

Welcome, everybody, to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar, in partnership with the Tribal Judicial Institute at the University of North Dakota, Processes to Support Policy Development and Implementation. This webinar is the second of a three-part series. Presenting today's webinar is Michelle Rivard Parks. And my name is Kevin Poleyumptewa.

Before we begin the presentation, there are some items I need to go over. This project was supported by a grant awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.

Let's try our first poll question. This is a simple question to find out who is joining us today. The question is, which of the following best describes your role? Your choices are victim service provider, judge or attorney, law enforcement, CAC, social worker, mental health advocate, or other. As you can see from the results here, we have 62% of you are victim service providers. We got 3% either judge or an attorney, 12% of law enforcement, 6% CAC, child advocates, and 18% other.

So I'd like to welcome you, again, to the second of a three-part webinar series. I am pleased to introduce you to our presenter, Michelle Rivard Parks. She is the associate director at the Tribal Judicial Institute of the University of North Dakota School of Law. She serves in many roles in promoting tribal justice. With that, Michelle, I'll turn the time over to you.

Good afternoon, everyone. And welcome to today's webinar. As Kevin has discussed already, this is the second webinar in a series of a three-part series of webinars that is designed to provide an overview and some instruction and information relative to policy development for your respective programs.

I'm going to go over today's learning objectives. And before I do that, I just also want to say thank you for joining us on today's webinar. I know there's a lot going on in our world right now. And so your taking the time out of your day to move forward with your programs and the services that you all provide to victims is definitely to be commended. So thank you for being with us today.

For today's webinar, we want to hopefully achieve a few different learning objectives. First, we're going to move through and describe a little bit on policy development procedures. We're also going to discuss some of the methods that can be used to organize your thoughts and ideas to support policy development. And finally, we're going to talk a little bit about the importance of style in writing your policies and procedures. And we'll give you some tips and tools relative to writing your policies.

And we have another poll question. Which do you believe is the most important goal of establishing policies and procedures? Educate program personnel, clarify roles and responsibilities, promote understanding of processes and delivering of services, all seem equally important. As you can see from the results, we have 8% answered clarify roles and responsibilities and 92% of you, all seem equally important.

Thank you for responding. And I think that many of you are correct. And all of those responses are correct. There is importance to all of those aspects for policy development. And during our introductory webinar, I know we discussed some of the purpose of policies, as well as the importance of policies for our agencies.

We talked a little bit in that last webinar about how policies can really be used to support strong and consistent and victim-centered provision of services through our respective agencies. We also talked a little bit about how agency policies can interact with other agencies and can help to streamline our collaboration and clarify our roles and responsibilities within that collaborative response. So it all feeds together, really, to promote really a really strong justice system response that is meeting the needs of the victims and the clients that we're serving.

So really, our overall goals of our policies and procedures will be to educate our program personnel about a couple of things. First of all, their larger role within a justice system response to crimes. I think it can be a common issue, where we get really busy in providing the services and performing our day-to-day tasks within our agencies. And it is, I think within that, so busy that we sometimes lose sight of how that impacts the larger justice system response to crime.

So having a well-rounded policy and procedure that provides information to our program personnel on the role that they play in the provision of services, as well as the role that they play in the larger systemic response, is really helpful. And in part, doing that within your policies and procedures will likely involve you referencing some of the applicable laws and codes that apply to victims and that apply to services, and particularly justice system services, that are available to victims.

We also want to make sure that our policies and procedures are helping to clarify agency roles and responsibilities within a systemic response. So we want to, in that regard, reference any collaborative agreements and promote an understanding of how our respective agencies interact with one another in a more seamless way to make sure that we're, number one, working well together and sharing information as best we can, while being also respectful of some of the confidentiality laws and rules that may come into play. But also making sure that we're not having cracks within our larger justice system response, where information is being lost, or perhaps where we're maybe even inadvertently causing further trauma or hardships for victims.

We also want to make sure that we're promoting an understanding for our personnel regarding their specific roles

and responsibilities and what their individual process is for delivery of services. And when we get to this portion of our policies and procedures, we really want to make sure that everyone working within our agencies is familiar with what the mission and purpose of our agency is, what it is we're trying to achieve, what our role and responsibility is as an agency within the delivery of services to victims. And then we also want to make sure that our personnel is really clear on how they go about delivering services to victims, whether those be direct services, whether it be linking our clients to counseling or other services that might be beneficial to their healing and to the well-being, et cetera.

So the idea here is to promote consistency in how we're delivering services and to be victim-centered in how we're delivering those services. And one of the best ways that we can achieve that consistent and victim-centered response is by having really clear policies that we can utilize to orient our personnel to our justice system and to their role within the justice system, as well as their role within the agency.

So we just want to take a moment here, too, to also review a little bit of the terminology that we went through in our introductory webinar. It's very common, I think, as many of us have worked within the justice system for years, that we will utilize terms, and sometimes we forget to revisit what those terms really mean. And sometimes we forget to make sure that new employees or personnel who are interacting and engaging with victims are also really clear on what these terms mean.

So what we mean by victim-centered is really that our emphasis is on developing policies and providing services in a way that we are focusing on the needs and concerns of victims. And our ultimate goal in doing that is to ensure, that as we deliver services, that we are being compassionate in how we deliver those services, and that we're also aware of victims' rights throughout the justice system process.

And again, that's another area just to give a little bit of thought to. Sometimes as we get into our daily process of doing our jobs and fulfilling our responsibilities as justice system providers, especially in situations where we are advancing maybe for legal people, where we're advancing criminal cases, we get engaged in really trying to move forward a case for adjudication, for example. And it's really important that as we do that, we're always mindful that victims have rights and that the whole point of really moving these cases through and promoting offender accountability is really to achieve a measure of healing and safety for the victims.

