

SUD Organizational Development Assessment (SODA)

Implementation guide

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SUD Organizational Development Assessment (SODA) implementation guide

About

This implementation guide is designed to be used with the **SUD Organizational Development Assessment (SODA) Tool** and the **SODA Scoring & Planning Tool**. These resources are available on the Washington State Health Care Authority's (HCA) [SODA Resource page](#).

HCA, in partnership with [UW Behavioral Health Institute at Harborview \(BHI\)](#) and [Principle Allies](#), developed the SUD Organizational Development Assessment (SODA). If you have questions about the tool, please contact the [Principle Allies developers](#).

Introduction

The Health Care Authority (HCA), in partnership with UW Behavioral Health Institute at Harborview (BHI), contracted with Principle Allies to develop the SUD Organizational Development Assessment (SODA) to advance quality substance use disorder (SUD) treatment across the state.

The SODA tool can be used to assess organizational barriers and facilitators of success and inform a tailored strategy to address training, staffing, and quality improvement initiatives that focus on the unique needs of the SUD organization and individuals they serve. The tool consist of three primary components:

1. Organizational Assessment
2. Implementation Guide
3. Scoring & Planning Tool

The assessment is an opt-in tool available to SUD agencies interested in exploring drivers of success in value-based care and/or for those who would like to develop their organizational roadmaps and quality improvement projects. The SODA tool a is currently not required by any partner or funder.

Getting started

The assessment can be self-administered as a standalone tool, as part of a structured group, or in connection with a technical assistance program. Ultimately, the goal is to strengthen SUD treatment organizations and improve clinical outcomes.

Six assessment domains

The SODA tool evaluates six key domains of a SUD agency:

1. Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure
2. Finances
3. Workforce Organizational Readiness
4. Clinical Staff Growth and Development
5. Clinical Services and Quality Management
6. Ability to Address Whole-Person Health

The content of the SODA tool is purposely designed to start with overarching organization-wide areas before delving into specific clinical areas. This design recognizes that a strong foundation of organizational infrastructure underpins successful workforce, clinical, and partnership practice areas.

Team composition

We encourage agencies to convene a cross-functional team of operational, financial, and clinical leaders to gather multiple perspectives and complete the assessment together. Your team may include the executive director or chief executive officer, chief financial officer, chief clinical officer, human resources director, and/or quality improvement leader. It can be valuable to include individuals from different levels of the organization to take into consideration potentially varying perspectives. The team can range from just one or two participants to as many as six. For efficiency, teams greater than six are not recommended.

Time allotment

It should take a few hours to complete the assessment. We recommend scheduling two 90-minute meetings to complete and score the assessment, with a follow-up meeting to review the scores together and begin the process of developing a quality-improvement roadmap.

We recommend that you do not have individual staff members complete the SODA tool and then average the scores without a group discussion. The group convening is an important part of the process and is a unique opportunity to collectively identify opportunities and priorities for an organization. Participants have reported that the collaborative exercise was a valuable aspect of developing a shared plan that considers priorities, sequencing, and dependencies.

Administering the assessment

SODA tool

Each domain of the **SODA tool** includes a practice area, a description of that practice area, a scoring rubric, and an area for recording the score and any related notes. Staff completing the assessment should note specific instances to justify the score and share these examples with the team.

In the example below, the SODA tool is asking about the first practice area under the **Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure** domain, which is **Leadership**. The scoring rubric is directly below the practice area description.

DOMAIN 1

Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure

Practice areas

1. Leadership

Executive and clinical leadership teams have appropriate business management and clinical expertise.

0 - Key leadership positions have vacancies and/or expertise gaps.

Score:

Notes

1 - Most leadership is junior, with less than 5 years of experience in a relevant clinical or administrative field.

2 - Leadership is a mix of junior and senior staff, with longevity across the team.

3 - Most leadership is senior, with 10+ years of experience.

Scores in all categories range from 0 to 3, with lower scores indicating greater organizational gaps or barriers. A score of 3 represents the use of best practices.

