

Work Together With Francophones In Ontario: Understanding The Context And Using Promising Practices

GUIDE



Prepared by the Healthy Communities Consortium

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FOREWORD

Why do we need this guide?

The Healthy Communities Consortium conducted a needs assessment in 2010-2011, and the Health Promotion French Language Services Committee made a regional tour to examine community involvement in the autumn of 2009. Both of these assessments clearly demonstrated the need to develop support for integrating groups from the Francophone community into partnerships with the Healthy Communities Fund in Ontario. As a first response to the needs assessments, the Consortium began by offering a series of webinars and training sessions in different regions in both English and French, with the objective of raising awareness on good practices in working together and mutual engagement with Francophones in Ontario. Following the success of the webinars and training sessions, participants expressed the need for a bilingual resource that would serve as a tool to raise awareness and provide guidance for partners and organizations that regularly work together in engaging Francophones in Ontario, as well as to develop the offer of services in French.

An objective analysis of the reports from the French Services Commissioner in Ontario indicates that several organizations appear to experience serial failures in engaging with Francophones and providing services in a good level of French. In other cases, and in spite of the obstacles, many organizations have experienced great success. One thing is clear: even when an organization has good intentions, collaborating with Francophones in Ontario can be difficult if good practices and an understanding of the social context and community background are not part of the equation. This guide aims to provide the necessary understanding and to help you build successful practices

What does this guide contain?

The first section contains useful information on the relevance of collaborating with Francophones in order to provide quality French language services to this community. We have drawn up a portrait of Francophone communities in Ontario, describing their characteristics and highlighting various laws and institutional supports for providing French language services in Ontario. In the second section, we offer food for thought to help your organization develop and provide services in French: the development of partnerships; the creation of a bilingual organizational culture; understanding elements in governing and accountability; building bilingual human resources in your organization; policies and procedures conducive to supporting bilingual programs, and more. The second section also provides an exhaustive checklist to help you develop an action plan, wherein you can establish three priorities to begin the process of engaging with Francophones in Ontario.

We have provided several examples of successful organizations to offer a more concrete understanding of how to apply a strategy to develop French language services in your organization. The list of resources and associated references in this section alone constitutes an impressive amount of valuable information.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport for its financial contribution through the Health Promotion French Language Services Committee. The Committee includes more than 10 members from the community and various government agencies. Its mandate is to offer strategic support to the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport and key partners in improving French language services in health promotion activities. The committee members are:

- Healthy Communities Consortium
- The Health Communication Unit/
The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
- French Language Health Services Network
- Ottawa Public Health
- OPHEA
- Health Nexus
- Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Regional Services Branch
- Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Branch
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
French Language Services Office
- Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Standards, Programs & Community Development Branch

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About the Healthy Communities Consortium

The Healthy Communities Consortium receives financial support from the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport's Ontario Healthy Communities program to assist groups, organizations and community partnerships create healthy communities throughout Ontario.

We are a group of organizations with a combined experience of more than 25 years working with groups, coalitions, and community organizations on community initiatives for health promotion.

- Health Promotion Specialist, Health Nexus
- Ontario Public Health Association
- Healthy Communities Support Services, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
- Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership

For more information on the Healthy Communities Consortium, visit the website at:
www.consortiumcs.ca

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INTRODUCTION

Why work together with Francophones?

Our society generally strives toward equity, inclusiveness and creating a sense of belonging. This is especially the case in health and social services, since these are priorities for governments as well as for society in general. These services are important factors that contribute to a healthier population, better social cohesion, stronger communities and a more equitable and prosperous society. By eliminating barriers in access to services (i.e. language), providing services in French will help to build a more inclusive and healthier society.

Why do services need to be offered in French?

Franco-Ontarians are the largest French-speaking community outside of Quebec, and they have the right to demand and receive services in their language by provincial and government offices as well as by certain entities receiving funding from the provincial government. Enshrined in the *French Language Services Act*, among others, this right acknowledges the contribution made by Franco-Ontarians in the development of Ontario over past centuries, and which continues today. The Act also communicates the government's concern in preserving the heritage and enabling Francophone communities to flourish throughout the province.

In the health and social services sectors, as noted by Sarah Bowen in her study entitled *Language Barriers in Access to Health Care*¹, it is generally acknowledged that a client who receives services in his or her language follows instructions better, does not need to fall back on hospital services as often, and remains in better health. Often, he will have a stronger sense of belonging to the community, which also has a positive impact on his well-being. Researchers allocate increasing levels of importance to this sense of belonging as an indicator of individual and community well-being (*Report to the Federal Minister of Health: Towards a New Leadership For The Improvement of Health Services in French – 2007*).

By offering services in a client's language, service providers can understand his situation more adequately and offer services that are better adapted to his needs. This improves the quality of their services, and translates their concern for equity into concrete action. As well, a bilingual capability lends providers the advantage of reaching a greater proportion of the target clientele, creating links with the communities and providing a better reflection of the community's diversity.

It should be remembered that according to Statistics Canada data from 2006 on the composition of non-Anglophones in the Ontario population, Francophones come in second place after people from South Asia.

As with any other health service, planning and providing services in French requires time and effort. Carrying out this planning and work is another step towards inclusion and equity in health care provision, resulting in definite impacts on clients, the organization offering the services, and the entire community.

Did you know?

- ◆ *Ontario has the greatest number of Francophones outside of Quebec*
- ◆ *Franco-Ontarians have the right to receive services in French in 25 designated regions in Ontario*
- ◆ *Language is an essential determinant of health that must be considered when planning health and social services.*

PART A: WORKING WITH FRANCOPHONES IN ONTARIO: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Portrait of Francophone communities in Ontario

Who are the Francophones in Ontario?

Ontario's Francophones share French as a common language. As for the rest, the Franco-Ontarian community is characterized by a wide diversity of ethnicity, religions, origins, education, culture, income, values and experiences. It is therefore essential to consider this diversity when planning, setting up and offering French language services.

History – More than 400 years of Francophone presence in Ontario

The French presence in Ontario goes back more than 400 years. The Franco-Ontarian community now numbers 582,690 individuals, which is 4.8% of the province's total population².

The French explorers were the first Europeans to set foot in what is now Ontario, and the first to establish colonies. But in 1763, after more than 150 years in Canada, France ceded its North American colonies to England.

Under the British regime, Francophones participated in the economic and social development of Upper Canada. However, in the wake of the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions of 1837, the Durham Report recommended the assimilation of French Canadians and the dominance of the English language in Canada.