So as we're developing agency policies, as we're developing our process for clarifying our roles and responsibilities within a larger systemic process, we always want to make sure that we are mindful that we're really here to serve the needs and concerns of victims. And that really is what victim-centered policy should do.

When we develop our policies, we should do so in a way that we are placing the crime victim's priorities needs and interests at the center of the work that we're doing. We also want to make sure that we're providing assistance to

clients in a nonjudgmental fashion. We want to make sure that our policies emphasize client self-determination and autonomy.

So one of the things that we have learned, certainly in cases where we're working with victims of crime, and particularly in those arenas where we have the types of programs where power and control is at the forefront, such as domestic violence or sexual assault or family violence cases, for a lot of the victims in those cases, there has been a process of an offender kind of removing the self-determination aspect to that victim and taking away a lot of elements of control within their life. And as justice system professionals, whether that be advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, we want to make sure that we are not exacerbating that issue and causing further harm to the victims that we're serving. Wherever possible, emphasizing and reinforcing client self-determination is really important.

We also want to make sure, though, that in that self-determination, we understand our role is really to provide that assistance to victims in a way that we're educating and informing them of what their options are and that we are helping them to make informed choices as they move through their journey towards healing. We also, very importantly, want to make sure that we are working alongside the victim to help restore some of the feelings of safety and security that may have been jeopardized or taken away as they've experienced the trauma associated with the crime that has impacted them.

OK, so with that in mind and kind of now that we're on the same page and back thinking about what the purpose and importance of policy development is, and in particular victim-centered policies, we want to move our discussion into a little bit of talking points on policy development procedures. We kind of know, I think at this point, why it is that we're doing what we're doing. But we also want to talk about what's the process.

We know that we need policies. We know that policies can help to orient new personnel. We know that policies can help to provide clarity on our agency's responsibilities in a systemic response. We know that policies can help to establish clear lines for the delivery of services within our agency. But where do we go from there now that we know that this is an important process?

The first thing, I think, is to make sure that we constantly revisit and keep at the forefront of our mind why these policies are important and what we're trying to achieve through policy development. So again, we're trying to reduce further trauma to the victim. We are trying to provide services in a manner that we are able to engage with the victim and maintain open lines of communication with the victim.

That's really been one of the, I guess, complaints or issues that a lot of victims have expressed over the years as to why they stop reporting crimes to criminal justice system providers, is that once they make a report, they often

feel that they are left out of the process and that their voice is not heard throughout the process. So we want to make sure that our policies are mindful of that concern and that we're continuing communication with the victim as they're needing services or as a case is proceeding through adjudication. And that role may involve collaboration amongst a number of service providers, including advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, and post-adjudication officials.

We also want to make sure that our policies are being really clear on what our roles and responsibilities are within a justice system, and also what they are not. Each of our agencies cannot be all things to all people. So one of the important aspects of policy development is to clarify what your agency is able to do. There may be some funding restrictions that will dictate what your agency is able to do and what not to do. So you want to be mindful of that as you're moving forward with your policy development.

You also want to make sure that your policies are developed in such a way that they help to improve and do not create unnecessary obstacles for collaboration across the cohort of justice system professionals that may need to engage with one another to work towards victim safety and offender accountability. So that collaborative piece is important.

And ultimately, what we're really hoping to achieve through consistent delivery of services as reinforced by policies, is to improve outcomes for victims and to help with the enforcement of victims' rights.

And we have another poll question here. The question is, from the list below, which do you believe is the first step in developing policies and procedures? First answer is identify stakeholders, second is conduct research, third is establish a policy development team, fourth is develop draft policies, and five, seek approval of policies and procedures.

And here are our results. And your answers indicate that 17% believe the first step in developing policies or procedures is to identify stakeholders. And 26% responded to conduct research. 46% responded establish a policy development team. 6% responded with develop draft policies. And 6%, as well, seek approval of policies and procedures. Michelle.

Thank you, Kevin. And it's really interesting as we go through this. It's a little bit of a trick question. We're trying to see how people had their coffee today, I think. But each one of those steps is going to be really important to policy development. The order in which we move forward with those, I think, is going to be equally important. I'm really pleased to see that a number of you responded showing that you recognize the importance and benefit to having a policy development team.

So I want to move forward, and let's talk about this a little bit. Up to this point, we know that policies are important.

We have an understanding of why those are important to reinforcing a victim-centered response. But that's oftentimes where we start to stall out. And we start to then ask, where do we get started? Maybe we don't have a lot of experience writing policy. Maybe we don't feel like we know all of the answers. Maybe we don't know what some of the best practices are. So how do we even get started?

And so we've kind of got this little visual up here for you that kind of overviews, really, what the entire process might look like from a best-practice approach or standpoint. And I think for a lot of you, that policy development team and recognizing that a policy development team is important, is a step in a very good direction.

From my experience-- and I know we didn't go into a ton of my background when we started today's webinar, but I'm actually a former tribal prosecutor. I've spent almost 20 years as a tribal attorney. I've worked on a lot of different policy and code development initiatives.

I will say that very early on in my career, one of the things that often happened is, you know, I was the attorney, so someone would come to me and say, we need a policy. And sometimes those agencies or people that approached me were looking for me to just sit down, draft them up something, give it to them, so that it could be signed off on.

And what I learned over the years is that a lot of the policies that were developed in that way we encountered issues with. Number one, it affected community buy-in and implementation. Number two, it oftentimes led to questions about who had input into the policy along the way. And number three, there were times when there were some things maybe that were left out of the policy.

And part of that was just because, if you're a loan policy developer, you're coming at things from your own perspective. And when you have a team approach, it's really beneficial, because you get an opportunity to hear from others and from others' perspectives on what they feel some of their issues or concerns are.

And what I found in my experience is, when I moved forward to policy development in a team approach, we were able to establish policies that were much more comprehensive, much more user-friendly and beneficial to agency personnel. And they took into consideration what the experiences and situation was for those people who are on the ground and providing services to victims.

