Environmental Scan Process Guide

Decide who will conduct the environmental scan. It is recommended to conduct the environmental scan as a team, rather than making it the responsibility of a single person; in this way, the work is manageable and multiple perspectives are included. In a large or complex physical space, it may make sense to divide the work among the team; try to have at least two people conducting each part of the review together. It can beneficial when the people reviewing the space are familiar with the environment, and people who are less familiar with the environment may notice things that others would not. We highly recommend finding ways to include consumers and/or persons with lived experiences as consumers in similar systems, as well as staff at multiple levels of the organization (e.g. direct service staff, front-desk staff, supervisors, support staff.) Decide beforehand if the members of the team will review the spaces independently and compare notes after the review, or if they will be working together during the walkthrough. Before the doing the scan, decide who be in charge of receiving and compiling the results of the scan, what will be done with the results, and on what timeline.

Make sure there is enough time to conduct a thorough review. Have materials ready. Based on the size and complexity of the space, set aside enough time that the review does not feel rushed. The time set aside for the review should include time to review the principles or trauma-informed care as a team, time for a thorough walkthrough of the space, and time to debrief as a team afterwards. Reviews of common spaces such as break rooms or lobbies should be conducted at low-traffic times, so that the process is not disruptive to those who are using the space. All members of the review team should have writing materials, a clipboard, and a checklist, if one is being used.

Before beginning the review, take time as a team to consider the key principles of a trauma-informed approach.

1. Safety – ensure the physical and emotional safety of clients and staff

2. Trustworthiness and Transparency – provide clear information about what the client may expect in the program, ensure consistency in practice and maintain boundaries

3. Peer Support – provide peer support from persons with lived experiences of trauma to establish safety and hope and build trust

4. Collaboration and Mutuality – maximize collaboration and the sharing of power with consumers to level the differences between staff and clients

5. Empowerment, Voice and Control – empower clients and staff to have a voice, share in decision making and goal setting to cultivate self-advocacy

6. Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues – move past cultural stereotypes and biases, offer gender- and culturally-responsive services and recognize and address historical trauma

Start from the beginning, take your time and use *all* of your senses. Enter the space in the same way that a person receiving services for the first time might do. How does it *feel* to walk into the building? What do you notice first? What sights, sounds, and smells catch your attention? What are your reactions to your experience? Do you feel welcome? Comfortable? Safe?

Walk through the whole building, and visit every area possible. When feasible, walk through the space in the same way someone might do if they were visiting the building for services. You'll want to continue giving the same attention as when you first came in, remembering that someone who has experienced trauma and/or is entering the space for the first time may be especially vigilant and aware of details that would not stand out to someone who was familiar and comfortable in the space. Notice if you start to get tired or become distracted, as this will impact your ability to review the space thoroughly. Do something that will help you re-focus, such as taking a stretch or breathing break. (Fatigue is another reason to divide the work up with a team; if no one on the team gets too tired, the review will be more thorough and thoughtful)

To notice:
- Are there areas you find especially welcoming? Reflective of cultural diversity? Calming?
- Are there areas in need of repair or other attention?
- Do you see any safety concerns?
- Are there places that might be triggering if you were a survivor of trauma?
- Are the signs clear?
- Is the art work inspiring? Empowering? Meaningful?
- Is there adequate space and privacy for staff and staff meetings/consultations? For relaxing and/or taking a break? For playing music or games?
- Is there adequate space and privacy for clients to meet privately with staff? For relaxing and/or taking a break? For playing music or games? For spending time with other clients/residents?
- Reflecting on the 6 principles, what spaces seem sensitive to trauma and which ones might need improvements?
- If you could change only one or two things about the space or the building set up, what would they be?

Debrief and collect results of the scan. Take some time to debrief as a team about what you found, as well as what it was like to do the walkthrough. One person should receive the checklists from all team members, and compile the results into a single document. This document should be shared with the organization's Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup so it can be used to inform their work-planning process. It is recommended that the results of the environmental scan, and any changes that result from the scan, be publicized to staff, consumers, and anyone who will be impacted by the changes.