Choosing the Right Assessment Method: 
External Reviews

Definition: External reviews consist of utilizing an expert in your field from outside of your service unit, usually in the form of an auditing agency or an expert working in similar unit at another institution to conduct, evaluate, or supplement your service unit assessment.

- **Advantages:**
  - Third party objectivity: Provides an unbiased look into the aspects of the service.
  - Clients of the service or members of the service unit may disclose to the external evaluator information that they may not otherwise share to someone who works directly in that service.
  - External evaluators may see positive or negative attributes of a service to which insiders have grown accustomed to and therefore, may not identify themselves.
  - External evaluators may have skills, knowledge or resources not otherwise available for an assessment.

- **Disadvantages:**
  - Potentially expensive.
  - Time consuming.
  - Risk of a “misfit” between an examiner’s expertise and/or the expectations and service unit outcomes.

- **Ways to Reduce Disadvantages:**
  - Have the service unit members share their service philosophies and objectives with the external evaluator and agree on assessment criteria before the assessment begins.
  - Limit the external examiner process to service areas where an external evaluation might be most beneficial.