



Trauma Informed Care Review Board: Policies and Procedures

The table below is a tool to help review your policies and procedures through trauma informed care with an emphasis on centering relationship. This review process aims to promote organizational policies that contribute to an environment able to mitigate re-traumatization. It should be noted that trauma informed care is not a linear guide. It moves at the speed of trust through relationships built between all parties.

Trauma informed care principles can be used as considerations for reviewing how organizational policies and procedures help or hinder trauma activation. SAMHSA currently uses six principles, with newer principles related to peer support and gender, historical, and gender responsiveness. However, for implementation purposes, Yatchmenoff and colleagues (2017) recommend collapsing the principles of TIC into three major domains (safety, power, and self-worth) which are utilized in this review. Values for centering relationships are also included in this review process.

While there are many ways to use this assessment tool, the approach we have found to be both thorough and time efficient is for your reviewing team to score the policy of interest individually and then as a group. The aim of this review process is to gain insight of what policies might be doing well regarding TI principles and relationship-centering and areas for improvement. Therefore, we recommend that your reviewing team consist of staff, people you serve, and less represented identities. We also recommend allotting at least ten minutes to discussion of the scores as a means to come to a score consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, we recommend deferring to how the policy might hinder relationships and TI principles in order to move the discussion to strategic planning. Last, because this review process requires dialogue, it may be difficult for feedback about the policy to be provided anonymously. We recommend reviewing the ["Hosting a Meeting Using Principles of Trauma Informed Care"](#) tip sheet to foster a trauma informed space.

TIC Policy Review Form

The following is a process for reviewing policies, practices, and procedures.

Instructions:

1. *Select a policy or procedure you would like to review. We recommend summarizing the policy or procedure with the reviewing team and providing everyone with a copy of the policy. For those less familiar with the policy, offer scenarios or examples of how the policy or procedure might influence them. (Ex: The intake procedure guides how new clients are enrolled.)*
2. *Individually, review the questions using the TIC Policy Review Form. Consider if this policy or procedure promotes or hinders trauma informed values and why. Select yes or no per question. This process can be done prior to convening or during the meeting.*
3. *As a group, review your answers as a group and discuss which questions were answered differently. If consensus cannot be reached, defer to a democratic majority vote. If individuals answered the questions before the meeting, facilitators can consolidate the data and review discrepancies as a group. If individuals answered the questions during the meeting, facilitators can consolidate the data and review discrepancies with the group.*
4. *If your policy or procedure you are reviewing does not uphold the principles of TIC, discuss as a group how the policy or procedure can be reformed for both people served and the workforce. We recommend focusing on action items that are attainable and determining who and what is needed to reach the action items.*

Do you have any personal biases related to this policy?

(e.g., you wrote the policy, it only impacts your program/site, it has directly impacted you, etc.)

Yes

No

Any comments:

What identities or life experiences are you utilizing in this review that you would like to share?
(e.g., parent, teacher, Spanish language speaker, etc.)

Does this policy promote or hinder PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY for...
(consider physical safety, trustworthiness, choice, transparency, predictability, and clear/consistent boundaries.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither
Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY for STAFF:

Any comments about PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY for PARTNER AGENCIES:

Does this policy promote or hinder TRANSPARENCY for...

(consider if organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintain trust with clients and family, among staff and others involved in the organization.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither
Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about TRANSPARENCY for STAFF:

Any comments about TRANSPARENCY for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about TRANSPARENCY for PARTNER AGENCIES:

Does this policy promote or hinder IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS for...

(consider if this organization demonstrates that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision making. Efforts are made to foster and support healthy authentic relationships.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither
Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS for STAFF:

Any comments about IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS for PARTNER AGENCIES:

Does this policy promote or hinder COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF POWER for...
(consider if this policy/procedure supports making decisions and sharing power with those impacted.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither
Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF POWER for STAFF:

Any comments about COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF POWER for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF POWER for PARTNER AGENCIES:

Does this policy promote or hinder CHOICE for...
(consider if those impacted by this policy/procedure are informed and have choices.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither
Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about CHOICE for STAFF:

Any comments about CHOICE for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about CHOICE for PARTNER AGENCIES:

Does this policy promote or hinder BELONGING including CULTURALLY and LINGUISTICALLY SUSTAINING practices for...

(consider if organizational operations create a sense that you are accepted and part of the environment. This is achieved through inclusive practices that are culturally and linguistically sustaining as well as other aspects of an environment.)

