



RELATIONAL COORDINATION ANALYTICS

MEASURE • CONNECT • TRANSFORM

# Improving Performance by Transforming Relationships

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RCA CASE STUDY

2016



# Background

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Results from an employee engagement survey identified ambivalence and low staff engagement on a Radiation Oncology Unit located at a prominent teaching hospital in the US.

A recently hired Director observed similar engagement issues – lack of trust between therapists, dosimetrists, physicists and physicians, and mistrust of the previous Director. Observed outcomes of this were blaming, bullying and lack of teamwork between groups. Further, staff members reported hesitancy to provide feedback and share ideas due to fear of negative responses and retaliation.

Concerned about the consequences of low staff engagement, the new Director of the unit contacted an organizational development consultant internal to the organization to develop and implement a plan of action for improving engagement and related outcomes. As a first step, focus groups were conducted. The issues identified suggested that the RC Survey would be a good measure to capture a baseline and the ongoing pulse of the Radiation Oncology Unit's team dynamics. Relational Coordination Analytics partnered with the Director and the internal consultant to provide baseline and follow-up measurement services. The first phase of their effort is now complete.



# RC Survey Questions

## Radiation Oncology Unit

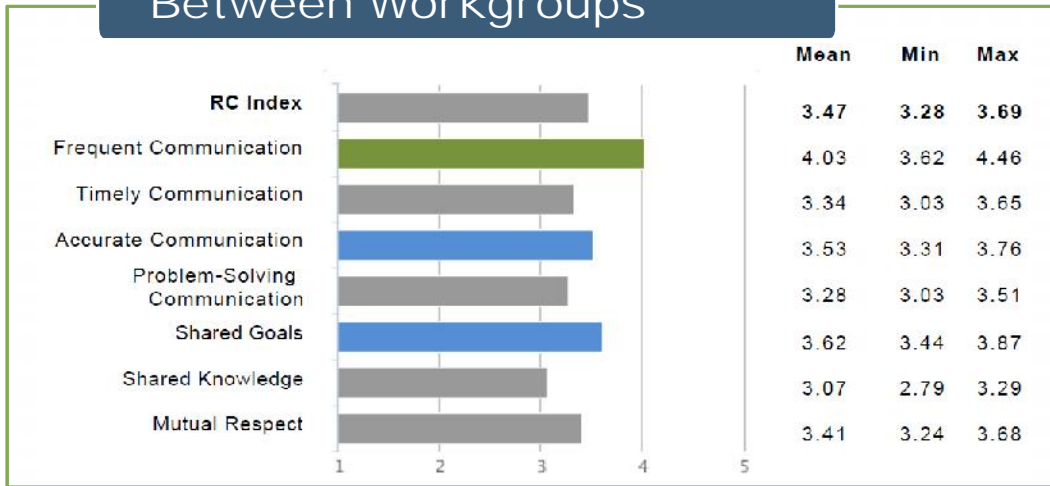
COMMUNICATION	Frequent Communication	• How <b>frequently</b> do people in each of these groups communicate with you about <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?
	Timely Communication	• Do they communicate with you in a <b>timely</b> way about <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?
	Accurate Communication	• Do they communicate with you <b>accurately</b> about <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?
	Problem Solving Communication	• When there is a problem with <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> , do people in each of these groups blame others or work with you to <b>solve</b> the problem?
RELATIONSHIPS	Shared Goals	• Do people in each of these groups <b>share your goals</b> for <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?
	Shared Knowledge	• Do people in each of these groups <b>know</b> about the work you do with <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?
	Mutual Respect	• Do people in each of these groups <b>respect</b> the work you do with <b>the coordination of patient care in the department of radiation oncology</b> ?



# Baseline RC Results

## Radiation Oncology Unit

### Between Workgroups



### Key Observations

- RC Index score suggested opportunities for improvement driven by weak:
  - Timely-Communication
  - Problem-Solving Communication
  - Shared Knowledge
  - Mutual Respect
- Findings parallel within workgroup scores with the exception of shared knowledge.