After Confederation in 1867, internal divisions grew between English Canadians who favoured assimilation, and French Canadians who desired equal status. French-Canadian leaders demanded recognition for the right to their own schools and religion.

Education has always been a priority for Franco-Ontarians. Following the adoption of Ruling 17 (1912) imposing the English language as the only language for teaching in public schools, Francophones organized popular resistance and created separate schools. The crisis cooled down in 1927 when bilingual schools were once again established. Starting in 1969, Ontario laws authorized French schools at the elementary and high school levels.

The schools crisis of 1912 led to the movement for self-actualization among Francophones in Ontario. Between 1910 and 1960, they set up many organizations to defend their rights and promote their culture, such as the Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFÉO), the first Francophone caisse populaire (credit union) in 1910, and the daily newspaper *Le Droit* in 1913.

The 1970s were a period of cultural and artistic effervescence. The Franco-Ontarian flag was created and raised for the first time in front of Laurentian University in Sudbury on September 25, 1975. In 1980, TVOntario began to provide French programming.

During the 1980s, the Ontario government began to enlarge the legislative framework defining the rights of Francophones. In 1984, the *Courts of Justice Act* conferred the French language with the status of official language before the courts. In 1986, the government adopted the *French Language Services Act*, which granted legal status to French in the Legislative Assembly and guaranteed the public the right to receive government services in French.



While education and culture were the traditional battlegrounds in which Franco-Ontarians asserted their rights, in the mid-1990s health and social services began to emerge as priorities. In 1997, the government recommended that Hôpital Montfort be closed: this was the only Francophone university hospital centre in Ontario and in all of Canada west of Quebec. This decision led to a popular resistance movement. In a series of historic legal judgements, the courts decided in favour of the hospital and its defenders, based on the fundamental unwritten principle of the Constitution: the respect for and protection of linguistic minorities³. In

the opinion of the Court of Appeal, the *French Language Services Act* would from that moment forward be subject to a broad and liberal interpretation. The community continued on the strength of this motivation by creating health networks in French in the early 2000s, and in 2011, setting up six service planning entities in French by virtue of the *Local Health System Integration Act*. To find out more about these health networks in French, consult the Société Santé en français website at: <http://santefrancais.ca>.

Since the beginning, immigration and migration have played a fundamental role in Francophone history in Ontario. The first Francophone colonists came mainly from France. In the 19th century, French Canadians migrated to Ontario, attracted by jobs emerging from industrialization and railway construction. More recently, as we can see in the demographic survey, Francophones still migrate from Quebec, but in addition there are approximately 30 other countries contributing international immigrants from regions of the world where French is spoken: Europe, Africa, many Caribbean countries, the Middle East and Asia.

An inclusive definition of Francophone

On June 4, 2009, the Ontario government adopted a new and broader definition of the Francophone population to better reflect the new realities and diversity of the Francophone community in Ontario.

Prior to this, Francophones had been defined according to their mother tongue, or “the first language learned at home during childhood and which is still understood at the time of the census.”

The new inclusive definition of Francophone (IDF) is based on three census questions: mother tongue, the language spoken at home and knowledge of the official languages. The IDF measures the number of people whose mother tongue is French and adds those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, but who have a particular knowledge of French as an official language and who use French at home, including recent immigrants to Ontario who use French as their language of integration.

Ontario Francophone...

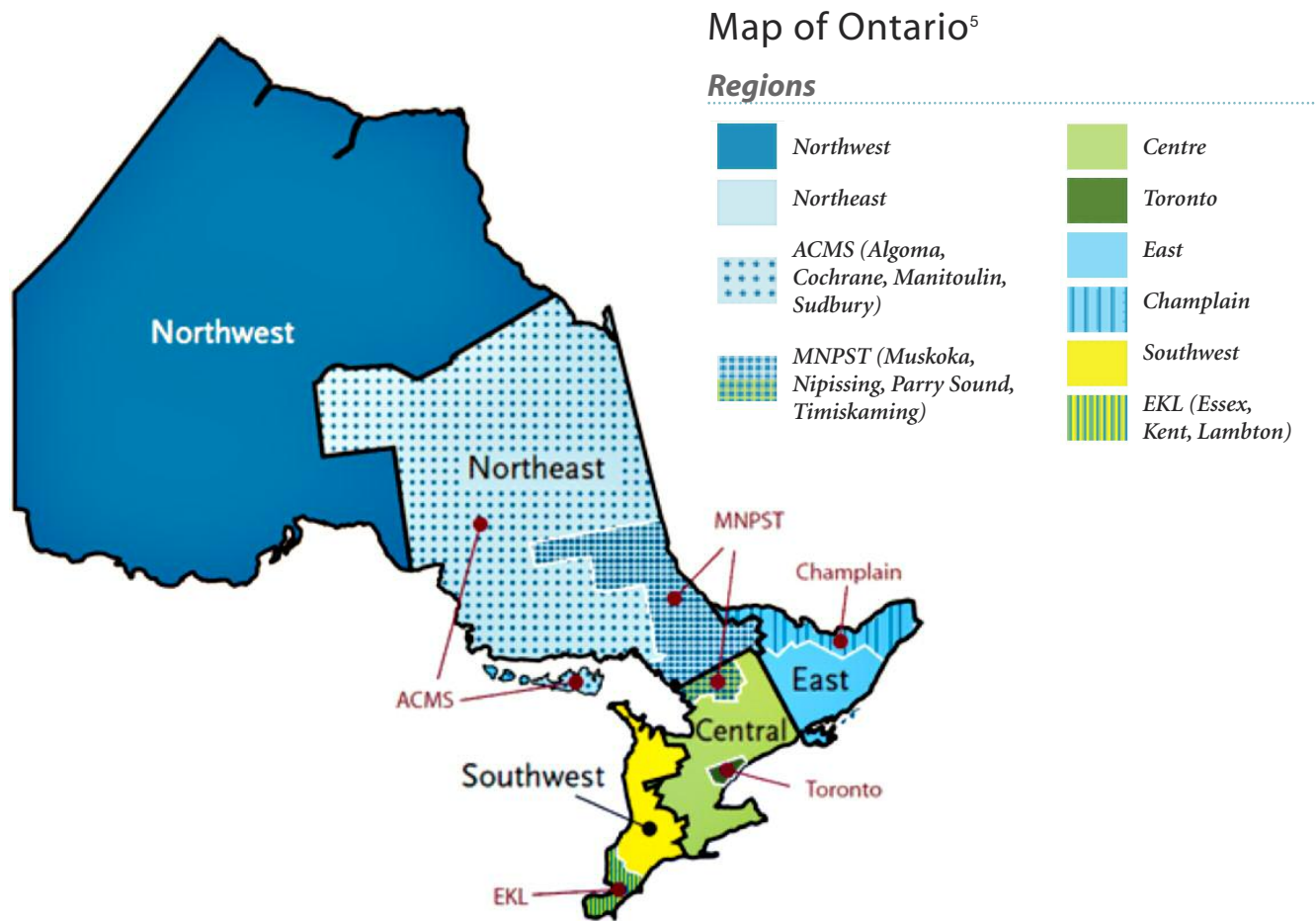
- ◆ *I am from Russia, my mother tongue is Russian, I lived in France, I speak French, English and Russian at home, and I live in Kingston. I am an Ontario Francophone.*
- ◆ *I am Nigerian, my mother tongue is Haoussa, I married a woman from Quebec, I speak French at home, and I live in Ottawa. I am an Ontario Francophone.*