	Promotes	Hinders	Neither

Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service Recipients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments about BELONGING including CULTURALLY and LINGUISTICALLY SUSTAINING practices for STAFF:

Any comments about BELONGING including CULTURALLY and LINGUISTICALLY SUSTAINING practices for SERVICE RECIPIENTS:

Any comments about BELONGING including CULTURALLY and LINGUISTICALLY SUSTAINING practices for PARTNER AGENCIES:

The purpose and expectations of this policy/procedure are clear.

Yes

No

Any comments about the clarity of this policy/procedure:

Do you have any other recommendations not already stated above?

Please select one:

- I would pass this policy as is.
- I would pass this policy with edits.
- I would not pass this policy.

TERMS:

Trauma Informed Care: “Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.”

Personal Biases: To have personal biases is to be human. We all hold our own subjective world views and are influenced and shaped by our experiences, beliefs, values, education, family, friends, peers and others.

Promotes: Will bring more of something, enhance, and create or foster development.

Hinders: Will decrease something, minimize, or limit.

Neither: It does not hinder or promote a value/principle.

Emotional and Physical Safety: Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety. Understanding safety as defined by those served is a high priority.

Transparency: Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintain trust with clients and family, among staff and others involved in the organization.

Importance of Relationships: Organization demonstrates that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision making. Efforts are made to foster and support healthy authentic relationships.

Power Imbalances: Importance is placed on partnering and the leveling of power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff in all areas

Choice: Those impacted are informed and have choices.

Collaboration: Making decisions and sharing power with those impacted.

Belonging: A sense that you are accepted and part of the environment. This is achieved through inclusive practices that are culturally and linguistically sustaining as well as other aspects of an environment.

Example of a procedure review with recommended actions

Bumble Run (a hypothetical organization) has been implementing TIC for the past two years. They currently have a small TIC workgroup that consists of two staff members, one manager from another department, and two parents of their afterschool program. They are reviewing the check-in procedure students and educational staff use for their preschool afterschool program.

First, one staff member (who is an educational staff member who regularly takes part in the check-in process) reviews the procedure with the team until all participants of the workgroup report they understand the check-in procedure and its purpose.

Check-in Procedure:

1. The student arrives at the building and walks into their classroom
2. The front desk worker writes down the time the student arrived
3. The staff is on standby for when the student arrives
4. Time for the session begins when student and assigned staff member are together

Second, each staff member on their own uses the policy and procedure review chart, checking “yes” or “no” and adding comments to certain boxes they feel strongly about. Below is an example of one of the rows:

Safety (Parent #1)	Does this policy promote or hinder PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY of service recipients?	Yes	No	Does this policy promote or hinder PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY of staff?	Yes	No
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Safety (Staff #1)	Does this policy promote or hinder PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY of service recipients?	Yes	No	Does this policy promote or hinder PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL SAFETY of staff?	Yes	No
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Third, one person from the TIC workgroup leads the group discussion on their responses. The group recognizes that they did not unanimously agree on if this policy promoted safety of those served. Time was dedicated to listening to concerns and benefits of this procedure. Parent #1 expressed concern that children are expected to know where their classroom is and that it is assumed they will go there. They expressed concerns that some students might leave the building or get lost. Staff #1 expressed that they had initially said “yes” because they valued children autonomy and trusting students to go to the correct location, but acknowledged that they have had to take special consideration for “runaways”. The person leading the discussion thanked them both for their perspectives. They noted that labeling children “runaways” can be misleading, diverting the issue to the children rather than the procedure, especially children with a trauma history who might wander as a coping skill or not feel safe entering the classroom on their own.

Fourth, the team discussed how the procedure could be improved to address parent #1 concerns and other concerns that came up during their conversation while balancing student growth and autonomy. After holding space for multiple ideas and suggestions, the workgroup tentatively revised the procedure with plans to pilot the changes with the rest of educational staff and regroup with feedback in one month. They also agreed to add an addition to the student feedback process to include assessing physical or emotional barriers that might prevent students from going to their classroom on their own. The new procedure is as follows:

Check-in Procedure:

1. The front desk worker awaits student arrivals
2. The student arrives at the building
3. The front desk worker greets the student and asks the student to sign-in next to the time the student arrived. (The student can sign in with a sticker or with a marker to encourage students to connect with the front desk worker)
4. A staff member is on standby at the front desk to assist students to go to their classroom as needed
5. Time for the session begins when student and assigned staff member are together