

Audit Trail #1 – Rules and Regulations



Rules and Regulations include laws; court rulings; legislative mandates; requirements or regulations of federal, state, county, and city regulating bodies; agency policies and directives; and policies of related organizations, such as insurance companies and medical facilities. They direct and guide the management of the institution.

- The rules are established by political processes within state legislative bodies, federal regulating commissions, local and county commissions, service agency boards of directors, and other entities.
- Rules and regulations define the scope of institutional responsibility and direct the internal operations of most agencies, significant aspects of service delivery, and methods of communication between and among agencies.
- As you interview or observe practitioners and read files and narrative reports, you will see many examples of the way a rule, law, regulation, or other directive influences case processing.

Audit Trail #2 – Administrative Practices



Administrative Practices include all of the methods that an institution uses to standardize how practitioners carry out its policies, laws, regulations, and mandates. Most administrative processes involve the use of texts, such as screening forms, case documentation forms, matrices, guidelines, report writing formats, routing instructions and protocols, and other examples of what practitioners refer to as “paperwork.”

- Think of rules and regulations as mandates and administrative processes as instructions to practitioners on how to carry out those mandates.
- Along with mechanical instructions on case management, administrative processes carry conceptual practices that either centralize or marginalize women’s actual experiences and needs for safety. A child protection intake form, a pre-sentence investigation format, and a guardian ad litem’s parenting skills checklist are examples of administrative practices that prescribe ways of thinking about and acting upon cases.

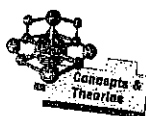
Audit Trail #3 – Resources



Resources include the ways that a community allocates and ensures the quality of funding, materials, processes, and personnel needed to address the problem—in our case, the problem of woman abuse within intimate relationships. Resources include everything necessary to accomplish the following:

- Workers do their jobs without compromising victim safety or offender accountability. This includes size of case loads, technology, adequate supervision, and support services.
- Victims of abuse position themselves in safer situations, through such means as housing, skilled counseling, financial help, and adequate legal representation.
- Intervening systems hold offenders accountable. This includes adequate jail space, enough time for probation officers to supervise their clients, high-quality rehabilitation services, and practitioners who are well prepared to work with men of diverse economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Audit Trail #4 – Concepts and Theories



Concepts and Theories include language, categories, theories, assumptions, philosophical frameworks, and other methods and ways that institutions organize workers to think, talk, and write about the cases and the people whose experiences are being managed as cases.

- Many conceptual practices are readily seen, but most are not. It’s easier to see the philosophical frameworks that challenge or undermine the way we think. It’s much more difficult to recognize those that mirror our own assumptions.
- It’s sometimes very difficult to see how conceptual practices are ingrained in the use of language, assignment of categories, crafting of assessment tools, and assumptions supporting a law, rule, or policy.
- Ask: What concepts operate here? How is this worker coordinated to use this concept? What categories does this worker use and how does that shape his or her thinking about the case? What assumptions are in this form or process or matrix?
- Concepts, theories, assumptions, philosophical frameworks, and so forth are not owned by or specific to an individual; they are embedded in institutional processes.

Audit Trail #5 – Linkages



Linkages include the ways that institutions link practitioners to other workers and other intervention processes; ways that practitioners are linked to the people whose cases they process; and ways that practitioners are linked to process and people outside their community (or *extra-local*, e.g., federal regulating agencies, state legislatures, professional associations.)

- In a misdemeanor assault case, there may be over a dozen workers in a dozen separate agencies at four or five levels of government. Most will never talk directly to each other about the case; in large communities, many will never meet each other. Most of them will never meet the people whose cases are being processed.
- No worker acts independently from those who proceed or follow him/her in the process.
- Each worker is linked to others in a sequence of institutional actions.
- Watch and listen for methods of linking practitioners, such as routing information, referrals, regular meetings, writing reports *to*, receiving reports *from*, and collecting information *on behalf of*.
- Watch for how workers are linked to concepts and theories (see Audit Trail #4).
- Watch for how workers are connected to the actual people whose case is being managed. Do they have direct contact, or does the case file stand in for the actual person (and if so, with what accuracy)?
- Links can be strong or weak and can enhance or diminish victim safety and offender accountability.
- The unique needs of victims of battering require that institutions create new linkages and enhance existing ones.

Audit Trail #6 – Mission, Purpose, and Function

Mission, Purpose, and Function



- **Mission** concerns the *overall process*, the overarching purpose of a system such as criminal court or child protection. Presumably, every action and case processing step within the institution or agency reflects that mission.
- **Purpose** refers to the institutional purpose of a *specific process* within that overarching mission, such as booking, arraignment, and pre-trial hearings.
- **Function** is the function of a practitioner in a **specific context**.
- An Audit explores how the interconnected mission, purpose, and functions of practitioners within specific systems and institutions account for victim safety and offender accountability.

Audit Trail #7 – Accountability

Accountability holds specific meanings in relationship to the Audit process. It includes the ways that institutional practices are organized to accomplish the following:



- Hold individuals *accountable for the harm* they have done, as well as the harm they are likely to cause without effective intervention.
- Hold practitioners *accountable to the people* whose lives are being managed.
- Hold practitioners *accountable to other interveners* in the system.

