

## WORKSHOP 8

### TARGETING POLICY FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

#### Objectives

Following this workshop, the youth will be able to:

- Evaluate and assemble evidence about their priority challenge.
- Describe the steps — and opportunities for intervention — in the policy cycle.
- Identify policies that are relevant to their priority challenge.

#### Overview

Contributing to successful policy change requires credible evidence and an action plan. Knowing how to evaluate evidence, gaining familiarity with the policy cycle, and identifying where youth can intervene, all help to demystify the policy process and are critical first steps for successful policy change planning.

#### Total time

2 hours.

#### Facilitator Prep

- Review and summarize AWE evaluation results to share using a modality of your choice.

#### Welcome

Ask the youth to share a rule that they encounter in school or another institution in their life that doesn't make sense to them and why.

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#### Connect & Open

Review AWE survey summary and anonymous compliments from last session.

#### Look Back

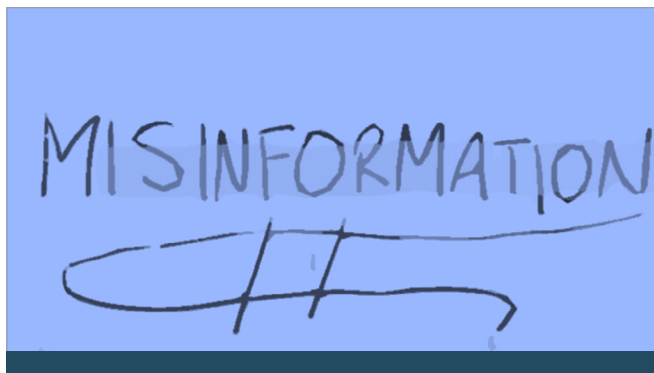
Last week, the group decided on a policy advocacy priority and began mapping their collective supports and resources. Ask if they would like to make any additions.

#### Look Forward

Note that the group has been learning about policy and how it influences their everyday lives. Share that during this workshop, the group will begin to explore how they can influence policy. They will start by gathering information such as stories, media articles or research findings related to their priority challenge and will then be introduced to the policy cycle and its steps.

## Frame

Play the [What is Misinformation?](#) video. This video outlines the difference between misinformation and disinformation, and offers tips on how to assess the credibility of an information source. This is an important skill for the group to gain as they gather evidence to inform their policy change efforts.



## Activity 1: Gathering Evidence to Influence Change (30 minutes)

### Aim

This activity will equip the youth to critically evaluate information sources for credibility as they gather evidence related to their priority challenge.

### Steps

1. Introduce the CRAAP test for evaluating the credibility of an information source. Review:

- a. Currency — When was the source published?  
For your purposes, is this timeframe relevant and suitable? Has information changed since this source was published?
- b. Relevance — Is this source related to the focus of your work?
- c. Authority — Is the source author or contributors considered expert on the topic with suitable credentials?
- d. Accuracy — Is evidence used to back up any claims that are made? Is the information consistent with other sources?
- e. Purpose — Why is this source published in this way? Is the source presented as authoritative or as an opinion to be debated?

### Currency

- ✓ When was the source published?
- ✓ For your purposes, is this timeframe relevant and suitable?
- ✓ Has information changed since this source was published?

### Relevance

- ✓ Is this source related to the focus of your work?

### Authority

- ✓ Is the source author or contributors considered expert on this topic with suitable credentials?

### Accuracy

- ✓ Is the evidence used to back up any claims that are made?
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### Purpose

- ✓ Why is this source published in this way?
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2. Inform the group that they will now play a game to practice evaluating sources using the CRAAP test.

Divide the group in two. Each team will compete in a timed internet scavenger hunt to find as many credible sources as they can related to their priority challenge.

## Workshop 8 cont.

3. Tell the group that their internet searches could involve gathering information from research articles, media stories, videos, community newsletters or other sources that provide further details about the priority challenge they are targeting.
4. Suggest that the group might launch their research using a search engine, such as Google. They could use Google Scholar for more academic sources.
5. Recommend that the youth begin their search by using a combination of keywords that include their community's name or region, as well as "youth," "mental health," and terms related to their priority challenge.
6. Provide each team with the [CRAAP Scavenger Hunt Worksheet](#) and ask them to use this to assess and document the sources they identify.
7. Tell the groups they will have 20 minutes for the activity.
8. After the scavenger hunt is over, return to Circle and ask the groups to share their sources and review how they applied the CRAAP guidelines.
9. Sources found to be credible should be retained to inform and guide the group's policy advocacy efforts moving forward.

### Facilitator Tips

- Different forms of evidence, such as research articles, may be new to the group. It's important to help those unfamiliar with academic sources to better understand how to identify articles that are relevant and credible.
- During the scavenger hunt, check in on the groups to answer questions or provide guidance about sources that are unfamiliar. Encourage them to bring any relevant sources back to the group for discussion, even if they are unable to complete all components of the worksheet.
- Participate in the scavenger hunt and also share your results with the group.

