A, which shows the leading questions to be discussed in the small groups, and explain the questions.

5. Allow **30 minutes** for a small-group discussion. Ask each group to assign a member to present the results to the entire group.

6. After the groups have completed their discussions, ask Group 1 to begin a presentation. Each group will have **10 minutes** for a presentation.
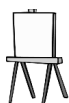
� **Trainers Tips**

Make sure that the group presenting the systems within the organization mentions supervision, training, information, education, and communication (IEC), finance, supplies and logistics, monitoring and evaluation of the program, and human resources management systems, and that they describe briefly the functions of those systems.

Make sure that when the participants discuss **environmental context** (Group 2), they mention such external factors as donor priorities, the political climate, the sociocultural context of the local community, social hierarchies, community organizations, infrastructure and production, etc. The participants need to analyze what types of reforms might take place in different sectors. The recognition and management of external influences are the tasks for supervisors.

Make sure that all groups come up with the idea about the role of supervisors as liaisons **a) within the facility, b) within the health system at different levels,** *and* **c) with the external environment.**

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7. Explain that the other groups should add the ideas that they think are missing from the first group's presentation. (If there are four groups, the groups that were working on the same questions should decide which group will present its results first. The second group will then add what was missing from the first group's presentation.)

8. After the groups have presented their results, ask the participants **why they think they were asked to discuss all of these questions?** Lead a discussion. Make sure that the participants understand the importance of their role as supervisors to ensure that all systems involved in service provision are operating properly and to help staff provide quality services and continuously improve their performance. They should see clearly all of the links between the systems and environmental sector in relation to the operation of the health care system and their role as a liaison between the systems and the larger system.

9. Distribute Participant Handouts 8.1 and 8.2. Allow the participants time to read the information, and then use the handouts to summarize a discussion emphasizing that there is increasing recognition that **sustainable quality improvement requires a more comprehensive systems approach**, which helps to address the full range of issues affecting the health system. Emphasize the role of supervisors in managing the systems, structure, and staff, through serving as a liaison with the larger system and within the health system to ensure the fundamentals of care. Discuss with the participants how one sector influences processes in another and what mechanisms cause this to happen.

10. Explain the role of supervisors in organizing and conducting advocacy activities to bring in additional resources and to make necessary changes in policies, to ensure the quality of services and to better meet the needs of clients.

11. Discuss with the participants what role **their level** plays in the supervisory system, what relationships exist among the site, district, middle, and central levels, what specific supervisors' actions are required, and why it is important for supervisors to be aware of all processes that exist in the external environment and within the health care system (health-sector reform).

12. Tell the participants that they will discuss all of these issues in more detail during the course.

➤➤ *Trainers Tips*

Note to the trainer: **Assess the situation and adapt this session to the local context, taking into consideration the local situation regarding health-sector reform, including local stakeholders' priorities.**

Consider:

❏ Who are the supervisors in the local setting?

❏ How does the health care system work?

❏ What are the links within the supervisory system?

❏ What is the link between service provision and the supervisory system?

Participant Handout 8.1: Supervision and System Support for Quality Services

Support Systems within the Health System	Functions
Facilitative supervision and management— an overarching system linking all of the systems involved in service provision	**Ensuring the fundamentals of care and a quality of services framework** Managing human resources: planning for deployment; deploying staff; ensuring that job descriptions are available and that job expectations are clear; ensuring that a mechanism for performance evaluation exists, including providing constructive feed-back, recognition, motivation, and a reward system; ensuring that staff have access to updated standards/guidelines/protocols and use them correctly; serving as liaison to bring changes into national/regional policies and standards Ensuring that operational protocols/regulations are in place and updated. Ensuring that there is a mechanism in place to collect service statistics, analyze them, discuss them with the staff, and use them for decision making (see Monitoring and evaluation system). Ensuring access to services, including a well-operating referral system; ensuring a proper infrastructure that enables staff to provide quality services (creates an environment that fosters privacy, confidentiality, efficiency, and client and staff comfort) and ensures the fundamentals of care. Ensuring that a mechanism is in place to involve staff in a continuous quality and performance improvement process through use of the quality improvement and performance improvement tools and approaches. Ensuring that an outreach system is in place to educate communities and increase access to services (IEC). Providing links to the larger system within the health system, as well as with the outside sectors. Using advocacy activities to promote a well-functioning health system and the goals of the health care.
Finance	Developing a budget/business plan ensuring the resources needed for service provision; mobilizing new kinds of resources, especially at the community level; analyzing and adjusting service fees and developing a flexible fee schedule.
Training	Ensuring that there is a mechanism in place to link supervisory and training systems to involve staff in assessing learning needs, planning how to address those needs, implementing training plans using the whole-site training approach, monitoring trainees, and supporting the application of new knowledge and skills; that there is a mechanism in place enabling staff to transfer knowledge, skills, and attitude to other staff; that there is a mechanism in place for training capacity building; and that "Inreach" is used to increase access to services (applied within a facility).
Logistics	Planning, obtaining, and distributing equipment, materials (including IEC materials), and supplies needed for service provision, to ensure access to safe services and informed voluntary decision making for all clients. The inventory system is in place (First Expired, First Out [FEFO]).
Monitoring and evaluation	Establishing a mechanism to monitor a site's/program's performance, to collect and analyze data, and to use the data for decision making (see facilitative supervision and management)

Participant Handout 8.2: Environmental Factors That Affect the Health Care System

- ❏ **Clients/communities**

- ❏ **Country/national programs**

- ❏ **Policies, legislation, political will**

- ❏ **Cultural practices**

- ❏ **Health policies and essential services packages (ESP)**

- ❏ **Stakeholders and policy makers**

- ❏ **Country/regional/district finance system/funding sources**

- ❏ **Donors' priorities**

- ❏ **Networks of health services**

- ❏ **Information/education/communication/media**

- ❏ **Infrastructure/production**

- ❏ **Partnerships**

- ❏ **Private sector**

- ❏ **Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)**

- ❏ **Other**

Resource: Links to the Larger System

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                  │ With other services within the facility │
                  └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────┐                                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│  With the larger  │                                    │ With stakeholders, policy │
│ health care system │                                   │ makers, funding sources │
└──────────────────┘                                    └──────────────────────┘
           ▲                                                      ▲
                         ╭─────────────────╮
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┌──────────────────┐                                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ With networks of │                                    │   With communities     │
│ health care services │                                │                        │
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           ▼                                                      ▼
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     │ With partners │                              │  With other sectors   │
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