Audit Trail #8 – Education and Training

Education and Training include the following:



- The ways different disciplines organize workers (e.g., criminal lawyers, civil lawyers, child protection workers, police, therapists, nurse practitioners) to understand their jobs and the social phenomena related to their work, such as the abuse of women in marriages and intimate relationships.
- Formal ways that agencies train their workers to think about and act on cases.
- Informal ways that workers learn their jobs through experience and training by more seasoned workers.
- Exposure to different concepts, theories, and conceptual practices.
- Ongoing skill building that enables workers to effectively intervene in domestic assault cases involving diverse populations.

Audit Trail #9 – To be discovered...



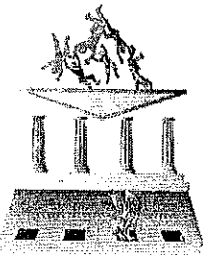
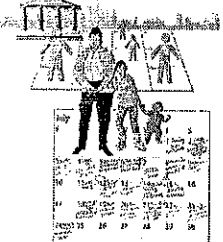
To be discovered . . . We have identified eight primary methods by which institutions organize and coordinate workers to intervene in standardized ways. Your Audit team may uncover a method that is particularly influential in case processing but is not included here. Don't let these eight categories limit the boundaries of your investigation.



Problematic Features of Institutions of Social Management

Excerpted from (In) Visible Workings: A change agent's guide to closing the gap between what people need and what legal and human service institutions provide

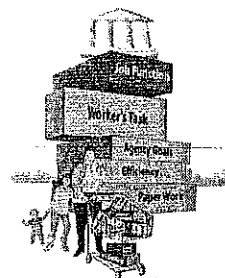
Ellen Pence, Ph.D., 2009

<p>Fragment Complex Lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex lives divided into distinct cases • Each case divided into processing steps • Each step divided into sub-steps • Specialists for each step • Each event is a separate case 	
<p>Textually Coordinated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts define relations • Texts embody institutional thinking • Texts create forms of consciousness • Texts standardize workers actions • The file "stands in for" real people • Texts connect separate actions 	
<p>Rely on the Use of Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lumps dissimilar events/situations together • Connects situations to the discourse – not necessarily what's really going on • Oversimplifies complex situations • Generates a specific institutional action • Converts lived experience to something institutionally recognizable 	
<p>Operate on a Time Different Than Lived Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional routines control time • Institutional time overrides lived time • Has different meanings for people being acted upon than for those doing the acting 	

SUPPORTIVE MATERIALS

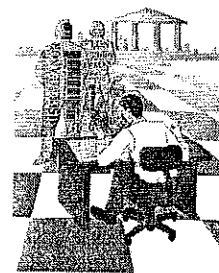
Privilege Institutional Functioning Over Individual Needs

- Job function over people's needs
- Success = properly carrying out tasks
- Success ≠ if it helped
- Agency mission; worker function sets narrow course of activity
- Customs of neutrality, professionalism, and objectivity act against workers advocating for clients



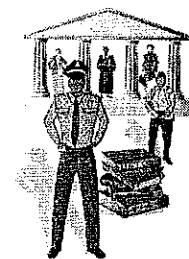
Create Communication Without Dialogue

- People become data points
- No give and take...participation
- Communication framed and filtered through forms, rules, liability concerns, etc.
- People's experiences become an instance of the professional discourse



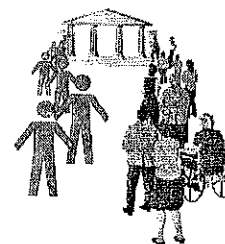
Engage in Conceptual Practices That Organize How Workers Act

- The circumstances of the real world are instances of what can be explained in the discourse
- Discourse is produced by groups that have political and social power
- Competing discourses are common
- The discourse makes people institutionally actionable



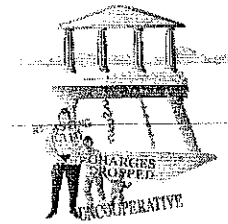
Create a Fictitious Universal Person as a Standard

- A "fictitious universal person" based on ideological myths is produced and used as a standard
- Real people treated in relationship to universal person and norms
- Inadequate accounting for social status and corresponding risks
- Resulting cultural imposition is veiled



Mask Institutional Limitations and Failures

- Limited resources fail people, but are not discussed
- No documentation of impact of ineffective resources
- Failures are attributed to aspects of the case or the people in the case, but not the institutional structure
- Limited incentives for critical review



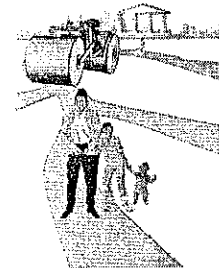
Weak Systems of Accountability

- Accountability system is adversarial within a structure with substantial power differences
- Lack of accountability to people whose lives are being processed as a case
- Embedded in processes – not people
- Agencies are vulnerable to political attacks



Use Coercion to Gain Compliance

- Covert and overt institutional authority to use coercion
- Institutions have varying climates that promote or tolerate abuse of its power
- The objectification of the people being managed in the discourse and specific practices promotes abuse



SUPPORTIVE MATERIALS

Individualize Social Problems

- People plucked from their settings (family, economic circumstances, etc.) and treated as if independent of them
- Social problems treated as individual pathologies
- Problems that are linked together are treated as separate phenomenon experienced by individuals rather than groups

