

# Using the Results of Your Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment



Congratulations for taking the Trauma-informed Organizational (TIO) Assessment. You've received your results, and hopefully have taken some time to digest the report. But you may be asking, now what? This guide gives you some ideas for how to use the assessment results and move your organization forward. You are not bound to these suggestions, so feel free to

explore other options too (including joining the cohorts and coaching sessions)! Utilize the six principles of trauma-informed approaches: create safe spaces to talk about ideas, progress, setbacks, and cultural, historical and gender issues; listen deeply without judgement; invite and consider multiple perspectives, and trust and empower staff.



## Four Key Elements

- 1 Realizes the impact of trauma
- 2 Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma
- 3 Responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices
- 4 Resists re-traumatization

## The Principles Defined

**Safety:** Throughout the organization, staff, and the people they serve, whether children or adults, feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety, as defined by those served.

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

**Peer Support:** Individuals with lived experiences of trauma, or in the case of children, this may be family members of children who have experienced traumatic events and are key caregivers in their recovery and share and utilize their stories to promote recovery and healing.

**Collaboration & Mutuality:** Leveling the power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff across all roles and demonstrating that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making.

**Empowerment, Voice & Choice:** Operations, workforce development, and services are organized to foster empowerment for staff and clients alike. Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting to determine the plan of action they need to heal and move forward. Staff are facilitators of recovery rather than controllers of recovery. Staff are empowered to do their work as well as possible by adequate organizational support. This is a parallel process as staff need to feel safe, as much as the people receiving service.

**Cultural, Historical & Gender issues:** The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases; offers gender-responsive services; leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections; incorporates policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic, and cultural needs of individuals served; and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

**Administrative Support & Policies:** Organizations understand the importance of power differentials and ways in which clients and staff, which historically have been diminished in voice and choice, are often recipients of coercive treatment and policies. Administrative support and policies are grounded in the principles of TIC and are examined regularly and revised as needed.

# Share the Results

Make the report available to all staff and encourage them to read it carefully and thoughtfully. Remind staff that low scores do not represent failure. They are simply where you are right now, and they point to areas you may want to prioritize.

## Consider Throwing a Data Party

Data parties are fun occasions that bring people together to explore results, ask questions, and make meaning of data. Set up a time for staff to gather and discuss the results. You might set up a World Café to get ideas flowing. Questions you could ask include:

- How did you react to the results?
- Were any results surprising?
- Were any results expected or unsurprising?
- What else about the data is noticeable to you?
- What are we doing well?
- What do we need and or want to improve upon?



Once you have gathered staff input, end your data party by offering a summary of themes or synthesis. Be sure to seek consensus from the group on the summarized understandings.

## Form a Transformation Workgroup

Invite interested staff to form a workgroup that will be empowered to work on organizational transformation during work hours and who will communicate with both staff and leadership. This group will take a deep dive into the report and do the heavy lifting for the organization, and members should be empowered to make recommendations and/or decisions. They will be point people for other staff and central to the success of your organization becoming more trauma-informed.

## Prioritize and Target Areas for Improvement

Depending on the size of your organization, either your whole staff or your transformation workgroup would take this step. Using participatory methods like voting (raise hand, dot voting, secret ballot, etc.), ask your staff what they feel are the 3-5 most important areas that need improvement in the short term. Remember, organizational change takes time, so don't try to do everything at once.

Think about the six principles and how they impact your organizational culture, climate, and operations. You might organize them using a chart like this example, courtesy of Trauma Transformed:

Criteria	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	High
If we improved [this area], how much do you think it would benefit your work?		-Collaboration and Mutuality - Empowerment, Voice and Choice	-Safety -Peer Support	- Trust and Transparency - Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Think about how much time each area might take. Your priority areas may also be impacted by your own internal capacity, so bite off the pieces you are confident you can chew at this time. Any step forward is progress! For instance, reviewing policies and procedures and developing more trauma-informed ways to operate may be a task that takes months and requires many levels of review, perhaps even board approval in some instances. Chart out the process and time it would take to move the needle on each area of focus.

### Think about where you have control

It might be useful to sort information into a “control” chart. The control chart lists factors into where the workgroup has control, influence, and where they can express concern (but don’t have control/influence). This can help the workgroup prioritize and strategize.

Example:



## Make a Calendar and Timeline

Once you’ve identified your top areas of focus, make a detailed list of tasks, who will be responsible for completing the tasks, due dates, and target completion. This will help keep people focused and accountable. The worksheets, courtesy of Trauma Transformed, are on our website. They are provided to support your use of the TIO Assessment Report and your organizational transformation work. You can use them as they are or use them as models and create your own.

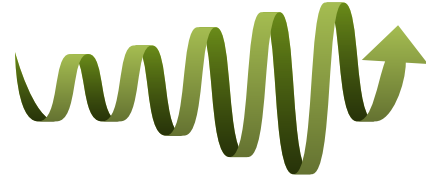
## Use Process Evaluation Methods

The worksheets on the website provide sample frameworks that can help you reflect on your actions and strategies and if you’ve achieved the desired outcomes or not. It is important to monitor progress, and make it a routine to ask, “How are we doing?” You want to identify barriers and challenges as you go along, and also note what is working well. Build on your strengths.



## Things to Keep in Mind

- Make a plan, one that's clear but not set-in stone. It's ok to adjust course. Stay open to change. Remain flexible. Events may happen that cause you to shift focus areas and priorities. That's ok.
- Reflect on progress and setbacks. Think of organization change like a forward moving spiral. You will have ups and downs. That's natural.
- If something doesn't work, figure out what happened, adjust and try again, or try something else.
- As you make progress on your priority areas, revisit the initial report, and decide what else you can work on. You are in a cycle of change, so you want to feed in new tasks of focus as you complete others.
- Set realistic goals and time frames. Most change does not happen overnight.



- Communicate progress and changes on a regular basis. Keep lines of communication open in all directions. This communication might include decisions you are still weighing and the associated tradeoffs, or things you have decided against and the reasons why. Often it is helpful for those who are not in the workgroup to see that conversations are still happening even though visible outcomes are not seen.



- Talk through conflict. Listen to each other with care. If you are in the cohorts, use the Circle process for effective group communication, decision-making, and conflict transformation.
- Change can be stressful. Build in time for self-care, breathing, stretching, relaxation, and self-regulation. Take breaks when you need to. If you're burning out on the work, see if others could step in. Once people see change, they may be more willing to join the work group.
- Celebrate successes! Create a date a year from now when you'll gather staff together and reflect on where you were and where you are now. Then, talk about where you want to go next.