From my vantage point, for example, as a prosecutor, I might have thought through things very much from an adjudication standpoint and how do we work with victims for the purpose of adjudication. But what I may not have been considering were some of the safety planning concerns or shelter concerns. I also may not have considered some of the funding restrictions and limitations on direct services or what it might take to effectively communicate with victims as we move cases through the process.

So you start to see, when you think about all of those facets of providing a systemic response, that that team approach can really be helpful to developing a thoughtful and comprehensive policy. And so that policy development team is a good starting point. But then we can even back that up one step further and say, well, how do we identify a team?

And so the next really-- once you know that you want a policy development team, your next task is really going to be identifying some of the key stakeholders that you feel are people in the community or agencies in the community that could lend some information or knowledge to the development of your policy. And we're going to talk about that just in a couple of minutes.

And once you've identified and engaged your stakeholders or those people that you know you would like to be a part of your policy development team, the next step in your policy development is going to be really to assess, what are some of the existing services that are being provided by the agency? Maybe looking at a more larger scope. Or what are some of the services that are being provided in your community that might be of benefit to victims? Maybe conducting some of the research, also, on some of your codes and laws and rules that apply to victim services or adjudication of cases and that type of thing. And we'll talk about each of these a little bit more as we move forward.

Once we've got our policy development team, we've engaged our stakeholders, we've conducted some of that initial review, then we're going to move into drafting the actual policy. So later in today's webinar, we're going to talk about some of the dos and don'ts, maybe, for policy development and some of the key considerations or steps that you can take on getting started with actually writing policy.

And then the step after you've got your draft policy in place, in a final version, you also want to be thinking very early on as to whether there's an approval process that's in place for your policies. And then how you'll move forward with implementing those policies.

On the policy approval and implementation, I always suggest that people really give a little bit of consideration to that very early on. Different tribes and organizations might have a different process in place. We have some advocacy programs, for example, that might be nonprofit status. They may not be tribal agencies, but they may be a nonprofit that is providing services within a tribal jurisdiction.

For those agencies, there may be a board that exists for-- that has to review and approve your policies. So you would want to revisit any of your organizational documents for your agency. See if there is an oversight board for your agency. And then determine whether or not that oversight board or agency needs to review any policies and approve.

If you're a tribal agency organized within the tribe as maybe a governmental form of a service provider, you would also want to be familiar with your policy approval process within your tribe. For some tribes, for example, if a tribal agency wants to enact a formal policy, they may need to go to tribal leadership to review that policy with tribal leadership and have it formally approved. That may have to be done in a resolution form or other authorizing form through your tribal government. So again, that may vary depending upon how your service agency has been developed. So just be mindful of that at the onset, because you don't want to go through the whole process and have all the momentum and have your draft policy ready and then not know how you move forward with the approval of that.

The other thing is is to think about an implementation strategy. So once you get a policy drafted, are you going to orient new personnel on that? Will there be a training on your policy? Will that be an in-house training? Will you want other agencies to be familiar with your policies and procedures? If you are conducting an internal training, would you want to invite other agencies to participate in that? So just giving some of that some thought at the forefront can really be helpful to continuing the momentum once you've got your policy drafted to make sure that it can be timely approved and implemented by your program.

OK, so one of the important aspects of developing a policy development team is identifying key stakeholders. And we just wanted to kind of take a moment here to give you some ideas on who some of the stakeholders might be that could offer input into policies that are being developed by victim services agencies.

And, of course, having input from those within your program or within your agency. So that program or agency personnel is very important. These are the people that are actually carrying out the purpose and vision and mission for your agency. And having them be able to provide input on how they feel that they should be carrying out those duties and responsibilities is important. And it also provides a good opportunity for them to engage early on.

And what we have found, of course, also with policy, or code development to that matter, is that the more input that the key stakeholders have into the development of policy, the more familiar they are with it, and the more likely we are to have a solid foundation for implementation of that policy. So engaging program and agency personnel in the process or as members of your team is important.

Also, making sure that you have the advocates or victim specialists. If those people are within your agency, great. If they are people that are external to your agency, then you might want to roll them in to your discussions. One of the really important aspects and voices that those people can bring to the table, of course, is to help keep your policy development team on track with victim-centeredness.

Also, key justice system personnel. So maybe you have a prosecutor or you have a court advocate. And in some



instances, maybe some input or feedback even from a judge might be an option. In the judicial context, it can get a little bit tricky, especially because our judges are responsible for interpreting and applying codes in cases. And sometimes policies can become involved in adjudication.

So if you're looking for judicial feedback on policies and procedures, just be a little bit mindful of that fact and understand that if a judge responds to you that they don't feel that they should participate out of concerns for them being able to carry out their judicial role, or if they prefer to play a limited review type role, just understand that that may be where it's coming from, as opposed to them just not being interested in what you're doing. There could be some concerns on their judicial responsibilities later on down the road.

Attorneys or tribal attorneys can be a valuable source of information for your agency. A lot of times, the attorneys will be familiar with victims' rights legislation. They may also be familiar with tribal codes or federal laws that could impact the provision of services. Tribal attorneys, in particular, might also be aware of other collaborative agreements and arrangements that the tribe has agreed to. So they can be valuable in terms of providing input to make sure that your policies, as developed, aren't in conflict with existing law. They can also be helpful to informing your policies with respect to the need for collaboration.

Also, reaching out to any partners that you might already have collaborative arrangements with can be helpful. When we're talking about victim services providers and advocates, a lot of times there are already established working relationships with first responders, such as law enforcement. There might also be established working relationships with prosecutors. So pulling some of those people in to help inform the process and provide information on the ins and outs of the history of those collaborative partnerships, how those have worked historically, whether they've been formalized through formal written agreements, can also be really important.

