

CHEAT SHEET:

French Language Services

IF YOU SPEAK FRENCH

(Intermediate Level or Higher)



LE RÉSEAU DU MIEUX-ÊTRE
FRANCOPHONE
DU NORD DE L'ONTARIO

What is Active Offer of French Language Services?

Active offer of French language services is the action of proactively offering quality services which are:

- ❖ Available at all times;
- ❖ Clearly communicated;
- ❖ Visible;
- ❖ Easily accessible;
- ❖ Equivalent to the quality of services offered in English.

See [Poster - Active Offer of French Language Health Services](#).

It's always important to actively offer health services in French, regardless of the individual's:

- ❖ Accent;
- ❖ Name that may be associated to a specific language;
- ❖ Appears to speak English;
- ❖ Is accompanied by an English-speaking person, for example a parent or a caregiver;
- ❖ Asks for English written materials.

Why is it important to actively offer health services in French?

Active Offer is person-centered care and improves:

- ❖ Quality and safety of care;
- ❖ Relationships with clients;
- ❖ Diagnosis and medical follow-ups;
- ❖ Client's confidence.



How can I assist my Francophone clients?

- ❖ Use a pin or name tag that clearly identifies that you speak French.
- ❖ When offering services, **ALWAYS** use a bilingual greeting, such as “Hello / Bonjour”, this indicates to the clients that you speak French.
- ❖ If the person responds in French, continue the conversation in French.
- ❖ Record an identical bilingual message in both languages for your voicemail.
- ❖ Ensure the availability of documentation in French.
- ❖ Ensure continuity of services in French by referring clients to French-speaking professionals.
- ❖ Don't be embarrassed of your French and your accent: Francophones appreciate the effort (Tools : Med Interpret App, Interpretation Guide, Workshop - Interpretation and you).
- ❖ Be proactive in introducing yourself as a Francophone and reassuring the person that they can speak to you in French.

How can I ensure proper understanding between my client and myself?

Many Francophones may be embarrassed to say that they are not comfortable in English. Here are some tips to ensure good communication:

- ❖ Make eye contact, and take the time to pronounce the words well;
- ❖ Read the client's body language (anxious, confused, overwhelmed, etc.);
- ❖ Adjust your vocabulary for your client, and use familiar language or define certain words as needed;
- ❖ Repeat the key messages;
- ❖ If the person seems to only use simple words (for example: yes...), it may be a sign that they did not understand;
- ❖ Debrief with the individual, such as asking them to repeat to ensure they understood.
- ❖ Take your time and make sure the individual has no further questions.

How to identify a French-speaking client?

The following two questions are recommended at the time of admission and throughout the continuum of care:

- ❖ **What is your mother tongue?**
(French, English or Other)
- ❖ **If your mother tongue is neither French nor English, in which of Canada's official languages are you most comfortable?** (French or English)

See [Fact Sheet – Identification of Language of Service](#).





Behaviors to AVOID when offering services to Francophones:

- ❖ Don't expect Francophone clients to ask for services in French.
- ❖ Don't assume that all Francophones speak English.
- ❖ Don't speak louder and slower in English to a Francophone.
- ❖ Don't expect the client to be able to get by in English to accommodate you.
- ❖ Don't expect the caregiver to act as an interpreter due to potential risks.
- ❖ Don't exclude the French-speaking client from the conversation when there is an interpreter.



What can I do to learn more?

- ❖ Follow the activeoffertraining.ca.
- ❖ Discover the [French Language Training Reimbursement Program](#).
- ❖ Consult the [Tools and Resources](#) section on the Website of the *Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario* - rmefno.ca.



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