



TRAUMA-INFORMED ADVOCACY SERIES

Developing an Advocacy Agenda



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WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THIS MODULE

choosing a specific topic
to advocate about



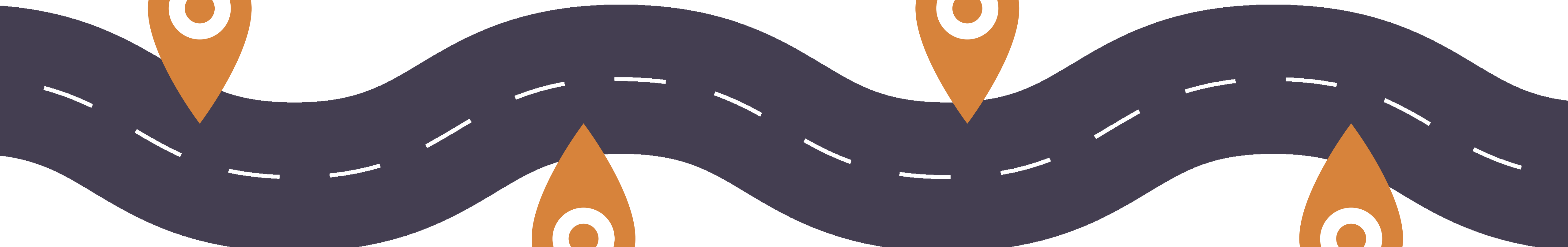
gathering more
research & information



setting advocacy goals



evaluating and
monitoring progress



EXAMPLE FRAMEWORKS FOR ACTION

- Personal/work/volunteer/community experiences
- Professional organization's priorities
- Previous legislation/existing policies
- Political ideology-related priorities
- Public sentiment and support
- Previous judicial decisions
- Professional values/ethics
- Personal values/beliefs



Key takeaway:
Choose something
you care about!

GETTING MORE SPECIFIC FOR POLICY ADVOCACY

- Consider what factors are associated with policy change related to this issue...
 - ✦ how can trauma-informed policy intervention serve to optimize the relationship between social environments and wellbeing in this context?
 - ✦ what policy lever applies? (*legislative/regulatory/administrative/legal*)
 - ✦ if no policy action is taken to address this issue, what is likely to happen?
- What are potential policy options to address this issue?
 - ✦ consider positive *and* negative impacts of policy change
- What research/evidence would help you better understand the issue and potential policy solutions?
- What is the root cause of the issue to be addressed through policy?
 - ✦ collect preliminary information
 - ✦ engage stakeholders



CONSIDERATIONS FOR SETTING GOALS

- Find a North Star!
 - ✦ Connect to your mission, vision, values, and purpose - what do you want to see happen?
- Set a variety of short-, intermediate-, and long-term goals
 - ✦ What needs to happen for you to reach your North Star?
 - ✦ What can you aim for in addition to getting legislation passed/thwarting harmful legislation?
 - ✦ Set overarching goals for the entire group as well as area-focused goals for different teams/work streams/committees/etc. *(if applicable)*
- Collaboration is key
 - ✦ Engage stakeholders/people with lived experience in meaningful ways
 - ✦ Get input from a variety of sources, prioritizing the perspectives of people who will be impacted most by the process/outcomes
- Examine related resources, systems, capacity, and processes
 - ✦ What is already in place? What is still needed?
- Build in flexibility
 - ✦ Review often, and revise/re-strategize as needed
- Strive to be action-, strengths-, and solution-oriented



SETTING GOALS: THE SMARTIE FRAMEWORK

S

SPECIFIC

answers who, what, where, when, why, and how questions related to hoped-for outcomes

M

MEASURABLE

includes standards, metrics, and/or benchmarks that indicate goal progress

A

ACHIEVABLE

possible to achieve with consideration for resources, capacity, and other such factors related to attainment