(Adapted from the Office of Francophone Affairs, visual presentation: http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/docs/affiches_francophone_ontario.pdf)

The demographic survey that follows uses this new inclusive definition of Francophone. The data come from a series of demographic profiles published in 2009 and 2010 by the Office of Francophone Affairs and the Ontario Trillium Foundation; the complete list of profiles can be found in Appendix 1.

Demographic survey

The Francophone population is dynamic, complex and increasingly diverse. According to the 2006 census data, 10% of Francophones state that they belong to an ethnic group and nearly 22% of Francophone immigrants arrived here between 2001 and 2006⁴.

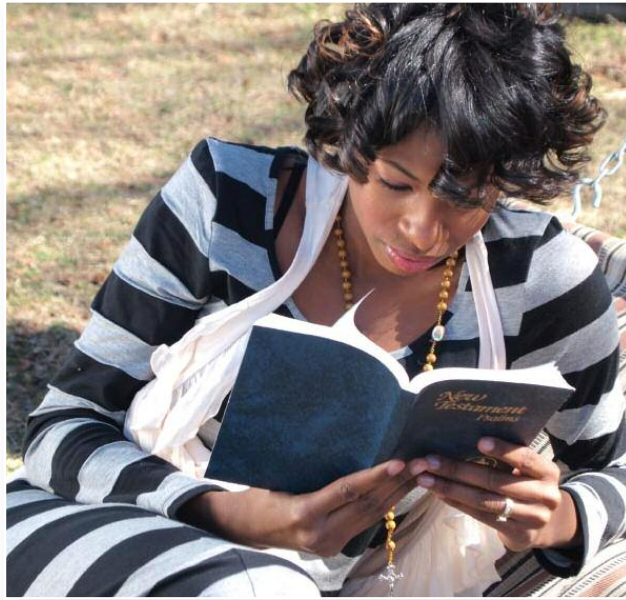


In 2006, the nearly 600,000 Francophones in Ontario were distributed throughout the province as follows:

- East 41.5%
- Centre-Southwest 34.6%
- North 23.9%

However, the greatest concentrations of ethnic groups were in the Centre, particularly in the Greater Toronto Area. Three out of five Francophones were born in Ontario and one out of five was born in Quebec. Most of the Francophone immigrants settle in the Centre region. For example, almost half of the Francophones in Toronto were not born in Canada and one out of three Francophones belongs to an ethnic group. By offering services in French, we need to take into account not only the overall diversity, but also the differences between regions.

Community diversity



The Francophone community features all kinds of diversity – religious, age, physical ability, economic status, education. It is multiconfessional, and includes followers of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and traditional African and Caribbean religions⁶.

The Francophone population tends to be older than the overall population. It includes proportionately more people in the 65 years and up age group, and fewer persons in the under 35 age group – except in regions with a higher economic growth rate, such as the Greater Toronto Area, where the median age is lower due to the presence of ethnic communities which are clearly younger than the overall Francophone

population. In the communities of Northwestern and Southwestern Ontario, the age of the Francophone population is much higher. An aging population will have a definite impact on the need for French language services. Studies already show that Francophones are more likely to need help with at least one daily activity⁷. Research also shows that fewer elderly persons speak English (12 % of elderly Francophones in Ontario are unilingual): access to French language services is absolutely essential for this population⁸.

Most Francophones speak French at home – in the East and Northeast regions, approximately two-thirds speak French most often at home. Over two-thirds of Francophones use French at work and close to 90% are bilingual.

Education and jobs

Compared to the overall population in Ontario, Francophones are more likely to have a certificate or diploma from a trade school or apprenticeship, but fewer of them have obtained a high school diploma or a university degree. The exception to this trend is once again in the central region, where more than a third of Francophones have at least a Bachelor's degree from a university. Members of ethnic communities are also more likely to have a university degree – this, according to 2001 census statistics cited in the statistical profile of Francophone ethnic minorities in Ontario published by the Office of Francophone Affairs in 2005⁹: 31.7% of Francophone ethnic minorities had a university diploma compared to 14.7% of Francophones in general. Among Francophones with a university degree, there is a trend toward the fields of education and human sciences.

In general in the year 2006, Francophones earned an average employment income that was higher than the overall population. However, the Francophones of Southwestern and Northern Ontario earned less than the Francophones of the Central and Eastern regions. The unemployment rate among Francophones was similar to that of the overall population, but there are gaps between regions: the highest rate of unemployment is in the North and the lowest is in the East. Nevertheless, still in 2006, fewer Francophones were living under the low income cut-off compared to the overall population, whereas the Francophones in the Central region, especially in Toronto, had the greatest proportion of people living below the low income cut-off.



With regard to members of ethnic groups, in spite of the fact that their level of education is clearly higher, the portrait is very different. Members of ethnic minorities earned much less than Francophones as a whole. In 2006, the average income of an individual member of a [Francophone] ethnic minority was \$22,417, compared to \$32,804 for Francophones in general¹⁰. The unemployment rate is also higher among members of ethnic groups than among Francophones in general: 11.5% compared to 6.2 %¹¹.

Some features of Ontario Francophones

Experiencing life from a minority perspective

The statistics indicate that Francophones in Ontario have made a lot of progress over the years. They are more educated, they earn more, unemployment levels are lower, and the population is more diverse. Nevertheless, the Francophone community in Ontario is a linguistic minority in the broader society of Ontario and Canada, and this minority situation influences the way this community perceives life, as well as its linguistic behaviours and reasoning.

