



Huddle Up for Safer Healthcare



A manual
Including how to get accredited

What is a Safety Huddle?

Team huddles have been used for many years and across many industries to improve team-working and communication.

We have combined the notion of a team huddle with measuring patient safety. Since 2013, we have worked with over 80 frontline teams and in this manual we share some of our learning about what makes our Safety Huddle effective and sustainable.

Active ingredients of a Safety Huddle

1. Non-judgemental environment
2. All team staff empowered to speak up
3. Flexibility on approach when starting huddles
4. Led by the most senior clinician (nurse or allied health professional) or safety huddles ward champion
5. All team staff, including non-clinical, invited to attend
6. Happens at the same time/place (Mon-Fri minimum)
7. Always brief (5-15 minutes)
8. Asking, “Who are the patients most likely at risk of harm?” Only discussing those patients at highest risk, including:
 - What is the plan for this patient?
 - Does everyone know what the plan is?
 - Is everyone happy with the plan?
9. Team agree on focus of harm, for example, falls, aggressive incidents
10. Suggest starting with one harm and build in further harms once huddles become more established
11. Review of days since last harm – to keep staff motivated
12. Consider ways to input patient and carer concerns
13. Celebration and recognition of milestones

5 steps to getting started

1. Culture survey and feedback session
2. Your own data (Improvement Academy can help)
3. Measurement ('days between') board
4. Access to 'light touch' coaching
5. Celebration plans!

The role of organisational executives

Senior managers and executive directors can have a very helpful role. This is most effective when focusing on removing barriers, encouraging, supporting and celebrating success! This is a bottom-up initiative to support frontline teams to improve safety. Mandating teams to participate prevents learning and results.

Getting accredited

We have an active coaches network. We can help you find coaches in your organization, to deliver success, and to develop a scaling-up plan. We can accredit teams who use our Safety Huddles.



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Patient harms are estimated to cost the NHS more than £2.3billion per year. For example, inpatient falls can lead to hip fractures and other injuries, whilst even falls without harm can lead to loss of confidence and increased length of stay for patients.

The Yorkshire and Humber AHSN Improvement Academy is actively working with more than 105 frontline teams across 23 organisations to implement our **Huddle Up for Safer Healthcare (HUSH)** programme. Our Safety Huddle has been demonstrated to reduce patient harm.

This work has received funding from the Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network and the Health Foundation Scaling-Up programme. The programme is being evaluated by the University of Bradford Evaluation and Trials Unit.