### Within Workgroups



### Notes

- The Between Workgroup RC scores are based on responses given by participants about workgroups/individuals of which they are not a part.
- The Within Workgroup RC scores are based on responses given by participants about their own workgroup.

Legend: ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Weak



# Baseline Results

## Workgroup Focus – Nurses

Nurses, a critical boundary spanning role between patients and other providers, were identified by their colleagues as having weak Problem-Solving Communication and Shared Knowledge.

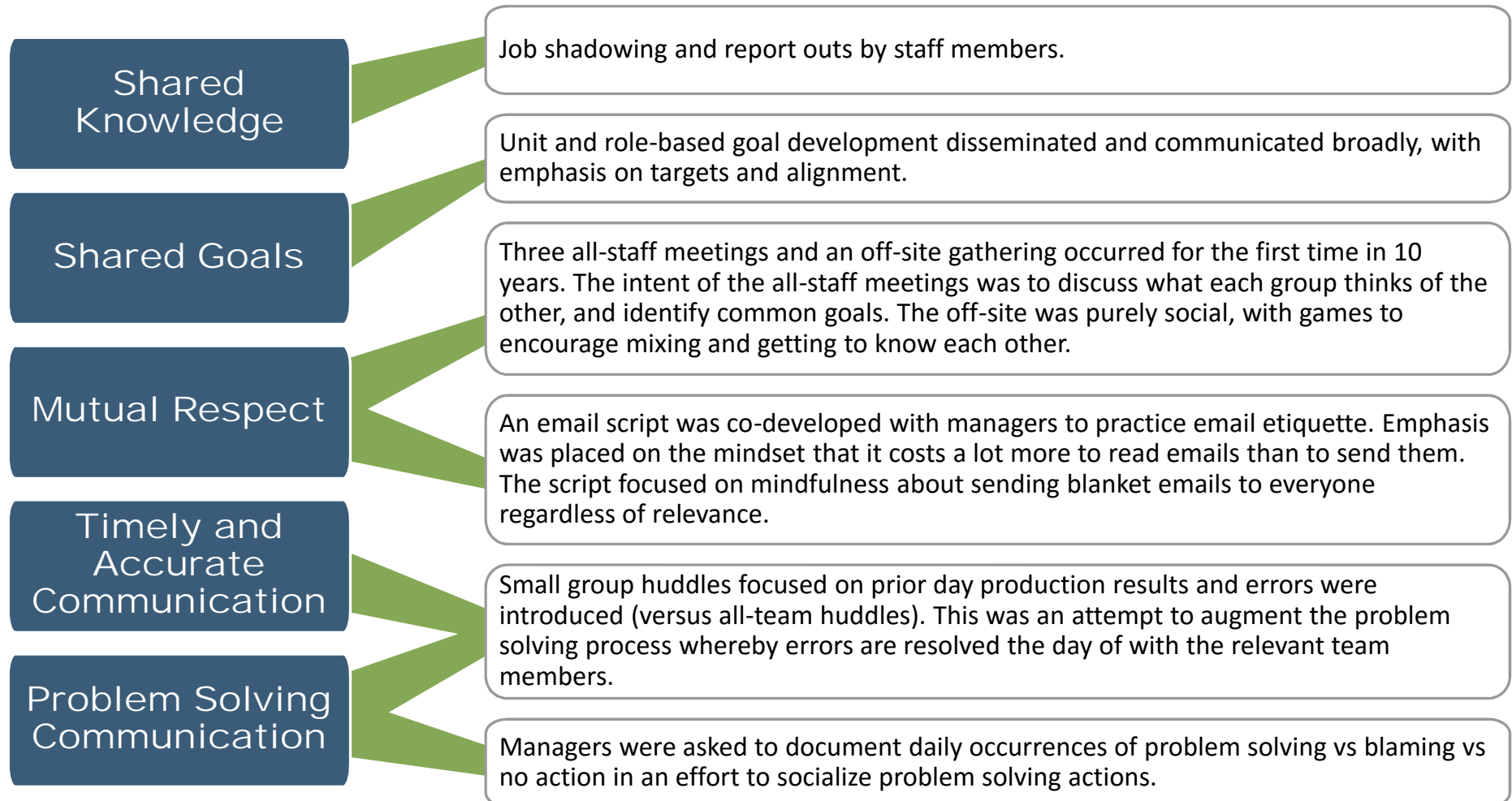
Amongst themselves, Nurses identified weak Problem-Solving Communication, Shared Goals, Shared Knowledge and Mutual Respect.

