Policy Analysis Exercise

Ultimately, we’re asking ourselves:

Does this policy bring us into greater or lesser alignment with the 7 Operating Principles?

There are a number of smaller questions to ask along the way. For each of your program’s Policies & Procedures ask:

**1) Which of the 7 Operating Principles are implicated here?**

* Does this policy & procedure **impact our alignment** with Operating Principle #\_\_?
* Does Operating Policy # \_\_ **call us to think differently** about this policy/procedure?

Some overarching questions to consider as you review each policy [Note: Use the Tracking Sheet attached to make notes as you review. Which policies need work?]

**2) Is it person-centred & holistic?** (Principles 1 & 3)

* What is the client’s perspective on this policy? How does it propose to treat them? How does it affect them/make them feel? Ask them!

[Note: it’s a useful exercise to ask yourselves these questions as a staff team, but even more illuminating to consult clients in answering this for themselves. See Section 3.8].

* Does this policy put the client or program at the centre? Does it consider the clients’ or staff as the priority/focus?
* Does this policy take a trauma-informed approach? Does it demonstrate an understanding of traumatic experience and take steps to ensure that traumatic memories are not (re)triggered for people? [See tool on Trauma-Informed Practice]
* Does this policy demonstrate sensitivity to different cultures? Does it take into account people who come from various backgrounds, language groups, and/or traditions?
* Does this policy recognize clients as dignified human beings? Does it demonstrate an understanding of people as having fundamental value and worthiness, regardless of their circumstances? Does it respect their rights?
* Does it take a non-judgemental stance – are there any places in the policy where stigma is reinforced? Are there any places where disapproving language or negative assumptions about clients are perpetuated?
* Take this opportunity to critically examine the restriction policies that you do have: do they make client safety the main priority? Do any policies restrict shelter access based on discriminatory grounds? Like population/demographics? On Substance use? Or Mental Health issues?

**3) Is it housing focused and oriented to helping people move beyond shelter?** (Principles 2 & 5)

* Does it respect a client’s right to make choices about their own lives?
* Does it empower them to be part of their own solutions to address homelessness?
* Does this policy take a ‘one size fits all’ approach or is it flexible to client needs?
* Does this policy encourage support or hinder the **building of rapport** between clients and their key/case workers? Does it unnecessarily interrupt the case work relationship? Does it set good boundaries?
* Does it misuse client’s time and energy by re-directing them to multiple people or does it take a coordinated, **‘no-wrong-door’** approach?
* Does it make **housing connections** an intentional, timeline-driven, program-wide priority?

**4) Is it based on best practice?** (Principles 4, 6, & 7)

* What are **our reasons** for having this policy? Is it just something we’ve always done? Does it still make sense? Does it **encourage good outcomes** for our clients?
* How are **other shelter/programs** are responding to this issue? Is there anything we can learn from them? Is there any research to be done?
* What is the **community’s perspective** on this policy? How do our partners view it? Does it encourage or inhibit **cooperation/coordination** with partners and other professionals?

## Policy Analysis Tracking Sheet

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Topic/Title | Which Principle(s)? | Person-Centred? | Housing-focused? | Best Practice? | **Needs Work?** | Notes |
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| **Policies Checklist – Got these?** | Yes, looks good! | Yes, but it might be out of date/line. Let’s review… | No! We need to draft something |
| Do you have an appropriate policy on **accepting people who are transgender**? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a policy that is in line with The Salvation Army’s standards on **accessibility and customer service?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have a section in your policy manual on appropriate **Spiritual & Religious Care**? Do the policies and procedures there support people in **accessing the spiritual and religious care of their choosing?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have a **behavior-based policy** on admission, restriction? |  |  |  |
| Do you have behaviour-based rules, which ensure safety but don’t undermine dignity? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a policy on **use of naloxone by staff which includes adequate training?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have policies that adopt the **language of Housing First,** framing housing as a right, and an important first step toward stability, rather than something to be earned? |  |  |  |
| Do you havepolicies to **protect staff as they accompany clients out into the community?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have a policy on **‘warm transfers’?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have policies regarding **timelines for connecting clients to one-on-one supports after admission?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have **trauma-informed policies?** |  |  |  |
| Do you have procedures for **progressive engagement** with initially reluctant clients? |  |  |  |