Activity adapted from the work of Sarah Blakeslee, University of California at Chico's Meriam Library:  
<https://commons.emich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=loexquarterly>



## Activity 2: Understanding the Policy Cycle and Making a Policy Action Plan (15 minutes)

### Aim

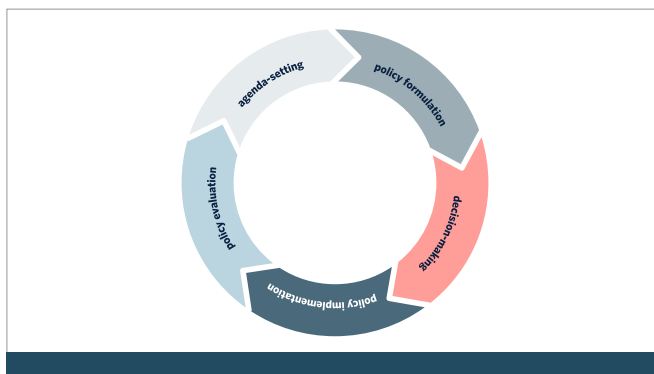
This activity will explain a typical policy-making process and engage the youth in creating a policy action plan.

### Steps

1. Ask the group to consider whether their priority challenge is influenced by school or community policies, or broader provincial or federal government policies, or a combination of these.

2. Share the resource [Stages of the Policy Cycle](#).

Introduce the diagram by explaining that policy is created through a policy-making process, represented here as a series of simplified steps. Review each step and ask the group what they think the various steps might involve, before providing a more fulsome overview:



- a. **Agenda Setting:** The policy cycle begins with the identification of an issue or problem that needs to be addressed.
- b. **Policy Formation:** Once an issue is identified, goals and objectives to address the issue are established (or proposed solutions).
- c. **Decision-making:** The policy solutions that get considered during the policy cycle process are influenced by many factors, including varying interests, as well as limits imposed by budgets or other resource availability.
- d. **Implementation:** Involves putting policy solutions into action.
- e. **Evaluation:** Steps to determine whether the policy solution is effective in addressing the problem. This stage may provide information that is used to inform additional rounds of the cycle.

3. Explain that at each step of the cycle, there are opportunities to advocate and make change.

4. Share the [Policy Cycle Worksheet](#). Review the following:

- a. The policy cycle process begins with the identification of an issue or problem that you want to address.
- b. Once the issue or problem is identified, the task shifts to exploring possible solutions. At this stage, it can be helpful to use “blue sky thinking,” where all potential solutions, big or small, are considered.
- c. This is followed by the development of an action plan. This may involve:
  - i. Conducting background research to get more information about the issues and potential solutions.
  - ii. Identifying who else is working on this issue and building connections with allies.
  - iii. Developing strategies to bring the proposed solutions to life.



d. Share that once a plan is in place, it is time for action. This involves efforts to carry out the plan and to implement the policy change. Once changes are made, it is important to monitor and evaluate their impact to know if the policy is addressing the issue in a meaningful way.

5. Ask the group to respond to the following questions:

- a. What priority challenge has the group identified as the target for policy change to promote youth mental health?
- b. What are some possible solutions to address this challenge, based on the group's lived expertise and available evidence?
- c. Who are potential allies who could support the group's efforts (e.g., teachers, parents, peers, organizations, local experts, etc.)?

### **Facilitator Tips**

- This activity is very information heavy. Be sure to check in with the youth to determine if they have questions.
- It's important to help the youth identify the aspects of their priority challenge that may be relevant to policy. Policy can be difficult to pinpoint, especially for those who are unfamiliar with how it operates. Spend some time helping the group to figure out how policy is relevant to their issue.



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**Connect & Close: Meditation** (10 minutes)

1. Explain that using mindfulness and reflection in our daily lives can help to buffer moments of high stress. This exercise is an invitation to consider aspects of life that are going well, but that without practices such as mindfulness, may go unnoticed. If meditation is uncomfortable for you, use this time to write down three or more things that are going well for you, no matter how small they might seem.
2. Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
3. Breathe normally and notice how it feels. Pay attention as the air goes in and out of your lungs.
4. Take a deep breath in and as you do think of something that made you smile or laugh today. Exhale. Thank yourself for being open to joy and laughter.
5. Inhale slowly, exhale slowly.
6. Take a deep breath in and, as you do, think of something you did today, even though you really didn't want to. It could be getting out of bed without pressing snooze or finishing a difficult school project. Exhale. Thank yourself for your perseverance.
7. Inhale slowly, exhale slowly.
8. On your last few inhales and exhales, remind yourself of something you accomplished today that you are proud of. It could be something as small as making it to school on time.
9. Think of a few positive words that you would use to describe yourself, or that your friends would use to describe you, such as "kind," "funny," "generous," or "loyal."
10. Repeat the words to yourself, saying "I am (descriptive word)" silently in your own head. Say it again as you breathe — once as you breathe in, and once as you breathe out. Stay focused on the phrase.
11. If or when your mind begins to wander, gently bring it back to this phrase.
12. Slowly bring attention back to your breathing and gently let your eyes flutter open.
13. It may be hard at first to make time every day to explore the aspects of your life that are going well; however, with practice, it becomes more natural.
14. Ask the group for their reaction to this practice. If they are comfortable, invite them to share how it felt.
15. Distribute the AWE survey and allow a few minutes for everyone to complete. If any youth doesn't want to do so immediately, ask that they complete it before the next meeting.
16. After the group finishes the survey, thank them for their participation and close the workshop.
17. After the workshop closes send a link to the AWE survey by email for those who did not complete it during the session.



