Health service principles for evaluating and improving healthcare

Why this document exists

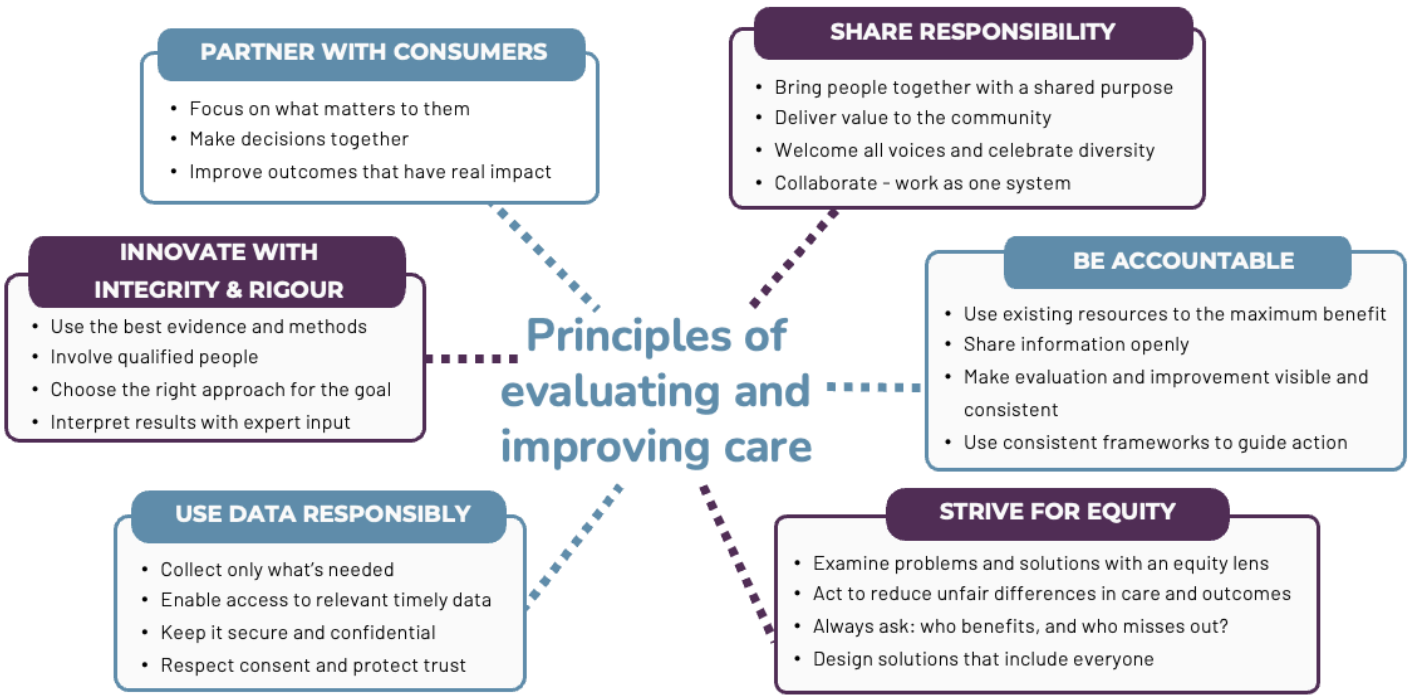
This guide explains how health service staff across Victoria work together to make healthcare better by looking at how care is delivered, whether through audits, research, or improvement projects, so that we do it in a way that's safe, fair, and useful for everyone.

To provide best care with available public resources, services conduct projects to continually improve care. Different types of projects can carry different levels of risk to those who access the health system. As technology has changed, health services need to provide the right support and oversight to give the best outcomes for patients and the public, without unnecessary red tape.

Experts from across Victoria's health system who work in ethics offices, clinical research, quality and safety units, health information services, and consumer advisors addressed this challenge together. They agreed on a set of shared principles to help guide how we improve healthcare safely and effectively for all Victorians. These are shown below and explained further on the next page.

Who is this document for

This document is written for health service users in Victoria.



Principles for health service evaluation and improvement activities

1. *Share responsibility*	It is an expectation that projects are done to a high standard, guided by ethical principles. Improving care isn't just one person's job- it's everyone's. Project teams work together across hospitals and services to: ● Build trust ● Share ideas ● Listen to different voices from our community ● Learn from each other ● Celebrate teamwork ● Choose the right tools for the job
2. *Partner with consumers*	Project teams involve patients, families, and communities in every step. Their experiences and priorities guide the work, making sure it's meaningful and leads to real improvements.
3. *Be accountable*	Project teams use clear rules and systems to make sure projects are well-managed. This helps health services to: ● Use resources wisely ● Adapt quickly to new needs ● Share what we learn ● Stay consistent across services
4. *Strive for Equity*	Project teams look at how their work affects different groups, and aim to ensure health care reaches those who need it. Everyone should benefit from improvements.
5. *Use data responsibly*	Project teams make sure projects are done to a high standard. They protect people's privacy and only collect data that helps improve care. They: ● Keep data safe and confidential ● Make sure people understand how their data is used ● Share data carefully, and honour the trust of our community
6. *Innovate with integrity and rigour*	Project teams use strong methods and qualified people to make sure their findings are reliable. They: ● Choose the right tools for the job ● Include experts when needed ● Check that projects are done to a high standard

Leadership matters

Leaders play a key role in supporting activities that improve care. This helps everyone get involved and make good decisions with a shared goal. Learning occurs best when people work together.