The first factor to keep in mind is the geographic scattering of Francophones throughout all areas of the province, and the variations in population density. According to the *Rapport sur l'état de la situation des services de santé en français en Ontario* [Report on the status of French language services in health care in Ontario], published in 2001 by the Société Santé en français, the density of the Francophone population has a decisive influence on access to services in



French¹². In the East and Northeast, Francophones constitute a relatively large proportion of the total population of the region and form a critical mass, which facilitates the consideration of Francophone concerns by authorities and service providers, as well as the ability to set up services whose primary clientele is the Francophone community. But in the other regions of the province, even where Francophones are relatively numerous – such as over 53,000 in Toronto – they are only a very small percentage of the total population – 2% of the total population in Toronto. The result is that it is difficult for Francophones to be taken seriously and motivate service providers to consider their needs, in spite of their fundamental right to services. The difficulty of setting up services to respond to their needs is a recurring problem. Even if the service provider is aware of the existence of Francophones and their needs, it is more difficult – due to a variety of reasons – to consult them, attract them, and serve them appropriately.

The dual minority identity of Francophone immigrants

While Francophones are usually in a minority situation within their communities, recent immigrants and members of racialized communities are in an even more intense minority situation. Francophones from visible minorities have a dual minority identity: they are part of a linguistic minority in a majority Anglophone Ontario, and are a visible minority among mainly white Franco-Ontarians. They bring with them cultures and values that are different from traditional Canadian Francophones, and they face many challenges when integrating their new society: the risk of marginalization, seeking employment, poverty, adapting to the surrounding culture. Sometimes, new immigrants are survivors of war or terrorism. Often, they do not speak English. They may not know that services are available in French, or have difficulty accessing them. When interacting with service providers and health or social workers, they often encounter

a lack of awareness of their cultural values regarding illness or disease, treatment, and behaviours common in certain cultures. This often results in health deterioration, stigmatization, and exclusion¹³.

Minority status can have an impact on a person's sense of belonging to his community. According to the report entitled *Count me in!*¹⁴, societies that encourage a sense of belonging also encourage better health among their citizens. A sense of belonging develops alongside the reality of belonging to a community when members of the community unite and establish social networks.

The *Deuxième rapport sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario* [Second report on the health of Francophones in Ontario]¹⁵ indicates that Francophones are more likely to state that their sense of belonging to their community is not as strong when compared to Anglophones. In some regions, Francophones are more likely to manifest lifestyle habits that can cause health risks: they drink and smoke more; they eat fewer fruits and vegetables; they have less power to make decisions in their work lives. These are health behaviours that we must consider when planning activities to promote health, such as planning for health services.

Experience shows that Francophones do not always demand services in French, even if the provider has made these services available. Researchers have defined sociolinguistic concepts that partly explain this phenomenon of disengagement and assimilation, which is intimately related to the history and minority status of Francophones in Ontario.

Symbolic violence

The concept of symbolic violence was described as a theory in the 1970s by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron to explain the relationships of power in society between the dominant and subordinate groups and classes¹⁶. With regard to linguistic minorities, we can define this concept as “action(s) by the dominant linguistic group to force the linguistic minority to speak the dominant language. Symbolic violence is conducted with the implicit consent of the subordinate group, because its concept of domination includes only the dominant group's categories of ideas. Symbolic violence serves to maintain order, without the conscious awareness of those using it.”

Symbolic violence can also occur within a linguistic minority group and cause linguistic insecurity. The constant reminder communicated to linguistic minorities that they may not be up to linguistic standards creates a sense of insecurity and anxiety and may even cause some people to stop speaking their own language.

Manifestations of symbolic violence:

A Francophone goes to the counter to be served and is told:

- ◆ *I'm sorry but I don't speak French.*
- ◆ *Can you speak English?*
- ◆ *It's not polite to speak a language other people can't understand.*
- ◆ *Why should we offer services in French? French is not one of our priorities. We have many more clients who speak other languages.*

Internalized oppression is manifested by:

- ◆ *Discomfort with one's identity as a Francophone*
- ◆ *Not wanting to belong to the community anymore*
- ◆ *Not letting on that you are different*
- ◆ *Fear of causing others to become angry*
- ◆ *Fear of not obtaining services*
- ◆ *Fear of falling behind and losing credibility*
- ◆ *Fear of being perceived as a "whiner"*
- ◆ *Fear that nobody will listen if you speak French*
- ◆ *Passive acceptance of assimilation*
- ◆ *Pretending to belong to the majority group to obtain the same privileges.*
- ◆ *Believing that services in English are better than services in French.*

(Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes.
Across the Chasm – Facilitation Guide)

Internalized oppression

Related to the power of symbolic violence, the concept of internalized oppression also helps explain the linguistic behaviours of Franco-Ontarians. "External oppression is the unjustified exercise of authority and power of one group over another. This includes imposing the beliefs, values and lifestyle of one group on another group. External oppression becomes internalized oppression when we end up believing and acting as if the beliefs, values and lifestyle of the oppressor were [the only] reality. Internalized oppression can also be defined as "self-hate" or "internalized racism". Internalized oppression translates into shame and a disavowal of one's individual and cultural reality."¹⁷

The bilingual resource *Faire le Pont / Across the Chasm* explains how women who are living in situations of violence undergo internalized oppression through barriers to access to services in French. It goes without saying that all of this can occur when a woman is reticent to admit that she is a Francophone and demand services in French. This is one of the reasons why an active offer of services is so important. This will be explained in greater detail further in this guide.