R

RELEVANT

reflective of and in alignment with broader best hopes for change

T

TIME-BOUND

includes clear time-related parameters for tasks critical to goal achievement

I

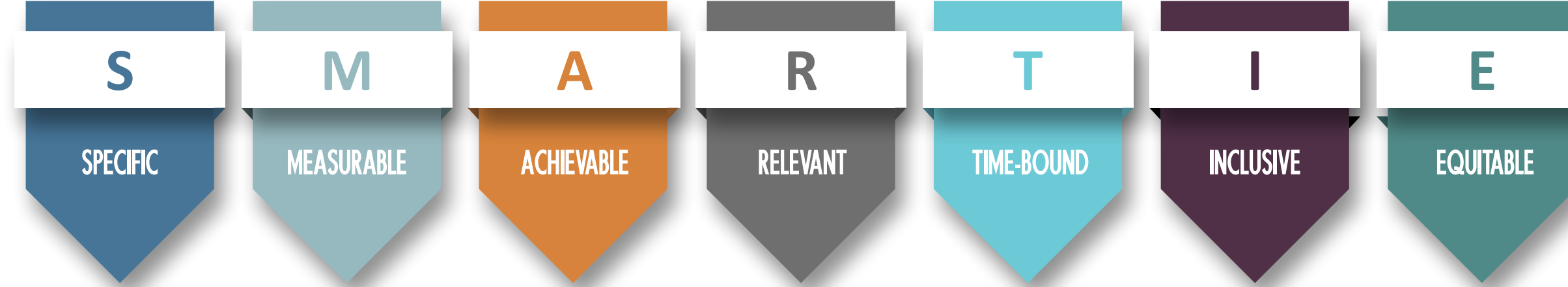
INCLUSIVE

those most impacted share power and give their voice to inform processes, activities, and decisions

E

EQUITABLE

intentionally seeks to address injustice, inequity, and/or oppression



SMART

Write and distribute to our action alert network one (1) sign-on letter per month.

Expand outreach volunteer base with 35 new members by September 2022.

Recruit three (3) local organizations the join our coalition by December 2022.

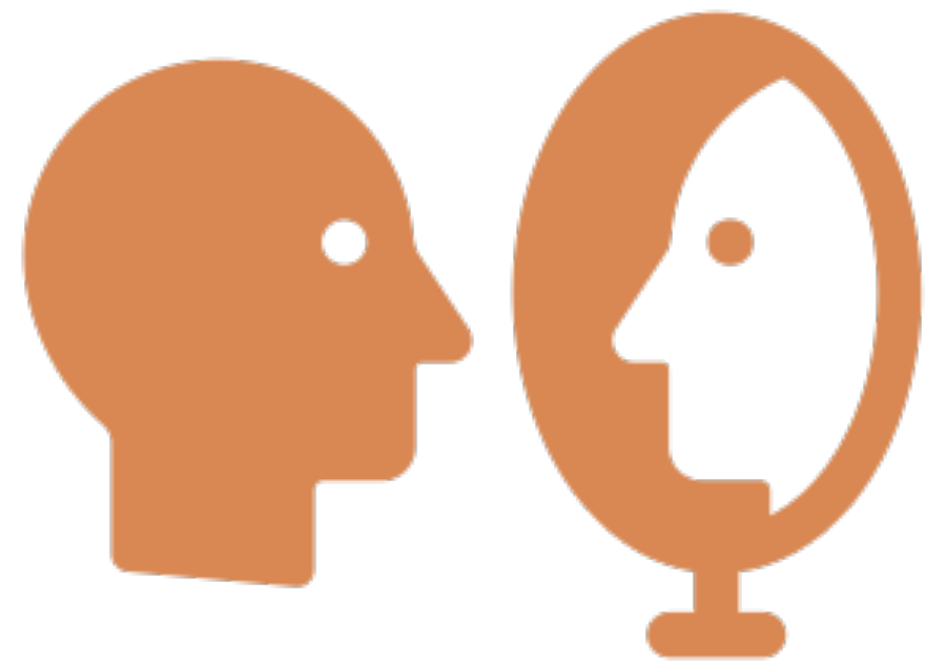


SMARTIE

Distribute to our action alert network one (1) sign-on letter written in partnership with people with lived experience per month.

Expand outreach volunteer base with 35 new members reflecting the demographic diversity of the community by September 2022.

Recruit three (3) local organizations the join our coalition the work with trauma-impacted communities not currently represented by December 2022.



REFLECTION POINT:

How do you see paring down your chosen issue to its essence?

What might one SMARTIE goal related to advocating about your issue look like?

What is the status quo?