**Legend:** ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Weak





# Interventions

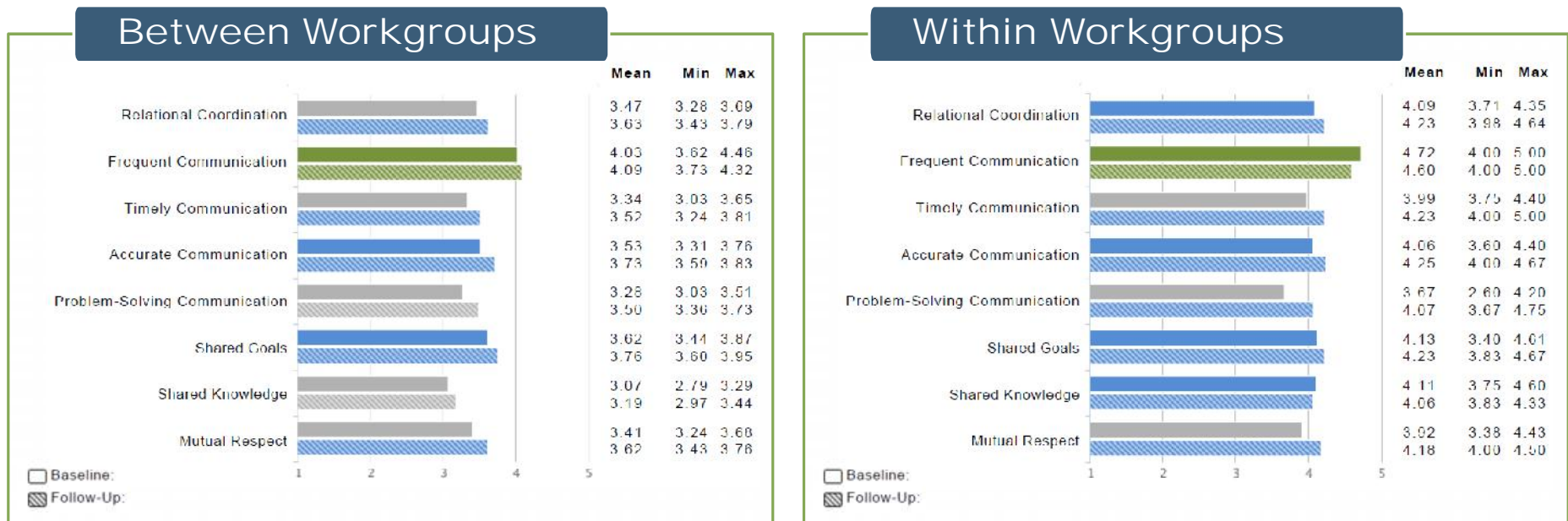




# Post-Intervention Result Comparison

## Radiation Oncology Unit

Progress made in key areas of opportunity identified at baseline:



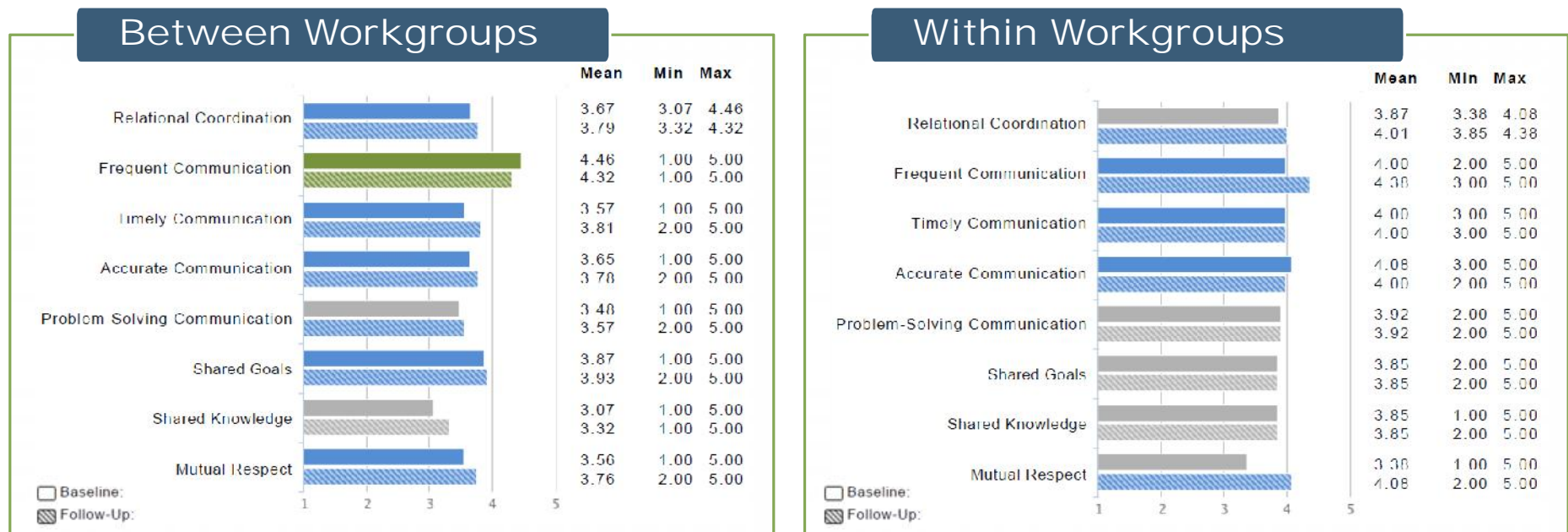
- All dimensions of relational coordination improved between baseline and follow-up. Of note, the improvement in Timely and Problem-Solving Communication and in Mutual Respect from a weak to moderate score.



# Post-Intervention Result Comparison

## Workgroup Focus – Nurses

The RC Survey allowed the Radiation Oncology department to identify specific issues within the Nursing Leadership structure on that unit.



- Leadership coaching was implemented with this group.
- The Director also initiated a hiring search for a new member of the Nursing Leadership team on the Radiation Oncology Unit.