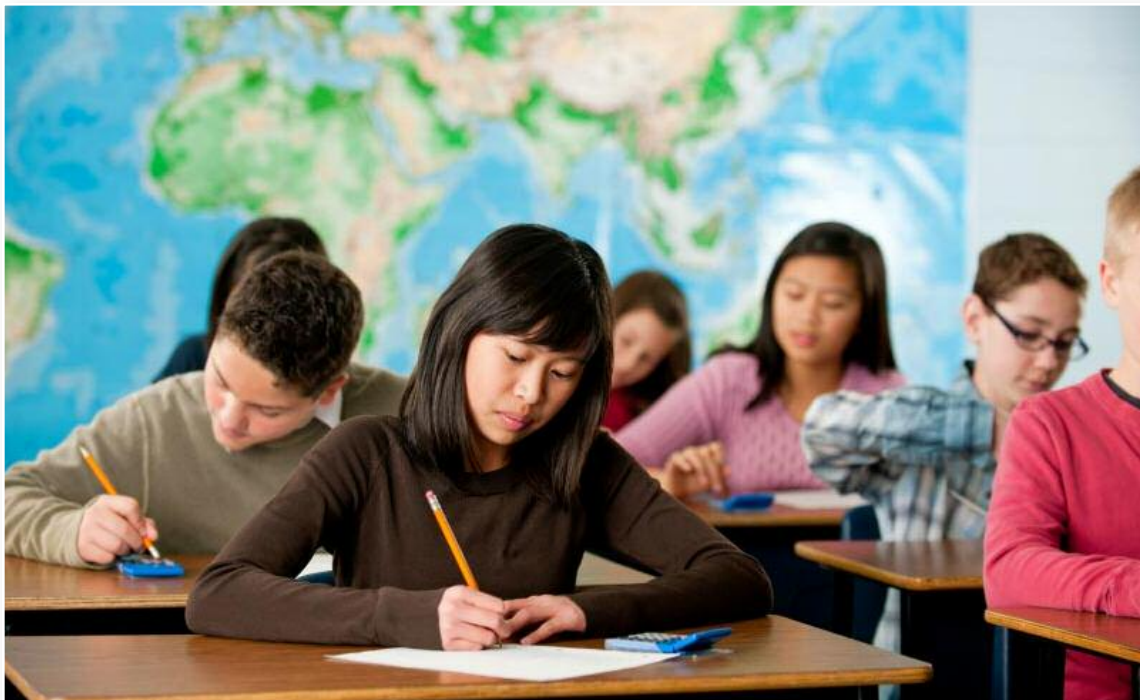
Marrying outside of one's ethnic or linguistic group (exogamy) is another factor that can have a significant impact on demand for services in French. In many families, the partners do not speak the same language. Some Francophone clients may have studied in English, and do not know the technical vocabulary in French and prefer to have the option of reading documents in English but they are more comfortable speaking with a health worker in French. In these circumstances, it's possible that bilingual services may be requested; and this must be taken into account when planning and providing services in French.

Access to services in French across regions and sectors

Access to services in French varies by region and sector. Even though there are still gaps, there is a nearly complete range of services in French in Eastern and Northeastern Ontario, regions where there is a critical mass of Francophones. Elsewhere in the province, access to services is much more of a problem.

Education sector

In elementary and high school education, which has been a priority for Francophones since as far back as the turn of the last century, there are services everywhere in the province. Ontario has set up 12 public and Catholic school boards that oversee more than 425 French language elementary and high schools throughout the province; each and every Francophone student has the right, according to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, to study in French.



In postsecondary education, access is more limited. There are two French language colleges: Cité collégiale in Ottawa and Collège Boréal, which has its main campus in Sudbury as well as satellite campuses throughout Northern and Central Southwestern Ontario. For university studies, there are six bilingual universities offering a good selection of programs in French. However, the post-secondary French language system has a more limited choice of programs than what is available in English, and some programs are not offered in French in Ontario, particularly in scientific and technical fields. Yet it is precisely in these fields where it is most difficult to recruit and retain French-speaking professionals.

Early childhood education sector

The network of French language daycares is also well-developed. Daycares are most often associated with French language schools: this helps to create a seamless system all the way from early childhood until the end of high school studies.

Cultural sector



Since the 1970s, Francophone culture has been developing and growing in Ontario: music, theatre, television, visual arts, literature and many other fields of cultural expression have flourished. Even in small towns, there is often a Francophone cultural centre offering cultural and artistic programming that reflects a diverse Franco-Ontarian heritage. Several community radio stations have set up shop beside Radio-Canada in the heart of Francophone Ontario, and since 1986, Francophones have had access to their own educational television station (TFO), which became fully independent in 2006.

The website Etablissement.org

(www.etalissement.org/index.asp) presents a good overview of artistic and cultural life in Francophone Ontario.

Health and social services sector

Services in French are not as well developed in the health and social services field, particularly outside of Eastern and Northeastern Ontario. Several studies have reported on the gaps in services in primary care, community support services, child protection, long-term care, services for the disabled, hospital services, public health services and health promotion activities. Depending on the region, access to any given service can vary between 0% and 100%¹⁸. The report on the status of French language services in health care in Ontario by Société Santé en français, along with the provincial and regional *Préparer le terrain* reports (available on the site of each of the province's French health networks; see Appendix 1) present a good overview of the situation.

Every year in his annual report, the French Language Services Commissioner brings the problems relating to services in French in the field of health and social services to the attention of the government and the general public. In his annual report for 2010, *Open to Solutions*, the Commissioner examined the community care access centres (CCACs), the public health units and the Children's Aid Societies. These are sectors where the Commissioner demanded that access to services be improved.

The Commissioner had this to say about CCACs: "On April 1, 2009, Ontario's Francophones lost out when major changes were made to the status of community care access centres (CCACs) as a result of changes to the *Community Care Access Corporations Act of 2001*. [...] the CCAC's status changed from that of a government agency to that of a non-for-profit corporation governed by an independent board of directors. ... the CCACs [which] were no longer subject to the French Language Services Act"¹⁹. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended that the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care Services "issue a regulation to ensure that *Community Care Access Centres comply with the obligations under the French Language Services Act*"²⁰.

As a result, starting in January 2012, French language services will be compulsory in Community Care Access Centres throughout the province.

Financed in part by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, public health units “are an integral part of the province health care delivery system. [...] The majority of the public health units do not deliver equivalent services in French, in spite of the fact that many programs are of vital importance to the Francophone community.”²¹ In consideration of the role played by the province in financing public health units and various public health initiatives, as well as in developing standards and priorities in response to specific needs of Francophones:

*The French Language Services Commissioner recommends that when all or part of their funding comes from the province, the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care require public health units to implement the French Language Services Act.*²²



With regard to Children’s Aid societies, the Commissioner stated: “With a few rare exceptions, such as Services to Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell, it is not easy to obtain French language services, even with the help of the Ministry. Again, this is not even remotely close to the principle of active offer. [...] A lack of French language services can have serious consequences.”²³ The Commissioner therefore made the following recommendation to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services:

“A. Ensure that the Children’s Aid Societies actively offer French language services throughout the province.