- **Existing related policies**
 - * Are they actively causing harm?
 - * Do they not go far enough?
- **Policy gaps** - if no policy yet exists re: this issue yet, why might that be?

What are those impacted saying?

- **Issue identification** - what is their view/definition of the issue itself?
- **Proposed solutions**
 - * What changes do they want to see happen?
 - * What difference will these changes will make in their lives/communities?

How are other advocates helping?

- **Successes thus far** - what contributed?
- **Current initiatives**
 - * What are they working on right now?
 - * Are there opportunities to collaborate/coordinate efforts?

Where can you draw inspiration?

- **Looking at all policy levels** - are there ideas/language to draw from that you can translate to the level you are looking at?



What issues are shaping the debate?

- **Trends** - what are local, state, national, and international policymakers noticing?
- **Public opinion** - what does the general public know/say?

What have policymakers attempted?

- **Successes** - how did they happen?
- **Shortfalls** - what contributed?
 - * What is different/possible now?
 - * What still needs to happen?
- **In progress** - what is working?

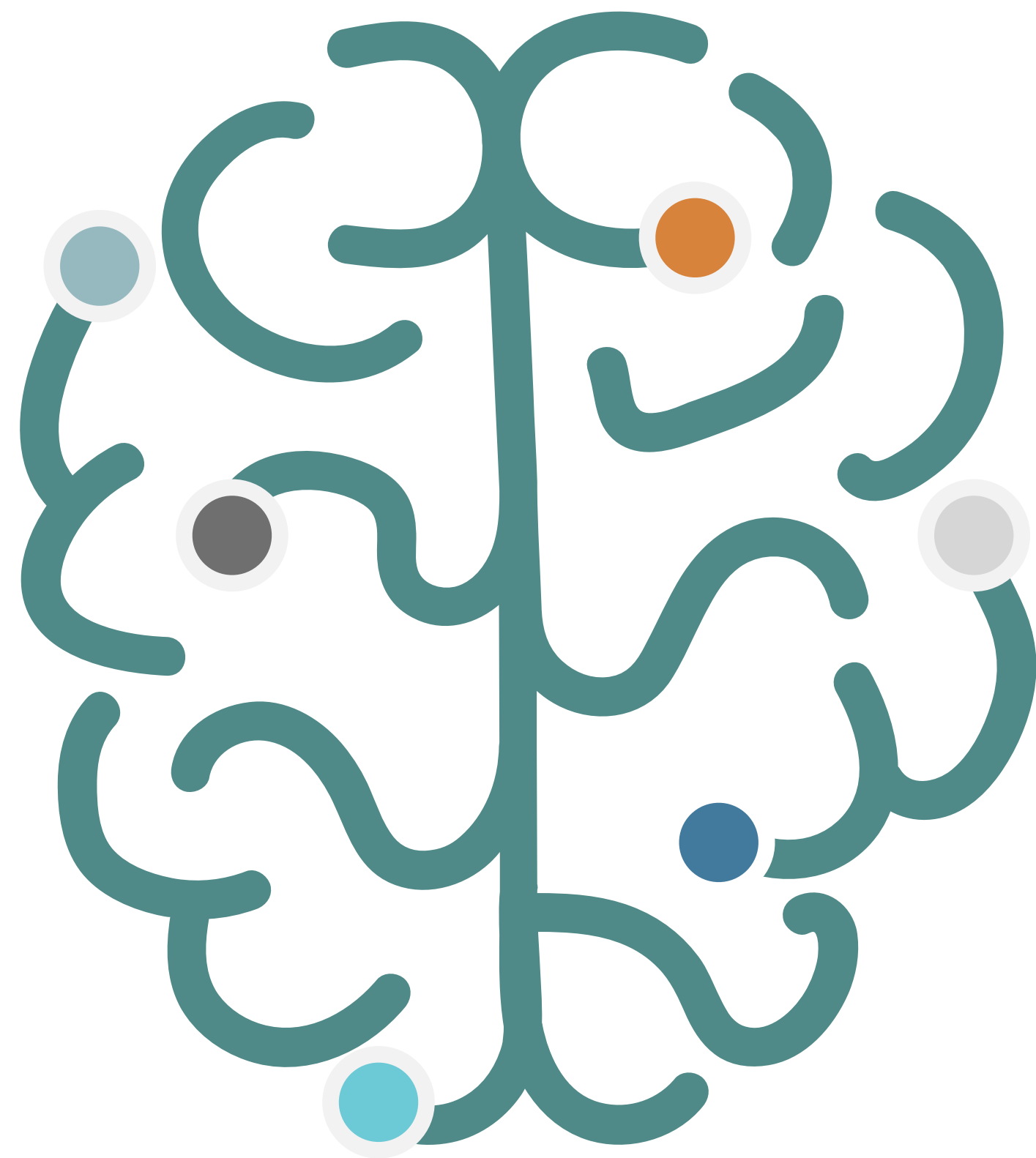
Which decision-makers are vocal?