Also, we include here elders and community members as key stakeholders that you might want to consider. And I've seen this in-- these folks have been included in various policy development teams that I've been involved with over the years in various ways. In some context, once you get your policy development team together, you'll have reoccurring meetings. Sometimes there might be a proper protocol. Elders can help provide some of that spiritual guidance and assistance to the project. They can also really help to inform on some of the culturally-relevant services, projects, that might be existing in the community, as well as some of those culturally-based opportunities that might help victims and help us work with victims in promoting their healing.

They might also help to inform some of the past relationships. A lot of our elders, even if they're folks who are retired, they may come from a long-standing background of being service providers themselves in the community. So they have a lot-- and that's just a really limited vantage point on what those folks might have to offer our policy development team. But certainly folks to consider in engaging within your team.

Same thing with community members. Many of our community members may be people who have had cases that have gone through the system. They may have experienced traumas themselves and be in a place now where they have healed from some of that trauma and are able to really help inform our process in a best-practice manner moving forward.

And then, of course, tribal leadership. And tribal leadership, it can be a little bit tricky, because I know that these folks are oftentimes really busy. But even having those people being aware that you're developing policy, keeping them informed on the status of your policy development, keeping them informed of the team of individuals that you've brought together to develop the policy can go a really long way as you move through the policy development and towards approval and implementation. And also, we have, in some instances, tribal leadership who is very engaged and sees the value in participating directly and on a consistent basis. So reaching out to the tribal leadership and having them engaged early on as a team member in whatever fashion is often very helpful.

And there may be others in the community that you wish to engage. But I guess the big message here is, when you're looking at a policy development team, look at-- consider the size. You don't want to have a policy development team that's so large that it's not manageable. But at the same point in time, you want to have a well-rounded policy development team to ensure that, as you're moving through the development of your policies, you're able to really get the best information from your community about existing resources, laws, codes, and practices to make sure that you have a really well-informed and comprehensive agency policy.

So once you've identified some of the folks that you feel you would like to engage to be a part of your policy development team, the question then goes, how do you start to ask those people to be a part of your team? What process can you follow to ask them?

One of the ways that you might want to proceed with is a letter of invitation. Sending out a letter, letting people know what it is that you're doing and why it is that you're doing it and asking them to be a part of it. And perhaps even clarifying why it is that they've been identified to be a part of the team can be really helpful to having them say yes or to be willing to participate.

If you're a governmental agency, or if you're trying to engage governmental service providers, requesting a formal appointment might be necessary from a time perspective for those individuals, but might also be helpful in ensuring that they will be a part of your policy development process. And that formal appointment might come from tribal council. A formal appointment might come from their departmental or supervisor head. But engaging in those communications can be important.

Once you've invited those individuals and they've agreed, or you've had a formal appointment, the next thing is to

be really sure that your key stakeholders know what their role and responsibility is within the team. For many of us, I think, as we've worked on a lot of different projects, we're asked to participate in various meetings or committees. And I'm sure many of us have had the experience of sitting around that table and wondering, internally, why it is that we're there, what is it that we have to contribute?

And so establishing those roles and responsibilities within your team is really important. And it may not be that you are dictating or telling someone why they're there. Your first meeting of your team might be having your team members review the purpose of why you're there, and then having them offer forth what they feel they can contribute to the development of your policy.

You also want to make sure that you have a process for team meetings, where early on, your team discusses and decides when you're going to meet, where you're going to meet, and how often you're going to meet. And on the frequency portion for team meetings, one of the things that I would just caution people on is that, early on in policy development or code development, I think, we're really gung-ho about moving forward with things. And so we want to meet often, often, often. And that can be helpful, as long as you have that momentum.

But I think it's also important to be realistic, that a lot of your key stakeholders may have responsibilities outside of the policy development effort that you're asking them to engage in. So being realistic in how often you can meet and how can you make those team meetings beneficial, fruitful, and task-oriented is going to be really helpful to making sure that your policy development team continues to engage all the way throughout the policy development process. And so that you don't have people dropping off of the process and finding yourself sitting alone trying to actually write your policies. And I think when people understand their roles and responsibilities, when you are respectful of one another's time, and when you are conducting meetings and policy development efforts that are really task-oriented, it will go a long way in helping to move the process forward and to keeping your team engaged.

Also important is, once you have your team assembled, is making sure that your team members have a kind of baseline knowledge. As I said earlier, a lot of us understand what our own individual roles and responsibilities are. But I think it's also important that everyone at that table, your entire team, has a really clear understanding of what it is that you're there to do.

And one of the things that you can do to get people onto the same page is bring those folks together and have them help to develop or review your agency vision and mission statements, so that they're really clear on what your agency's purpose is. If you have some existing policies, it might be a good starting point to have your team take a look at what's already in place. If you don't have existing policies, that's OK. You can start with your vision and mission. And we're going to talk more about how to get started on policies. And then also, making sure that

everybody is familiar with any of the applicable laws and regulations that might come into play and are applicable to your agency and to the clients that you're serving.

Also really important is to make sure that all of your stakeholders know what it means to be victim-centered. And in the first webinar, and then again in today's webinar, we've reiterated what it means to be victim-centered. And you can certainly feel free to take that information and to revisit that with your stakeholders, once those people are engaged, to make sure everybody's aware that it's going to be important as you develop your policies and procedures to keep that at the very forefront. That everybody has a role to play within the larger justice system as professionals. But at the end of the day, the goal is really to make sure that we're servicing the needs of those victims in a consistent way, in a compassionate way, and that the needs of the victims remain at the forefront of how we decide to deliver the services within our agencies.

So, again, making sure that your agency policies are developed in such a way that people know-- you're going to want to include in your policies an introduction to the overall justice system response. You're going to want to include in your policies an introduction to collaboration among justice system agencies. And that would include how your agency interacts with other justice system agencies. And then you want your team to also understand, that as you develop your policies, you want to spend some time talking about and developing the specific step-by-step process for how your agency is going to deliver the services that you are able to deliver.

