

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