*B. In cooperation with the Children’s Aid Societies, create a network, or at the very least a directory of French language service providers for the benefit of those Societies that are currently unable to offer these services themselves.”*²⁴

In a special report published in 2009, the Commissioner examined the integration of Francophones in planning for the health care services while he issued recommendations regarding the obligations of third parties to provide French language services in his 2008 and 2010 reports. *“Because the way in which services are offered is constantly evolving, the Commissioner urges the government to follow up on the recommendation that he made in 2007-2008 for a regulatory framework for services offered by third parties, in order to eliminate existing loopholes. More than 20 years after the adoption of the French Language Services Act, third-party French-language service delivery must be regulated.”*²³ Given that most social, health and health promotion services are offered by community organizations funded by the government, this recommendation is of capital importance.

On this subject, on June 27, 2011 the Ontario’s French Language Services Commissioner expressed his satisfaction with the adoption of a new regulation regarding the services provided by third parties on behalf of government ministries and agencies. This regulation, which had twice been recommended by the Commissioner, protects the delivery of services in French and is a call to order for all of government and its structures.

Sports, leisure and other sectors

In the fields of sports, recreation and tourism, few services are specifically offered for Francophones. These are fields which mainly fall under the responsibility of municipalities, which are not subject to the *French Language Services Act*. It is therefore the Francophone community’s responsibility to become organized in order to create Francophone Scout troops, soccer leagues, hockey leagues, seniors’ centres, youth centres and daycares. This is often not possible due to the fact that budgets are not allocated to Francophone communities in these fields. However, there are a few interesting individual community initiatives that have been put forward. The website [Établissement.org](http://www.etalblissement.org) (www.etalblissement.org/index.asp) provides an overview of the recreational and sports activities available in French in Ontario.





The rights of Francophones and current laws

In Ontario, Francophones have the right to receive services in French by virtue of different laws at the federal and provincial levels. However, the precise nature of their rights varies depending on the field of activity and the region. The obligations of service providers vary in the same fashion. In general, only those organizations which are identified as French language service providers by the ministries that finance them or which are designated by virtue of the *French Language Services Act* must offer services in French.

Provincial laws

The **French Language Services Act (FLSA)**²⁶ guarantees the public the right to receive services in French from Ontario government ministries and organizations located in 25 designated regions. The foreword of the FLSA also recognizes the impact of the cultural heritage of the Francophone population and hopes to preserve this heritage for future generations.

Municipalities will now be obligated to offer services in French. When services are transferred from the province to municipalities, the new regulation regarding the services provided by third parties on behalf of government ministries and agencies will be applicable.

The Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs oversees the application of the FLSA, but all ministers are responsible for providing French language services in their own offices. The Act was modified in May 2007 to create the French Language Services Commission.

The *French Language Services Act* is part of a group of legal provisions that aim to guarantee linguistic rights to Francophones. Other provincial and federal laws guarantee rights to Francophones, in particular at the provincial level with the *Education Act*, the *Courts of Justice Act*, the *Child and Family Services Act*, and the *Local Health System Integration Act of 2006*; and at the federal level with the *Official Languages Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The **Education Act**²⁷ confers Francophone students with the right to receive education in French at the elementary and high school levels; it also creates French language district school boards – Catholic and public – which are responsible for the management of French language schools.

Under the **Courts of Justice Act**²⁸, English and French are the official languages in the courts throughout Ontario. Francophones can demand a bilingual trial everywhere in Ontario; in the 21 regions designated under this law, Francophones can also submit documents in French and have a bilingual jury.

When deemed appropriate, the **Child and Family Services Act**²⁹ requires that service providers offer services to children and families in French. According to the French Services Commissioner, it means “according to the well-established principles of jurisprudence in the area of language rights, [it means] that if an individual asks for service in French, it is appropriate to offer service in French. This is separate from the issue of the designated areas under the French Language Services Act.”³⁰

The Act which created the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the **Local Health System Integration Act of 2006**³¹, requires that these networks not only offer their own services in French, but also engage the Francophone community with regard to the local health system: specifically, the Act requires the creation of health services planning entities in French, which we will look at later in this guide. The Act also mandates the creation of the French Language Health Services Advisory Council to advise the minister on issues concerning Francophones.

Federal laws

The guiding principles of linguistic duality at the federal level are enshrined in two regulatory frameworks: the *Official Languages Law* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Originally adopted in 1969, the objective of the **Official Languages Act**³² is to ensure that French and English are respected as the official languages in Canada; their equal status and



equality of rights and privileges with regard to their use in federal institutions; to support the development of Francophone and Anglophone minorities; and to specify the powers and obligations of federal institutions with regard to official languages.

The **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**³³ is a constitutional law that establishes both English and French as the official languages in Canada. It also defines the rights to education in the language of the linguistic minority, which in Ontario means in French.

Together, these provincial and federal laws set the foundations for services provided in French in the public and broader public sectors, and serve as a backdrop for the development of these services and enable Francophones communities in Ontario to flourish and grow in diversity.

Institutional support for providing services in French

In Ontario, several organizations offer support to French language service providers, as well as to the Francophone public.

Office of Francophone Affairs

Created pursuant to the *French Language Services Act*, the Office of Francophone Affairs (OFA)³⁴ works alongside government ministries to ensure application of the Act. With the help of the ministries' French Language Coordinators, the OFA ensures that citizens have access to services in French in the 25 designated regions, and that they are able to participate in the social, economic and political life of the province while preserving their cultural and linguistic heritage. It also provides information about the province's Francophone population to other levels of the government and members of the public.

In concrete terms, the OFA:

- Supports the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs in the development of services in French, and in the development of policies and programs that respond to the needs of Francophones in Ontario
- Offers expert advice on the issues that affect Francophones and French language services provision
- Collects and provides information on the Francophone community in Ontario
- Serves as a liaison between the Francophone community, the ministries and government organizations.

To carry out its mandate the OFA provides a vast array of resources, available on its website, to the public, provincial ministries, government organizations and French language service providers (www.ofa.gov.on.ca/fr/index.html).

French Language Services Commissioner

The French Language Services Commissioner³⁵ is accountable to the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, but is independent of the OFA. He leads independent investigations following official complaints, or upon his own initiative. He prepares reports on the investigations and monitors the progress achieved by government organizations regarding French language service provision in Ontario. He advises the minister and suggests recommendations related to the application of the Act.

To date, the Commissioner has published one special report on the health system and three annual reports. These reports describe his recommendations on how to improve service provision in French and can be a precious source of information and avenues in finding solutions to the challenges of providing services in French.

For the general public, the Commissioner plays a very important role in investigating the complaints officially submitted by citizens. In his investigations, the Commissioner and his staff work closely with ministries and service providers in general.

