TIP Sheet: Using the Policy and Procedure Audit Tool

Remember that the Policy Audit Tool is more about critical reflection and getting a conversation started, not as much about the score

There is no “perfect” policy

1. **Where do we BEGIN?**
   - Read the rationale for the audit tool questions. Prior to auditing any policy, discuss the rationales at your leadership or policy team to ensure common understanding.
   - Start small – this is a big process, take one small bite of the apple
   - Start with an ‘easy’ or less charged policy
   - Be mindful of defensiveness around a policy based on your own biases and values, including if you were involved in writing the policy you will be analyzing
   - Tool is flexible and not all questions may apply; the point is to be engaged in critical reflection and intentionally make space in our processes to examine the impact of policies
   - If there are several stakeholders impacted by a policy, consider using a separate tool for each stakeholder
   - Investigate the origin of the policy/ who developed it and identify its purpose as much as you’re able
   - Consider identifying the TIS principles reflected in this policy and/or the tensions the policy is seeking to address (i.e. trauma understanding vs. accountability).
   - You may want to divide the policy audit process into several steps. For example, in one meeting a team can audit the policy and identify areas of the policy to change. A next step could be for 1-2 individuals to wordsmith the edits to bring back to the group for review.

2. **WHEN should I use the audit tool?**
   - Ideally, you can use the tool during different phases of the policy setting process (conceptualization, implementation, etc.)
   - Consider how you can incorporate the tool into a standard/regular business process (i.e. scheduling a set time and place for the tool to be used – like once a month during administrative meetings)

3. **When considering WHO should be part of the conversation around policy and trauma informed systems, consider:**
   - There are different stakeholders to each policy – staff, consumers, community
   - Who is the group of people that this policy affects the most?
   - If it is not feasible for affected community to provide feedback, consider creating a feedback loop with advocates.
• In some communities, specific people (like elders/trusted members of the community) or groups of people need to be part of the conversation for there to be trust and representation (intentional partnership with a valued and respected member of the community)

4. **When thinking about GATHERING FEEDBACK/INPUT around a policy consider:**
   • If you cannot gather feedback before a policy is implemented, then consider creating a feedback loop afterwards (or getting feedback both before and after)
   • Include the people who are on the receiver end of a system to play a role of active contribution (or co-designers) in the creation of solutions and alternatives