OK, so once your team has been identified and has baseline information, then the next step in the process really is going to be moving forward with conducting some of the research. I talked about baseline knowledge, for example, having your team have an understanding of some of the applicable laws and regulations. It may be that you have a team that comes together and questions arise-- what are the laws and regulations? And if it's unclear in that first meeting, that's OK. You can put that down as one of your first tasks for your team to work on in terms of the research that you want to conduct.

Some of the research, the preliminary research to help establish baseline knowledge for your team, is going to be to look up the applicable laws in your jurisdiction and regulations in your jurisdiction that pertain to victims and perhaps to adjudication process, maybe to law enforcement or advocacy service providers. There may be some confidentiality laws and things that come into play. There may be, if you're dealing with child victims, some mandatory reporting laws. So taking a look at those different types of laws and regulations will be important.

That is also one of the benefits to the team approach. You may have people that are shovel-ready to go out and find you some of that information. So for example, if you have a prosecutor, your prosecutor might be easily able to say, hey, I will go and pull the criminal statutes and our criminal process so that everybody on our team is familiar with that. You may have your tribal attorney able to say, you know what, I'm going to go and I'm going to

pull the process for mandatory reporting from our codes. They may also be able to pull some of your victims' rights legislation.

If you have advocates on your team, they may be able to say, you know, we have existing collaborative agreements with some of our shelter providers, so we're going to go pull some of those collaborative agreements. We're also going to pull some of our funding information so that we can see if there's any restrictions in there on what we can do and how we can do it. If you have law enforcement, maybe law enforcement has collaborative agreements with your victim services providers. Maybe they have some established policies or protocols that they need to follow in how they're working with victims of crime.

So you can see how having a team of people, you can multitask, so to speak, in conducting some of this research. And each of your team members can be a valuable source of information for that.

You might also want to move forward within your team to conduct some mind mapping exercises to help things like developing your vision and mission or purpose statements. And we're going to talk a little bit more about what mind mapping means, as we move forward today.

Your team may also want to engage or need to engage in some community or victim needs assessments. Getting some feedback, too, from the community on what they feel is working. How well-informed they are about the services that you're providing and how they can access those services can provide you some really valuable feedback on some of the strengths and weaknesses within the provision of services and can also provide some valuable information for your team to inform your policies on maybe some of the educational needs of the communities and how you're working to engage the community and victims.

And then, of course, we want to-- once we've conducted some of our research and mind mapping and completed some of our community and victim needs assessments, then we're going to move into actually drafting policy to make sure that we're including information that is relevant to both our justice system and our independent agency response for victims.

When you're conducting research, as I stated, one of the things that's really helpful is to do some task planning. And I would say this isn't just for research. I think this task planning process is really helpful to making sure that your team members stay engaged, that they feel that they are contributing in a meaningful way, and that they continue to be an active part of your policy development team.

So one of the things that I like to do when I'm working with teams of individuals to create policy or to create code is I like to create a little chart like the one that you see here. And as we identify some of the tasks that we need to complete to help inform our policy, or even as we get to the point of drafting our policy, I like to narrow it down into

kind of this larger to-do list. So this gives you an idea of how you might designate responsibilities to team members to keep them engaged, and also, importantly, to prevent the full responsibility from falling to one individual person.

So I give you an example of some tasks that you might see here. An example is, let's say that we have a need for someone to research, what are our child protection laws within our tribal community? And maybe even summarizing those, so that they can do a report back and inform the team. Well, who would be the best person on our team to complete that task? Well, maybe it's the tribal attorney. And then also assigning a deadline, right, because deadlines help to keep us individually responsible to our team, and also help to prevent unnecessary delays in what it is that we're doing.

So maybe you say, OK, tribal attorney, we'd like you to pull and summarize for us some of the child protection codes we have. Can you bring that to the next team meeting, which is going to be in 30 days? And we're going to give you 15 minutes at the beginning to share some of that information with the team to make sure we're all on board.

Maybe you have a need to research some of the collaborative agreements. Maybe your agency director can do that. Maybe you want to develop a community needs assessment to get feedback from the community relative to victim services or relevant to their experiences if they've worked with advocacy providers or if they've had an experience with the justice system.

And so maybe you need to develop a short questionnaire that will be disseminated. Who could be responsible for that? Maybe you want to have your victim advocate draft that, and then bring it back to your larger stakeholder team to review, provide input, after which then you might roll that out to the community.

So this time and task planning, I think, is really important. And I really want to emphasize that to you to help your team stay organized as you're moving forward with trying to develop and inform your policies.

OK, looks like we have another poll question here. And the question is, are you familiar with mind mapping techniques? And your options for answers are, yes, I have actually done some mind mapping, I am familiar with mind mapping, but have never actually used the process, or, no, I am not familiar with mind mapping.

The results here are showing that-- I am familiar with mind mapping techniques, 26% of you answered yes. 26%, as well, said that you are familiar, but have never done it. And 48% of you are not familiar with mind mapping.

Michelle.

OK, thank you, everyone, for responding. And I'm glad to see that some of you have done some mind mapping. You may have done this and called it something else. It may be that the term is what's unfamiliar to people. But

sometimes it's the process.

Think of this kind of like a brainstorming with words. And mind mapping, I've found, is something that can be very, very helpful, especially to developing a vision statement, a mission statement, or a purpose statement for your policies. It's very, very helpful to that end. And it's an exercise that can be done within your team, and it's a relatively simple process.

So what you would want to do is you would want to get a whiteboard or a flip chart, something that everybody can kind of see up on a-- or on a screen. And you want to tell people, OK, we're going to talk about our vision of our agency. And you want to tell people just to start throwing out words that they feel are important to your community or are important to your agency and the services you provide. Just one or two words. And as people start to throw those words out into the air, you want somebody to be writing those words down. It's going to seem really illogical at first, because you'll just have a ton of different words on a paper.

