



PRACTICE AUDIT

Trauma-Informed Organizational Audit

Thirty questions that ask whether the practice is built in, or just being carried

ORGANIZATIONAL TOOL

30 ITEMS

90 MINUTES

REUSABLE

HOW TO USE THIS AUDIT

Score the organization, not the people in it

This audit asks one question in thirty different ways: is trauma-informed practice built into how this organization runs, or is it happening because particular people keep choosing to make it happen? Those two look identical from the outside and behave completely differently when someone leaves.

Complete it as a group rather than alone, with direct-service staff in the room. The people who hold the front door see things leadership does not. Allow ninety minutes, and expect to disagree; the disagreements are the useful part.

The scale

NOT YET	We have not addressed this.
INFORMAL	It happens when individual staff choose to make it happen.
WRITTEN	It is in policy, and staff could find it.
PRACTICED	It is in policy, and we could show you it happening this week.

The one rule that makes this worth doing

Every item scored Informal is a finding, not a middle mark. It means the practice depends on an individual remembering, and it will leave the organization the day that person does. Informal and Not Yet are counted together when you total the audit on the last page.

SCORING HONESTLY

Bring evidence to the Practiced column. If nobody can name where a policy lives or show it operating in the past month, the honest score is Written.

Safety, trust, and peer support

Mark one column per row. Informal counts as a gap.

NOT YET INFORMAL WRITTEN PRACTICED

Safety *Physical and emotional*

Waiting and meeting spaces let a person see the exit and choose where to sit	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff are trained to notice signs of distress, not only to manage disruption	☐	☐	☐	☐
People are told what will happen next before it happens	☐	☐	☐	☐
Raising a concern is safe and does not affect the service someone receives	☐	☐	☐	☐

Trustworthiness and Transparency *Decisions people can follow*

Decisions affecting a person are explained in the language they use	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rules and eligibility are written down and applied consistently	☐	☐	☐	☐
We say what we will do with information before we collect it	☐	☐	☐	☐
When we get something wrong, we say so and say what changes	☐	☐	☐	☐

Peer Support *Lived experience inside the work*

People with lived experience are employed, not only consulted	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participants have access to others who have been through it	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer roles carry real authority, pay, and progression	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participant feedback reaches decision-makers without being filtered	☐	☐	☐	☐

Collaboration, choice, and context

Mark one column per row. Informal counts as a gap.

NOT YET INFORMAL WRITTEN PRACTICED

Collaboration and Mutuality <i>Narrowing the power difference</i>				
Participants help set their own goals and plan	☐	☐	☐	☐
The power difference between staff and participant is named openly	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participants are represented where programs are designed and reviewed	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff at every level shape how practice changes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empowerment, Voice, and Choice <i>Real options, not the appearance</i>				
People are offered genuine options, including the option to decline	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strengths are recorded alongside needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
A person can change their mind without penalty	☐	☐	☐	☐
We ask what someone wants, not only what we think they need	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural, Historical, and Gender Context <i>Who we are to this community</i>				
Services are available in the languages people actually speak	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff composition reflects the community served	☐	☐	☐	☐
We acknowledge where institutions like ours have caused harm	☐	☐	☐	☐
Culture, gender, and identity shape how services are offered	☐	☐	☐	☐

Staff safety and secondary traumatic stress

If staff safety rests on individuals being good at de-escalation, the system has already failed.

CLARITY	Staff know what they may do in an escalation	☐	☐	☐	☐
PERMISSION	Staff may step back or end an interaction	☐	☐	☐	☐
BACKUP	Backup is named in advance and reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐
AFTER	Post-incident support sits in policy	☐	☐	☐	☐
SUPERVISION	Supervision addresses the weight of the work	☐	☐	☐	☐
WORKLOAD	Caseload is reviewed as a safety matter	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do this before you score anything

Call your own intake line. Sit in your own waiting area. Read your own form as though it were being asked of you. Most organizations find two or three things here that matter more than any training they could buy.

The phone call

How many steps before a human answers? What does the hold message say?

WHAT YOU FOUND

The arrival

What is the first thing a person sees? Can they tell where to go?

WHAT YOU FOUND

The wait

Can they see the exit? Is there privacy, water, a bathroom, something for a child?

WHAT YOU FOUND

The form

What is the first question asked? At what point does it ask about the worst day?

WHAT YOU FOUND

The conversation

Who else can hear it? What gets explained before it begins?

WHAT YOU FOUND

The exit

Does the person leave knowing what happens next, and who to call?

WHAT YOU FOUND

Count it, then change three things

NOT YET _____	INFORMAL _____	WRITTEN _____	PRACTICED _____
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How to read the total

Thirty items in total: twenty-four principles and six on staff safety. Add Not Yet and Informal together. That number is how much of your trauma-informed practice would survive a round of turnover, and it is usually larger than leadership expects and smaller than frontline staff fear.

Three things to change this quarter

Choose from the Informal rows first. They cost least to fix and carry the most risk.

WHAT CHANGES	FROM INFORMAL TO	OWNER	BY WHEN

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