

Safe, needs-based referral and support



Facilitate continuity between resources

- Referral is easier when trust has already been established. Creating a therapeutic alliance facilitates continuity of care.
- As much as possible (depending on confidentiality, consent, time, and other restraints), share relevant information about the individual with other services. Certain individuals, especially those who have experienced forced migration, might find having to repeat their story difficult.
- A personalized referral (e.g., giving the specific name of the person to contact or establishing contact during a meeting) may lead to better outcomes.

Offer resources or activities based on needs

For individuals who have recently immigrated or are still settling in, certain resources can strengthen social networks, provide support, and help them envision a better future (see the **Explore and Highlight Strengths** page [only available in French]).

- By speaking to the person and exploring their strengths, you will learn about their needs, interests, and preferences. This will allow you to better target relevant resources. For example:
 - Housing
 - Legal aid
 - Discovering Quebec
 - Integration
 - Support groups
 - Leisure activities
 - Food aid
 - Civic engagement
 - Social support
 - Family activities
 - Transportation
- Keep in mind that community or religious organizations that offer services to a specific community, or in the person's language, may help them feel understood.
- Have access to a list of community resources and organizations in your territory.
- Before referring the person to a community organization that offers services to a specific community, make sure they feel comfortable using that resource and identify with that particular community.
- If possible, show solidarity by writing letters of support to facilitate access to services (e.g., school, asylum claim, employment, etc.).

Suggest resources safely

To help diminish the lack of trust a person may feel towards a resource, they should understand how it can be useful and what its goal are. They should also be informed of how confidentiality, autonomy, and safety are addressed with regards to that resource.



Keep in mind

The person might seek help from people who share certain aspects of their identity (e.g., religion, gender identity, mental health diagnosis), or prefer neutral services, or even ones that are far from their family or community.

Mistrust toward health services, social services, or institutions may come from past experiences with mental health or immigration services, the police, the justice system, etc.

Discuss the suggested resources with the individual

- Which resources would they prefer? Why?
- Do they have any questions about access to resources and data collection?
- What would make them feel welcome and understood?
- Which resources do they trust most? Why?
- What factors would motivate them to use resources (e.g., trust, flexible scheduling, proximity, transportation costs, etc.)?
- What would help the person overcome barriers to accessing services?
- Take the time to explain the purpose of the referral and the role of the resource. If applicable, remind them that using the resources will not affect their migration status.
- Inform the individual about health services, social services, and helplines in Canada, explaining that they are accessible to a wide audience, not just to people with serious mental health problems.
- Discuss the limits of each resource (e.g., waiting list, lack of staff, etc.) to foster independent and informed decision-making, as well as manage expectations.

If the individual expresses fear or mistrust toward resources

- Explore their concerns and try to address them.
- If emergency services (911) are suggested, explain how they work and the possible implications of calling on them. Clarify that these resources are there to help them.
- Consider other resources that do not elicit fear or mistrust.
- If the resources in your area are limited, work on rebuilding trust between the person and the resource that elicits mistrust or fear (e.g., listen to the person's concerns, provide information and support, etc.).



Watch three video clips by an expert on the topic