

Environmental Audit Guide

Observer:

Context:

Date & Timeframe:

This observational guide is designed to help examine and document contextual factors that are shaping a person's communication and engagement. The guide organizes the environment into 4 different layers based broadly on the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and corresponding forms of ableism (Nario-Redmond, 2020) as operationalized in Vidal et al., 2023).

1. Cultural Messaging

- Look at verbal and nonverbal messaging through the environment (e.g., posters, focus of praise/correction, focus of attention, who is represented and who isn't) to consider what and who is valued?

2. Structural

- Consider how the environment is constructed (e.g., physical access, seating arrangements, means to engagement, sensory landscape)

3. Interpersonal

- Describe the frequency and nature of interactions (e.g., who? How often? Valence? Synchronous? Reciprocal? Prolonged? Egalitarian/hierarchical?)

4. Internal

- What does the individual appear to be experiencing/feeling about themselves?

References

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 993–1028). Wiley.
- Nario-Redmond, M. R. (2020). *Ableism: The causes and consequences of disability prejudice*. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119142140>
- Vidal, V.G., Wachholtz, D.P., Mattie, L.J., & DeThorne, L.S. (2023). It takes a community: How environmental systems construct (in)competence in autistic peer interactions. *Language, Speech, & Hearing Services in Schools, 54*, 63-81.