So you want to take about-- usually 15 minutes is plenty in a team group to throw out some words. And then once you get those words on paper, you want to take those papers off to the side. Then, you want to have your group take the next step. And what you want them to do is take a look at the words on the paper, and you want to start having them organize those words into one sentence that might reflect your vision or might reflect your purpose.

And remember, your vision is going to be your big picture. Your mission is going to be kind of talking about your agency role within that big picture. So let me give you an example.

We might take a few moments to say, OK, throw out some words that are important to your agency. And people might say, child, family, holistic, healing. They may say compassionate, safety. You may have those kinds of words on a paper.

OK, so now we're going to stop that word brainstorming and we're going to say, OK, let's organize those into our mission statement. And you may come up with a statement that reads something to the effect of, "It shall be the mission of this agency to deliver compassionate victim services to members of our community in a manner that is culturally-relevant and fosters healing."

So you can start to see how just that brainstorm gives everybody-- puts everybody's mind into this kind of working mode, where you can start to see what's important to you. And then you can take those important words that reflect your mission, and you can start to organize those into a formal statement.

So that mind mapping process, like I said, can be a really helpful tool to getting your team thinking about vision for your agency. And, of course, your vision statement, once you get that done, you're going to want to place that

directly into your agency policy. You can repeat the process for a mission statement. And you want to put that mission statement into your policy. And then you can also create a purpose statement in the same manner.

And one of the really helpful things also to that is it gives every one of your team members an opportunity to be engaged. And they're not just being told what your vision is. They're actually being made a part of the process from the very beginning, OK?

OK. So now that we've talked a little bit about getting your team together, engaging your stakeholders, having that baseline information, and really kind of how you might go about getting everybody pulled together as a team through contributions made in initial meetings, where you might conduct some tasks such as mind mapping and research and community assessments, how do you take all of that information that you're pulling together and start to get your thoughts organized?

Making sense of some of the research. And when we say research, your codes and regulations. We've given examples of that. You've had now some of your attorneys or some of your prosecutors or others on your team that have brought forward to your team the codes that might have implications for victims. How do you start to make sense of that?

Well, one of the things to note is that, from those codes and regulations, it can really help you to identify some of the legal standards that you need to be aware of as you're delivering services. So let's say you're at the part of your agency policy development, where you're going to talk about how your victim advocates will be conducting intakes and how your victim advocates will be interacting with clients and how your victim advocates will be making referrals for clients.

When you start to talk about those things, if you've already had a vantage point of looking at your legal standards, you might think, geez, you know, there are some real heavy confidentiality concerns. And we really need to make sure that when we're providing guidance to our employees and how they're working with advocates or with victims, that they're aware that they need to maintain high standards of confidentiality. That they're aware that if there are forms, for example, for waivers, that that's not a step that they're skipping, right? Those types of things.

They can also help to promote understandings of victims' rights and how agencies are providing services. So early on in today's webinar, one of the things we talked about is the importance of creating our policies in a way that we are supporting the self-determination of victims. When we're mindful that there might be victims' rights legislation out there, whether that be federal victims' rights, whether it be tribal victims' rights, or other victims' rights that might be even policy-driven, have your folks on your team be familiar with that. And then understand that victims' rights really are there to help support self-determination. And your policies that you develop should be consistent with that.



So a lot of victims' rights legislation might include statements or rights, like, the victim has a right to be informed throughout an adjudicatory process. OK, so now that you know that that's a victim's right, how can your advocacy program help to foster that right for victims?

Maybe in your policies and procedures you establish a process for ongoing and effective communication with the prosecutor's office. And once you receive information on updates regarding a case or the process of a case through the criminal adjudication process, maybe your policies will state that your advocates will, upon receiving information from the prosecutor, schedule a teleconference or a meeting with the victim to review their safety plan or to inform them of the status of the case, to answer questions where they can, or to provide them external resources.

There's a number of different ways that you might do that. But hopefully that's a good example that can show you how victims' rights can inform the policy development process. And it's important that your policies are consistent and not contrary to those rights.

Also, making sense of research might involve, you know, let's say you've had your team members pull existing collaborative agreements. Those can help to identify and inform your personnel where communication and information sharing might be needed, where there might be already formal agreements in place to address confidentiality concerns, et cetera.

Perhaps you already have-- maybe your codes have a multidisciplinary team referenced in them. And maybe that multidisciplinary team has a memorandum of understanding that clarifies how the multidisciplinary team members will communicate with one another and share information. Maybe that MOU also includes some confidentiality information.

So you would want to make sure that you're familiar with those collaborative agreements and that those collaborative agreements are reinforced through your policy. And in some instances, they may need to be referenced within your policy to make sure that your personnel is aware that there are collaborations in place and that they have a responsibility within those collaborative agreements with other agency service providers.

Also, community and victim needs assessment results. This is really helpful, I think, to helping inform your policy development, because it gives you some feedback on where you're at today. And it can be very insightful to helping you brainstorm among your team and develop strategies to improve the delivery of your services.

So let's say your community needs assessment is a questionnaire that goes out to 100 community members. And perhaps one of the questions is, do you feel that-- or have you had a case that has gone through a criminal-- have

you been a victim of a crime? And has your crime been adjudicated through the justice system? Perhaps you have 60 people who say yes. Your next question might be, do you feel that safety planning needs were adequately met during that time?

Now, of those 60 people, if you have 40 people responding that they didn't feel their safety plans were updated or taken into account or were adequately met, then that tells you that when you get to your policy development piece on how you're going to work with victim safety and for victim safety planning, you may need to take some really concrete steps to make sure that you address how to create an initial safety plan, how you can revisit that safety plan throughout the process of a case advancing from the point of a crime through adjudication or post-adjudication. You might want to address in your policy how often or frequently you should revisit safety planning, et cetera. So getting that community feedback is really important.