As an example: **Sample Agency** is a SUD treatment agency that has been in business for two decades, but its long-time CEO recently retired, and the position is being filled by a less experienced interim CEO. In addition, recent hires have included a less experienced clinical director and human resources manager. In that case, we would recommend that Sample Agency score 1 in this category, with the specifics described in the notes.

DOMAIN 1

Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure

Practice areas

1. Leadership

Executive and clinical leadership teams have appropriate business management and clinical expertise.

0 - Key leadership positions have vacancies and/or expertise gaps.

Score: **1**

Notes

1 - Most leadership is junior, with less than 5 years of experience in a relevant clinical or administrative field.

2 - Leadership is a mix of junior and senior staff, with longevity across the team.

3 - Most leadership is senior, with 10+ years of experience.

Long-time CEO recently retired and position is currently being filled by interim CEO. Other key management positions are held by recent hires with less than 5 years of experience.

Continue through each category, carefully reading the scoring rubric before determining the best fit for your organization. Here are a few general tips on scoring in order to get the best results from the tool:

- **Evaluate the agency in its current state**, not after current initiatives are completed or specific staff members are hired. It is important to set an accurate baseline, so you can accurately measure any future improvements. A realistic evaluation of the current state also ensures an agency focuses its quality-improvement investments where they are needed most.
- **If a score falls in between two levels on the scoring rubric, it is okay to assign a number in between.** For example, if the team is debating between a score of 1 and 2, a score of 1.5 is appropriate.
- **If the team does not know how to score a particular practice area or it does not seem to apply well to your organization, give it your best estimate** and note any open issues that merit discussion. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers when completing the SODA tool.

SODA Scoring & Planning Tool

After the entire **SODA tool** has been scored, an agency will use the **SODA Scoring & Planning Tool** to compile the scores. Each domain of the tool includes a practice area and areas for recording scores, strengths, opportunities for investment, recommendations, dependencies, and resources. Quality improvement resources are included at the end of each domain.

Teams may notice the **SODA tool** does not create a total score. This is by design because the assessment is not intended to create a comparison of one organization to another in a graded and ranked system. The goal is to allow an organization to self-evaluate and identify their own organization's strengths and opportunities within each of the domains.

Scoring each practice area

The following example shows the first domain of the **Sample Agency**, which is **Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure**. The score for each practice area has been entered into the corresponding line. Leadership was scored with a 1 so that has been entered in that line. Continue with each practice area.

DOMAIN 1 Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure		
Practice area	Score	Strengths
1. Leadership	1.0	- CEO created strong strategic

The tool will calculate the **Category Average** and the **Category Total Score**. The Category Average is an average of all the practice areas in that domain. In this example, the domain of **Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure** has an average score of 1.8. The Category Total Score looks at how well the organization scored against the best practice benchmark of 3. If all the practice areas in a domain had been scored as a 3, the total would be 100%. These scores may be helpful in comparing one domain to another in terms of the organization's relative strengths and opportunities.

DOMAIN 1

Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure

Practice area	Score	Strengths
1. Leadership	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO created strong strategic business plan and was tracking KPIs before retirement. - Partnerships are under development to bridge resource and service gaps.
2. Strategic Business Planning	3.0	
3. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Measurement	2.0	
4. Electronic Medical Records	2.5	
5. Service Accessibility	1.0	
6. Policies and Procedures	2.0	
7. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements	1.0	
Category Average	1.8	
Category Total Score	60%	

Interpreting domain scores: Strengths and opportunities for investment

The **Strengths** and **Opportunities for Investment** areas allow the assessment team to analyze the scores in this domain and discuss what the team learned about the organization. During the assessment, individuals are asked to capture specific examples or illustrations to justify the score. We recommend you record the examples of areas of strength identified during your assessment discussion. Similarly, a discussion of the lower scores may yield opportunities to discuss areas of needed investment or attention.