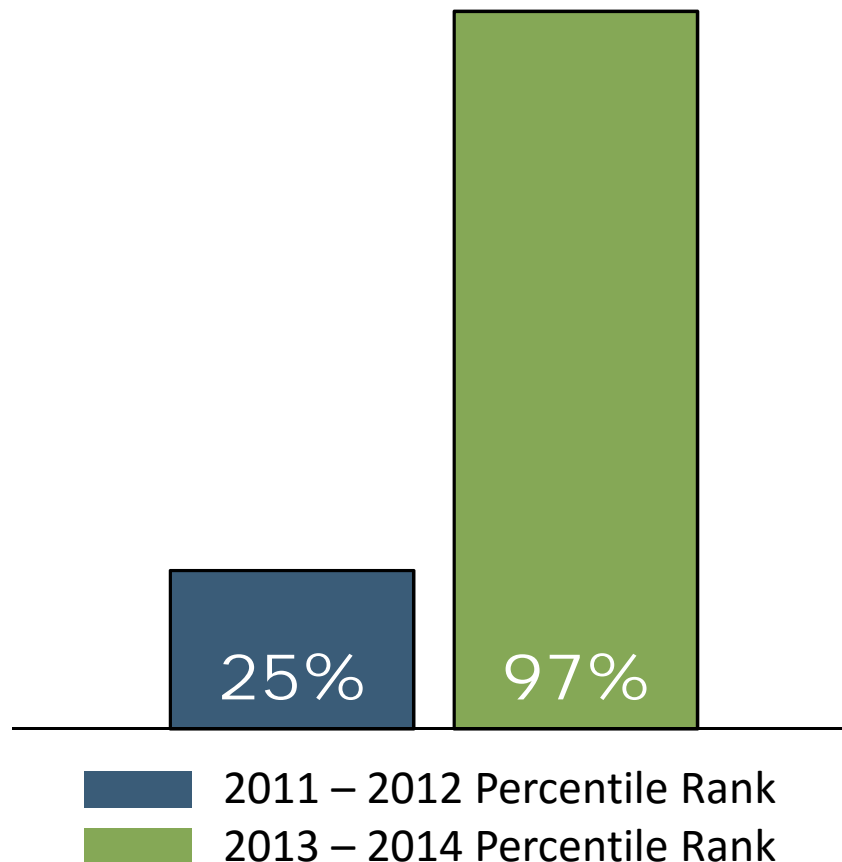




# Post-Intervention Results

## Patient Satisfaction

Press Ganey – Patient Satisfaction  
*“Likelihood to Recommend”*



“The work towards improving [Patient Satisfaction] began in earnest in 2012, and we’ve seen steady increases... we’ve been working on RC while Press Ganey Scores have climbed.”

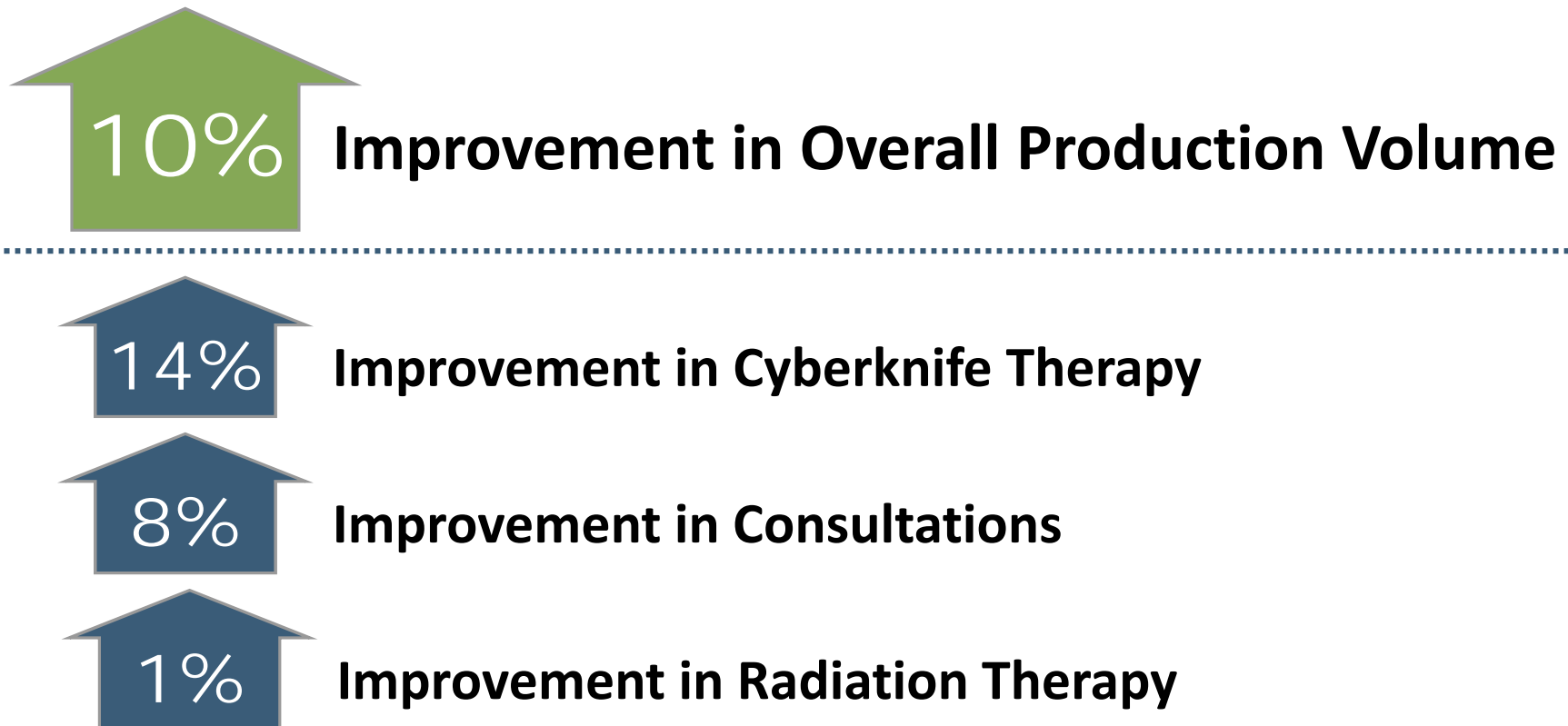
- Senior Consultant, Academic Medical Center