Provincial ministries and government organizations

To assist provincial ministries and government organizations in establishing, maintaining and evaluating services offered in French, a network of French Services Coordinators has been set up. According to the OFA, their role consists in helping people when they have questions regarding a ministry's provision of French language services or when their organizations would like to improve its services offered in French, and even to submit a request for designation. The full list of coordinators is available on the OFA site at the following address: www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/flsa-coordinators.html.

Some ministries also offer support at the regional level. For example, the regional offices of the Social and Community Services Ministry, and the Child and Youth Services Ministry often include one person who is responsible for French language services. This person's mandate also includes working with organizations providing services in French. In the same way, with regard to the health system, each Local Health Services Integration Network (LHIN) has a French Services Coordinator who must help health services providers to improve their services offered in French.

Health planning entities

Created in 2011 by virtue of a regulation under the *Local Health System Integration Act of 2006*³⁶, six planning entities exist throughout the province. The result of a will to engage the community in a sustained fashion in planning for the local health system, the mandate of these entities is to advise local LHINs on the ways to engage the Francophone community, on the health needs and priorities of this community and on ways to improve access to services.



PART B: WORKING WITH FRANCOPHONES: USING PROMISING PRACTICES

In the first section of this guide, we presented a summary of the context in which services are provided in French in Ontario. In this section, we will present several practices which, in the experiences of service providers, governments and researchers, are useful for organizations offering services that are both adapted to the needs of Francophone clients and welcome in their eyes. In Appendix 1, you will find a list of resources and websites that will provide other avenues for research and solutions to your specific problems.



The practices necessary to serving minority groups such as Francophones require that we adopt an inclusive approach: the target community must be valued and respected as an essential and equal partner. Offering fair and permanent access to excellent services will reduce the disparities in health care provision and directly promote equity. An inclusive approach means that every level of an organization must adopt an open and

positive attitude, be adaptable and demonstrate enough flexibility to accommodate the needs, culture and values of the target community and to take into account its diversity. The creation of partnerships with Francophones in your community and your participation in existing coalitions, partnerships or forums are all practices that will help you reach your objective successfully, and to serve this community in such a way as to gain its trust.

Building partnerships with Francophones

The rationale behind partnerships with Francophones

The experiences of Francophone and bilingual organizations that offer services in French show that no organization can work alone and hope to provide high quality and relevant services to clients. Collaboration allows us to mobilize a community's vital energies toward reaching a common vision and goals. It enables a more integrated and comprehensive planning and a more coordinated application, resulting in the sharing of knowledge, expertise, resources and spirit of innovation of each of the partners for the benefit of the community. For an Anglophone or bilingual organization, partnerships with Francophones and the institutions representing them can turn out to be the key to successfully setting up services in French. These partnerships will develop greater visibility in the community, increase demand for services in French, and build relationships based on trust. For Francophones, these partnerships can lead to better access to quality services that are relevant to their needs and priorities and are appreciated because they have contributed to their planning and implementation.

Collaborating with the Francophone community also enables you to work on improving the health and wellness of your community, by focusing on important determinants that influence health such as language and culture. As explained in the *Ontario Public Health Standards*, “*Together, [determinants of health] play a key role in determining the health status of the population as a whole. ... Addressing determinants of health and reducing health inequities are fundamental to the work of public health in Ontario. Effective public health programs and services consider the impact of the determinants of health on the achievement of intended health outcomes.*” As well, “*Many of the requirements can be more optimally achieved through partnerships with community partners, non-governmental organizations, governmental bodies, and others.*”³⁷



A partnership does not build itself. It takes work, resources, support mechanisms and time, as well as the necessary will and patience from all partners. When it comes to building partnerships with Francophones, there are a few special challenges³⁸.

Here are a few questions to ask:

- Do you fully understand the context in which you hope to apply your initiative?
- What are your goals in building this partnership?
- What is your understanding of the relationships with your partners?
- What do you expect from your partners?
 - Information sharing and networking?
 - Collaboration on a specific activity or project?
 - Commitment to working together in the short term on a specific goal?
 - Commitment to working together in the long term on common goals, and sharing work, risks, results and benefits?
- Who are your key partners right now?
- Are there any new partners with whom you would like to collaborate?
- Who else might be interested in your field of services?
- Who else offers French language services in your field?
- Who are the influential individuals and organizations in the Francophone community?
- Who is your target clientele?
- What is your contribution?

The Challenges

In seeking out partners in the community, it's important to assess the degree to which you should consider the following challenges and develop a strategy to minimize their impact as obstacles:

- **Geographic distribution:** There are Francophones in every area of the province, not just in designated regions. They vary in number and are more or less visible depending on where they live. In most regions, they don't all live in the same neighbourhood. Contrary to other groups, visibly Francophone neighbourhoods are rare.
- **Regional differences/community diversity:** The Francophone community in each region is made up of different cultural, ethnic and religious groups that each live in different situations with various impacts on their health and well-being. It is important to be able to identify the different groups.
- **Multiple potential partners:** In some regions, there are many Francophone groups or associations whose mandate, objectives and effectiveness may vary. It's important to recognize the different groups in order to select the ones that have the greatest devotion to your cause and who can best contribute.
- **Small, overworked organizations:** In general, Francophone organizations are smaller, have smaller budgets and nevertheless offer more programs than their Anglophone counterparts. It can be difficult for them to participate in all the initiatives seeking their support, so they have to choose among their priorities.
- **Lack of obvious Francophone interlocutors in your sector of services:** Not all regions may have French language service providers or community organizations working in your sector of services. For example, most regions don't have a Francophone or bilingual community health centre. You will therefore have to work with other centralized organizations in the community in order to gather the viewpoints you need to hear and consider.
- **Distrust/negative past experiences:** Historically, Francophones have worked hard in advocacy and awareness in order to obtain their rightful access to services in French. In the past, the difficulties involved in this process may have resulted in a poor quality of services that did not meet any real needs. This kind of situation may still be creating feelings of distrust toward the service provider and hesitation to getting involved once again.
- **What's the point?** Before forming a partnership, Francophones groups need to clearly see the advantages in participating. Francophones have too often been consulted in past ventures that did not produce any concrete results.
- **Means of communication:** In many regions there are few means of communication for Francophones – newspapers, community radio, or other resources. Reaching Francophones can take more time and energy, and require a long-term relationship with the target groups.
- **Lack of knowledge:** of the language, the culture and resources at the local level and from service providers.