- **Who are your allies?** - active and passive
- **Who has expressed opposition?** - active or passive
- **Who is neutral/uncommitted?**

Where do you notice alignment?

- **What "hot topics" overlap?** Are there additional opportunities you notice where you can embed your issue/solution?

GATHERING MORE INFORMATION



Well-researched policy agendas add credibility.

Looking at a variety of types of sources can be helpful as you develop your advocacy strategy:

- qualitative and quantitative
- academic and experiential

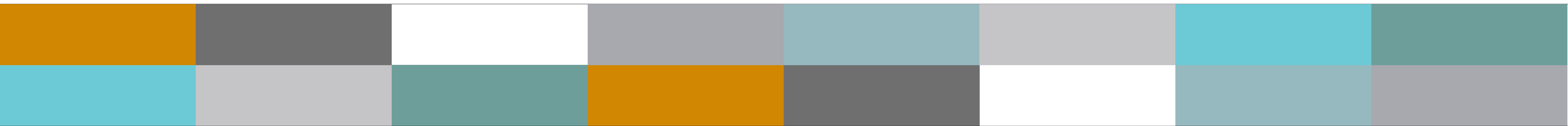


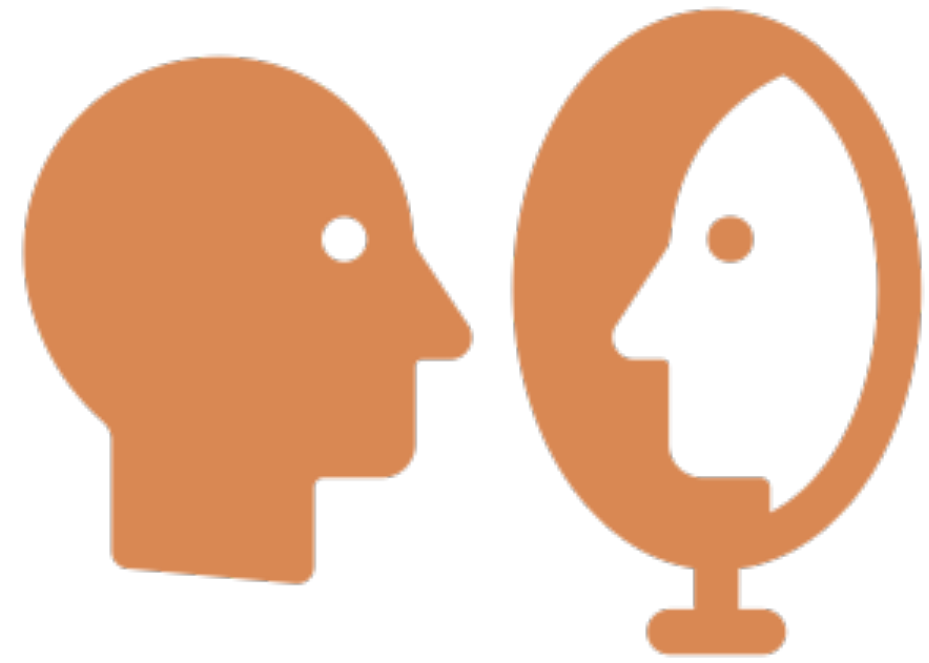
Some examples of possible sources:

- Professional and academic research
- Official statistics
- Committee reports
- News reports and other media coverage
- Voices of lived experience and others on social media
- Primary source data (e.g., interviews with those impacted)
- Allies' policy proposals/briefs/action plans/toolkits/etc.
- Your own personal/professional experience and expertise!