I also want to note here that we have community and victim assessment results. That's referenced separately. You may want to send out a survey or something to the larger community. But you might want to also have some sort of an internal evaluation tool that you can disseminate and allow people who are using your agency services to provide feedback to you.

The one thing I would suggest is, if you are asking clients to provide feedback to your agency, providing a means to be able to have them do that anonymously is sometimes helpful to garnering really kind of honest feedback. And I don't mean honest in the sense that victims might not want to be truthful. But just being aware that sometimes people may have a fear of saying what their real experience is because they don't want to be treated differently in the future or they don't want to have that disrupt services, they don't want to offend anyone. So the more that you can build neutrality and anonymity into your community and victim assessment process, I think the more helpful that will be to garnering honest feedback.

The other thing that I think you can do, too, is throughout your team meetings, as you move forward with your policy development, is to occasionally come back and re-evaluate and revisit with your team the purpose of your policy. Sometimes as we get into teams, we can start to discuss maybe a point of real interest, but it may be a point that's a little bit off topic to the actual policy development. So you may want to have your vision, mission, and purpose statement readily at hand and to continuously reflect with your policy development team on those things.

Also, revisiting with your team really why it is that you're developing your policy and what you're hoping to accomplish with your policy. So again, you're really trying to develop policies that clarify your agency role within the larger system. You're really trying to develop policies that help provide overall direction for your program and your program personnel.

That might include, or likely will include, providing a roadmap for how your personnel is going to conduct day-to-

day operations and deliver services. Also making sure that the team remains aware that you have to maintain compliance with applicable laws and regulations. And that ultimately, your goal is to support fair and equitable delivery of services, so that you're reinforcing that victim-centered approach.

And then finally, of course, a big, big part of this is, if we want to support the fair and equitable delivery of services through our agencies, one of the key aspects of that is making sure that all of the personnel within our agencies understand their role and responsibilities, that we equip them with the tools and education and steps necessary to help them make decisions and to work with other agencies.

We also want to make sure that our team constantly understands that our policies really are there to tell our agency's story. These policies are going to tell who we are as an agency within the larger justice system, what our vision and mission is. It's also going to be there to tell people what it is that we do, what services we are providing within an agency, and what our role within the justice system is.

And then also, how it is that we are going to do what we say we are going to do. And that might involve clarifying what the eligibility for services is, what the process for deliveries of services is, and then also clarifying to everyone who might interact with your agency or review your policies that you will do your job and carry out your responsibilities in a manner that is victim-centered.

Also, I'll just take this quick opportunity to let you know, as we said, this is the second in a three-part series of webinars. Our next webinar is actually going to talk a little bit more in-depth about not just how your policies tell a story of what you do, but also how policies can provide a measure of protection and address maybe some of the liability concerns that you, as an agency, may have.

So if you're wanting to go a little bit more in-depth into some of that discussion, we will, at the end of today's webinar, give you some information on webinar number three and let you know how you can register for that.

OK, so now we know who we want to involve in our policy development. People are going to know why they're doing that, why they're a part of the team. They're going to have some baseline knowledge. We'll have conducted some preliminary research. And so now we really want to talk about the writing methods or process.

OK, so it looks like we have another poll question here. Thinking about your organization, which aspect of writing policies and procedures do you feel needs the most attention? And our options are organization of materials, avoiding steamroller language, assigning responsibility for writing and maintaining P&P, including visuals like checklists and charts, something else not listed.

OK, and here are our results. So thinking about your organization, which aspect of writing policies and procedures

do you feel needs the most attention? 45% of the responses are for organization of materials. 16% show avoid steamrolling language. 23%, assigning responsibility for writing and maintaining P&P. And 3% including visuals like checklists and charts. And 13% responded, something else not listed. Michelle, back to you.

OK. Well, then let's get to that. It's good to see that you all are thinking ahead. And I know that getting us organized is one of-- or actually kind of thinking about how to start putting pen to paper once we've kind of amassed this large wealth of information can be a little bit daunting. And I also understand that assigning writing responsibilities can be a little bit daunting for some folks, too.

Writing is not everyone's area of comfort. But the one thing I will say about authoring policies and procedures is that there's a lot more room for writing that is more in a bulleted-point format. And as a team, I think if you start to pull together that information, the writing can become a lot less heavy of a feeling.

So one of the places that I like to start-- and there's different preferences for how people like to go about policy. What I personally have found is that establishing kind of this table of contents is really helpful. And the reason is it helps to organize our thoughts. And I find that it's very helpful to kind of creating that roadmap of what we know we need to include within our written policy.

When we're developing a table of contents, I also find that having appropriate headers is important. So this is, I think, a good kind of example of what we've talked about so far. So based on what we've talked about with an agency, we've talked about making sure that we understand who we are as an agency, first and foremost. So your table of contents might begin with, first, we're going to talk about our agency vision and mission and purpose statement, right? You might include that as item number one.

We also talked about having policies that inform the reader about the role of your agency within the larger justice system. So for part two of your policy, I would recommend that you include a section that speaks to your justice system and speaks to the role of your agency within your justice system. And when you're looking at developing that part, that's where really that research that you've done on applicable codes and regulation, justice system process, and collaborative agreements and forums can be really helpful to actually starting to write that particular section.

The third section that's really important, I think, is making sure that you then address your agency-specific policies and procedures. And this is really where you start to get into the nitty-gritty for your key personnel that are providing services in your agency. So in this section, you'd really want to talk about who the people are that work within your agency-- not their names. You know, you don't want to say, well, Tina's job is this. You want to say, we have an advocate, this is the advocate's roles and responsibilities.

You also want to make sure in here that you address very important aspects of the provision of services to victims, such as how you're going to communicate with victims, as well as any confidentiality rights and responsibilities that might apply to those communications. You want to make sure that you break down some of the agency services that you provide.