## Workshop 8: CRAAP Scavenger Hunt Worksheet

For each source identified, fill in the worksheet to assess credibility. If you are unsure of the answer to a particular question, make a note so you can ask for support with finding the answer later.

Title:

Author(s):

Link to Source:

### CURRENCY

When was the source published?

For your purposes, is this timeframe relevant and suitable?

Has information changed since this source was published?

### RELEVANCE

Is this source related to the focus of your work?

### AUTHORITY

Is the source author or contributor considered expert on the topic with suitable credentials?

### ACCURACY

Is evidence used to back up any claims that are made?

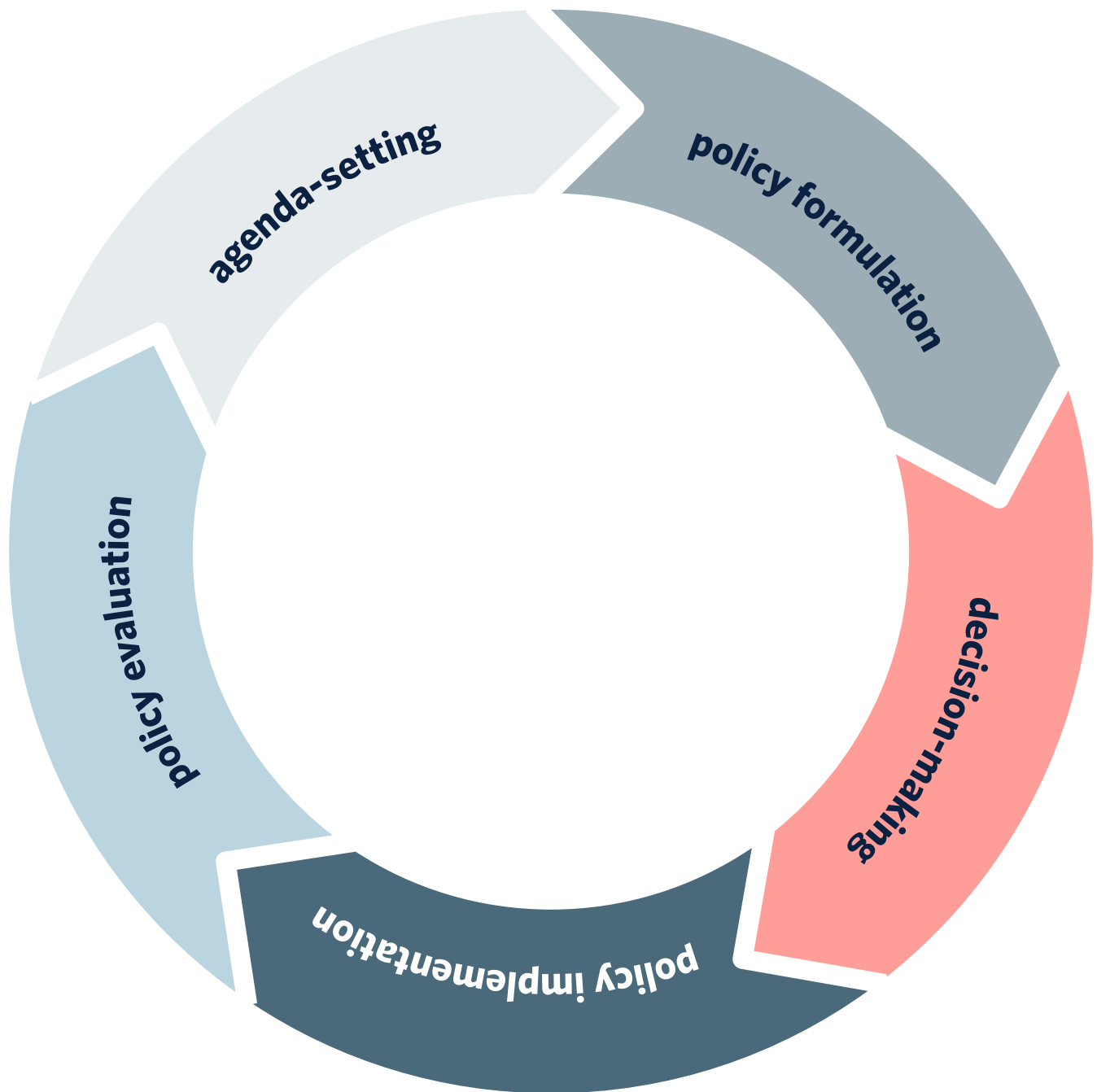
Is the information consistent with other sources?

### PURPOSE

Why is this source published in this way?

Is the source presented as authoritative or as an opinion to be debated?

**Workshop 8: Resource: Policy Cycle**





## Workshop 8: Resource: Policy Cycle Worksheet

### Policy Cycle: Identifying our interests