# Post-Intervention Results

## Production Volume

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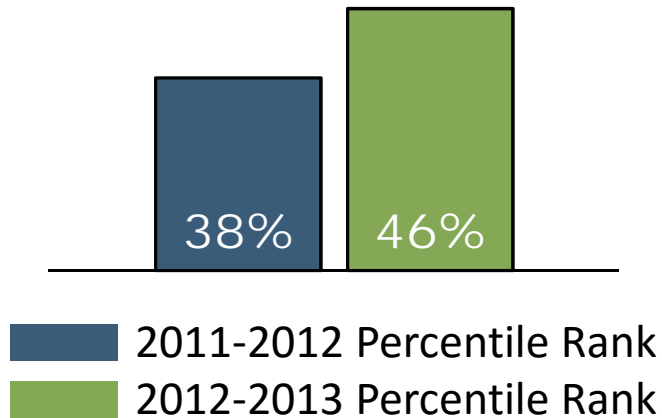
Production volumes have risen across the Radiation Oncology Unit and measurable improvements were made in Cyberknife Therapy, Consultations, and Radiation Therapy.



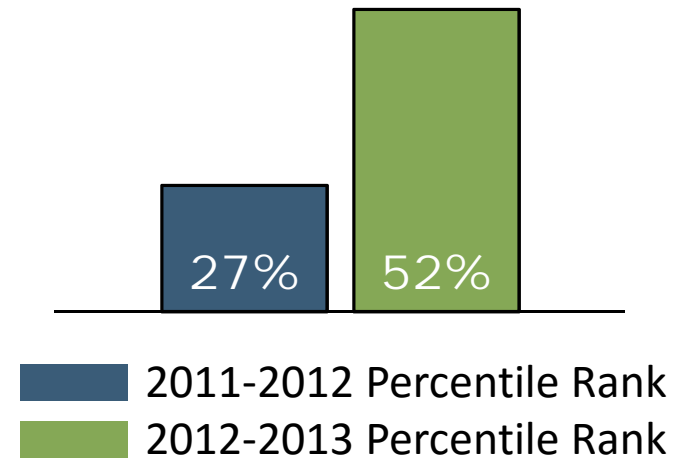
# Post-Intervention Results

## Employee Engagement

Overall Engagement



“My manager is open and responsive to staff input”



“This shift represented behavior changes on the part of managers to engage staff more in problem solving, and communications. Still a long way to go, but it was nice to see this improvement.”

- Senior Consultant, Academic Medical Center



# Next Steps

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- Expand efforts to focus on Quality and Safety.
- Hire a Quality Program Manager to attend to key metrics, processes, behaviors, and errors.
- Introduce Crucial Conversations workshops to attend to skills supporting the behavior of “speaking up”.
- Development of interdisciplinary change team to encourage staff to speak up, address problems as teams, and spread learning in the form of small group and all group communications.
- Introduction of RC as an ongoing framework and metric to track progress.
- Repeat measurement of RC in 6-8 months.