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INFORMATION-GATHERING

- **Stay anchored in your goals** - *what do you hope to achieve, and how can gathering more information help you to achieve this?*
 - ✦ Working backwards can help - what outcome will tell you that your solution effectively addressed the issue?
- **Collect and analyze evidence from all “sides”**
 - ✦ Helps with being transparent/trustworthy when meeting with targets
 - ✦ Anticipating opposing arguments equips you with knowledge to create tools and talking points that could change hearts and minds in advance
- **Trace the history of your issue/solution and notice what work has already been done/attempted**
 - ✦ Notice research gaps revealed along the way
 - ✦ What will deepen your understanding of the nature, scope, and magnitude of the problem?
 - ✦ Notice any lessons learned that may be relevant to your advocacy agenda
- **Use frameworks that promote justice/equity and consider domains of intersectionality**
 - ✦ Check for unintentional harmful, disparate, or re-traumatizing impacts/consequences
 - ❖ Consider: what can you do to integrate mitigating such harm into your policy proposal?





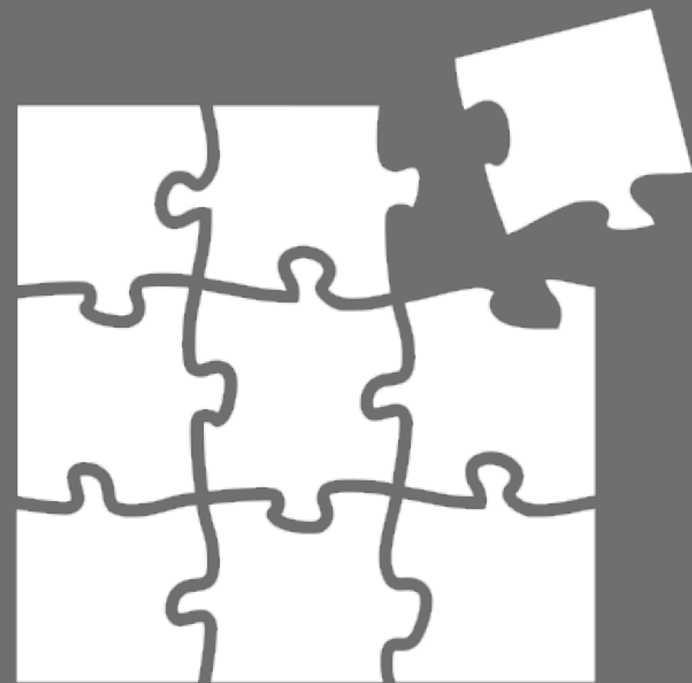
REFLECTION POINT:

What expertise (professional, personal, or otherwise) do you already have that you can build upon with further research?

What resources make sense for you to explore to deepen your understanding of the issue/solution you're thinking about?

DEVISING A PROBLEM AND SOLUTION STATEMENT

- Intentionality - frame the problem in a way that helps illuminate the appropriateness and feasibility of your policy solution
- Strengths-based - recommend policy changes that positively impact wellbeing by building upon existing strengths, capacities, and resources
- Specificity - clearly define and articulate the issue and policy solution
 - ✦ What is the issue?
 - ✦ How big is the issue?
 - ✦ What contributes to the issue?
 - ✦ What are the impacts of the issue?
 - ✦ Who is impacted by the issue? How much? When?
 - ✦ When and where is the issue most likely to transpire?
 - ✦ How does this policy solution address the problem?
 - ▶ What will be different?
 - ▶ Who will notice/be impacted by the solution?
 - ▶ How does the solution advance justice and equity?



MONITORING & EVALUATING PROGRESS

- Consider short-term, intermediate, and long-term SMARTIE goals
 - ✦ What are indicators of advocacy success?
 - ✦ What are indicators of policy implementation success?
- What are facilitating and limiting factors (external and internal) related to our goals?
- How can we actively engage primary stakeholders as active participants?
- What policymakers were included? Who else needs to be at the table?
- What have been the outputs (e.g., advocates trained, policy briefs written, etc.)
- What were our notable milestones?
- What about our strategy was most effective?
 - ✦ How can we do more of it?
- What about our strategy might we need to adjust to achieve our goals?
 - ✦ How can we use these findings to inform and improve policy advocacy efforts moving forward?
- Have there been any unintended and/or unexpected consequences?