So if you're a direct service provider, you may list out the various services you can provide. Some of that might be dictated by your funding stream. So you may say, our program will provide services for temporary emergency shelter. We may provide for emergency food needs, for emergency clothing needs and toiletries. We may provide referrals for counseling. The list of those types of services would be there.

And then you would want to also clarify what an individual's-- what the eligibility is. So in other words, if I'm an individual that just says, hey, they're giving out-- you can go over to the victim agency and you can get a food voucher. Well, one of the eligibility criteria might be that I have been a victim of a crime. But to expand upon that, your policies might have to go one step further and say, do you require any information? Is being a self-reported victim of a crime sufficient? Is there a need for some other type of information?

For most of the victim advocacy programs, that self-report is probably going to suffice for a lot of your services. But again, double-check your funding stream. See if there are criteria that restrict all or some of the services you provide to make sure that your policies and procedures and your eligibility criteria align with existing law, and then also align with any funding streams that you have, because you don't want to provide services in a manner where you're jeopardizing your funding streams.

And then, also, you would want to in here indicate the steps or the process for delivery of services. So you might state step one would be, an initial intake would be conducted. You can clarify whether that initial intake would be conducted in person, whether it be over the telephone, or whatever avenue it is that you have for completing an intake process for your prospective clients. And then from there, you would want to-- the step-by-step process of how you will engage and work with your client.

So once an intake is conducted, for example, maybe the case would be transferred over to an advocate. And the advocate would then work on safety planning and would work on the provision of emergent services and would work on whatever those steps might include.

You would also probably want to have in there any provisions that would be applicable to concluding services with a victim. So if there would be a particular reason that you would no longer be-- an individual would no longer be eligible for services, you might want to include some of that information, as well.

And then fourth, I would say, making sure that you have an appendix that includes any of your established

protocols or checklists, any visual aids or charts, any forms, copies of laws, or collaboration that you've compiled during your research. You might want to include those in your appendix, especially if you're referencing them in either section two or three of your policies and procedures. It just makes accessibility and ease of use of your policies much more user-friendly and stops the reader from having to go out and do their own independent research.

So some of you also said assigning writing responsibilities is another concern you have and wanting to make sure, again, that in a strength-based manner, you're considering the different stakeholders you have on a team. You would have identified, at this point, what they bring to the team. And one of the things that I suggest is that, if you're looking at having people develop certain sections, you can have one or two people working together to develop a certain section if you want to. But as people are making contributions to the writing piece, making sure that you're drawing upon the stakeholder knowledge and skill set is really going to be important.

Because really, again, your policies are a narrative of who you are, what you do, and how you do it. So even if you're not a professional author, I think most of us can describe who we are, what we do, and how we do it. And keep in mind that a best practice is, once you get that part down on paper, you can bring it back to the larger group for people to go through and edit and make suggestions on how to further expand upon provisions, if you need to.

It's really important, also, that you have an organized approach when you're writing and that everybody's consistent, that you have headlines, banners, or icons. And what we mean by that is, as you saw that table of contents, we had header, section one, section two, or whatever-- however you're going to put section numbers in, that you're being consistent throughout your policies and procedures is really important. And that can be reflected in a more detailed fashion in your table of contents as your various sections start to develop. And that also makes it much more easy to use.

You also want to be consistent with the use of particular terminology and phrases. Be concise, clear, and direct. And make sure that the language that you're using is victim-centered and reflects a victim-centered approach.

We do want to avoid the use of steamroller language in order-- in other words, language that is overly harsh, critical, or pessimistic. We want to be direct, but we don't want to kind of talk down to the reader. Be careful of words and phrases that you're using that do not seem to support a victim-centered approach, as well.

Visual aids I find very helpful, myself. I'm a visual thinker. So wherever possible, once you've developed kind of that overview of who you are or what you do or how you do it, if there's a way that you can translate that into a one-page flow chart for ease of reference, I find those things to be very helpful in not only providing a summary for your policy, but also gives a good point of reference for employees and others to reflect back on, without

having to constantly revisit multiple pages of narrative or written policy. They can be helpful in that regard, then, to refresh the recollection of key personnel and to continually promote the consistent delivery of services.

OK, so real quickly here, and I don't want to go over. But we want to make sure, then, that we have our policy development team. We want to make sure that we've identified and engaged our key stakeholders. We want to make sure that we start by assessing and conducting some initial research. And then we will move into our drafting of our policy, which is going to include some task planning and some writing assignments to our team members, which will be designated based on their various areas of expertise or their roles and responsibilities. And then we're going to move in to getting those well-written and comprehensive policies approved and implemented.

Thank you, Michelle, again, for another awesome presentation today, and also for sharing your insight and knowledge with us. We are going to go ahead move into the question and answer portion of our webinar.

All right. So we have one question here, Michelle. It says, I have a unique writing style. Are there terms or phrases that I should use more often? I don't want to steamroll my way through a policy.

Well, I think most people do have a unique writing style to some degree. I think with policies and procedures, one of the best pieces of advice I can give is to be conversational and follow the golden rule to some degree. Talk to others how you would appreciate them talking to you. And I think if you're mindful of that, you can really avoid some of that steamroller language.

Our goal is to inform individuals and educate individuals. Our goal is not to-- we want to avoid things like "you shall do this" in a policy. We want to instead use words like, "it's recommended that you do this," or "in accordance with our policy and procedure, we will deliver services in the following manner." And just tempering words like "shall" or "quit" or "don't." Those kinds of things have a tendency for the reader to feel like they're being talked down to. And some of that you may have to cut out during the editorial process, too, as your team reviews the drafts.

All right. I hope that helps answer the question here. So it looks like, in lieu of our time here, we want to be respectful of that, so I'll go ahead and conclude the question and answer portion of the webinar. Thank you again for joining us today. And you all have a great day and stay healthy.