DOMAIN 1

Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure

Practice area	Score	Strengths
1. Leadership	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO created strong strategic business plan and was tracking KPIs before retirement. - Partnerships are under development to bridge resource and service gaps.
2. Strategic Business Planning	3.0	
3. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Measurement	2.0	
4. Electronic Medical Records	2.5	
5. Service Accessibility	1.0	
6. Policies and Procedures	2.0	
7. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements	1.0	
Category Average	1.8	
Category Total Score	60%	
Opportunities for Investment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interim CEO is temporary, and search is underway. - Services are not widely accessible due to funding gaps and licensing category. 		

In this sample, the team has noted the impacts of the CEO's departure and the need to pursue a sustainable licensing and funding strategy. These notes will be important as the assessment team considers resources for quality improvement.

Assessment domain analysis: Recommendations and dependencies

Recommendations and **Dependencies** developed by the assessment team can be recorded in those areas so that these observations can be used for strategic planning and follow-up activities.

In this example, the assessment team determined they need to work on the agency's licensing, so it outlined the recommended initiative, dependencies, and resources in this planning area.

Recommendations

Identify licenses and funding streams required for care delivery. Initially explore opportunities that build on what you currently do, and then expand based on strategic goals.

Dependencies

Staffing model
Funding sources
License
Site

Resources & Toolkits

Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) Licensing Requirements

Note: In the beginning, we discussed the importance of the sequence of the assessment. Some components are foundational, and other components cannot exist if the organization does not have those foundational components. The goal is to crosswalk the relationship between the domains and consider root causes and dependencies because that information will affect prioritization and sequencing of strategies.

Quality improvement resources

After completing the practice area scores, strengths, opportunities for investment, recommendations, and dependencies, the assessment lists related publications and resources in the **Quality Improvement Resources** section for each domain to help the organization plan and implement a quality improvement exercise.

Below is a sample of the suggested resources for the **Organizational Leadership and Infrastructure** domain.

Quality Improvement Resources

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Leadership
National Council on Mental Wellbeing Workforce Solutions Community Tool Box | 5. Service Accessibility
Emerging Strategies to Ensure Access to Care |
| 2. Strategic Business Planning
U.S. Small Business Administration Business Plan Guide | 6. Policies and Procedures
Policy and Procedure Review Tool |
| 3. Outcomes Measurement
Behavioral Health Clinical Quality Measures Tool | 7. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements
Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) License Requirements |
| 4. Electronic Medical Records
SAMHSA Electronic Health Record Adoption | Community Behavioral Health Agency Tool kit - Recovery Housing and FCS |

In the **Sample Agency** example, the CEO hiring process is underway, so the team has decided to focus this domain's improvement exercise on licensing to support sustainable funding. In this case, the link to the **Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) License Requirements** is added to the Resources & Toolkits area as a suggested resource.

Resources & Toolkits

Behavioral Health Agency (BHA)
License Requirements

After completing the assessment

The assessment allows agencies to develop an action plan for strengthening their organization, which contributes to improved quality of care and clinical outcomes. The recommendations outlined in the scoring tool can provide a roadmap for quality-improvement initiatives.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

How often should an organization complete the SODA?

Agencies are encouraged to complete the assessment once per year to measure progress toward higher standards benchmarked in the tool.

Who will see the results of my assessment, and how will that information be used?

The assessment is intended to be an internal learning and planning tool. An agency may choose to utilize the tool with potential partners to determine areas of synergies or areas of investment. Organizations will self-score and will be able to see their results immediately. The assessment results can serve as a quality improvement roadmap.

Can I get help in completing the assessment?

The assessment is designed to be easy to follow and score. Instructions about how to complete the assessment can be found in this Implementation Guide.

What happens after I complete the assessment?

The assessment allows agencies to develop their action plan for improving quality of care and clinical outcomes.

What if I have questions about the tool or assessment?

You may contact the developers of the tool: [Principle Allies](#).

For the most up-to-date information related to the SODA, please visit the [SODA Resource page](#).