Strategies

The following strategies are good places to start building your networks among Francophones in Ontario.

- **Build ties to existing networks and structures** in the Francophone community of your region. In many regions (London and Sudbury, for example) there are coordination committees that bring together all Francophone and bilingual suppliers from different sectors who offer French language services – health care, social services, education, legal services, and others – with the goal of sharing expertise, developing resources and improving French language services.
- **Investigate the opportunities with coalitions or sector-based planning committees which have established French language services as a priority.** The Child, Youth and Family Services Coalition in Simcoe County is a good example. You can find more information on the Coalition in the section on partnerships. Moreover, as one representative of a Francophone organization Coalition member has stated: *“now that the Coalition has established French language services as a priority and developed a common vision for these services, what’s even more fantastic is the fact that I don’t even have to raise the issue of French language services anymore. My Anglophone colleagues already do that.”*
- **Contact provincial organizations whose regional representatives can direct you to organizations that work with Francophones in your region.** The Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (AFO) [Francophone Assembly of Ontario], Club Richelieu, the Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l’Ontario (FAFO) [Federation of elderly and retired Francophones in Ontario], the Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontarien (FESFO) [Federation of Franco-Ontarian high school students], the Regroupement des intervenants francophones en santé et en services sociaux de l’Ontario (RIFSSSO) [Francophone health and social services workers in Ontario] and the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC) are a few examples. Consult the website of the Office of Francophone Affairs for a list of key organizations in French-speaking Ontario (www.ofa.gov.on.ca/fr/franco-organismes.html). The Franco-Ontarian directory of the Francophone Assembly of Ontario has an exhaustive list of provincial and regional Franco-Ontarian organizations (www.monassemblee.ca/fr/Bottin_Francoontarien_35).
- **Consult the organizations in your region that already work with Francophones.** If they don’t work in your specific field of services, they can at least guide you to the group you are seeking. Francophone or bilingual community health centres – there are four French health networks in Ontario: North, Centre-North, East and South –, multi-service organizations, school boards, daycares, schools, senior and youth associations, and ethnic and cultural communities as well as parishes are all avenues to explore.



- **To achieve more visibility and credibility as a viable partner**, be more visible and more available to participate in Francophone community activities such as career and information days. As Integra for Children & Adults of Prescott-Russell pointed out in its annual 2009-10 report,

“In our drive to decentralize, we were careful to solidify and create links with people and partners in the community. The residents in the Prescott-Russell communities are welcome to visit our facilities. We regularly take part in various community activities organized by the different social clubs and organizations. We can say with certainty that our visibility in the communities has made it easier to achieve access to the services, has clarified the mandates and, finally, has brought us closer to the people.”³⁹

- **Assign competent people who speak fluent French to Francophone community activities and publish written information in both French and English.** This is a basic principle in any effort to build relationships based on trust and collaboration with the Francophone community, for whom French is the cornerstone and unifying principle. It wouldn't occur to us to assign a non-English-speaking representative to a career day in an English language high school, would it? The same reflex must be developed for services intended for the Francophone community. If a service provider wishes to build credibility, it must be sensitive to language. Francophone spaces in many communities are protected and support the continuum of life in French to help counter assimilation.
- **Use meetings with professional or regional associations to network with Francophone organizations** and informally introduce your desire to form a partnership for services in French. Try to establish a relationship that could serve as the basis of a more structured and strategic collaboration later on. A recent example: during the Ontario Public Health Conference in April 2011, two workshops were devoted to services in French; these were excellent opportunities to not only network with colleagues on this issue, but also to exchange ideas and promising practices and to set up the foundations for future opportunities to work together.
- **Before suggesting a partnership project**, have a very clear idea of your goals and objectives as well as the advantages for the Francophone community and your Francophone partners.

Conditions for a successful partnership with the Francophone communities in Ontario

Much of the success of a partnership depends on the collaborative spirit and synergy between the partners. The development and maintenance of a partnership is a complex affair that requires time. Nevertheless, working with partners who share the same ideas in working toward a common goal can be a very fruitful experience. In the Francophone world, partnerships based on the following principles are often successful:

- Creating a shared vision that can serve as the basis for the strategic plan.
- Having the right individuals at the table.
- Creating a trust-based relationship and demonstrating openness and flexibility.
- Working together in an approach toward consensus and consultation.
- Establishing roles, responsibilities and expectations.

- Respecting the mission of the organization, the limitations and expectations of each partner.
- Sharing leadership, risks and responsibilities. Sharing power among equals within a group.
- Joint investment in resources.
- Encouraging commitment and permanence of the parties involved.
- Celebrating and making known the success stories of the partnership⁴⁰.

Examples of successful partnerships

Setting up French language services by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)

Mandate of the OPHEA

OPHEA is a non-profit organization that partners with school boards, public health, the government, non-government organizations and private sector organizations to develop innovative programs and services to promote healthy and active schools and communities.

The situation

Prior to 2007, OPHEA offered a limited array of services in French, particularly in translation and adaptation of resources. It was not meeting the needs of the Francophone community and its school system. It gradually became aware of the importance of services in French and their purpose, of the needs and priorities of the Francophone community, the gaps in services and the opportunity to build partnerships.

Solutions

To meet the challenge of providing services in French, it completed a process that included building partnerships at various levels:

- With Health Nexus, to consult their expertise in planning French language services, strengthening internal capacities, creating partnerships and integrating French language services with program development
- With French language school boards and other key participants in the Francophone community to understand the needs, priorities, and gaps, to work with the community in defining solutions that are adapted to Francophones in Ontario in all their diversity, and to identify potential partners
- With the Ministry of Education concerning funding and to ensure that its services and programs in French are aligned with the principles and curriculum of the French language school system.

In 2007 and 2008, OPHEA consulted with the French language school boards. After these consultations, OPHEA developed a complete action plan to increase its capacity to offer services in French and respond more specifically to the needs of French language schools and school boards.

The key elements of the plan are as follows:

- Building internal capacity at all levels – consultants, project coordinators, administrators, board of directors.
- Changing the administrative culture to include French language services as an integral component.
- Adopting a systematic approach to services in French. For example, at the start of each project, determine how the Francophone component will be integrated at each stage – development, validation, evaluation.
- Maintaining the partnership with the Francophone community: for example, by having Francophone representatives in the curriculum committee and creating a Francophone sub-committee.

The consultations with the French language school boards also helped OPHEA to understand why it needed to make cultural adaptations to its programs and services, and why simply translating resources does not meet this requirement. For example, OPHEA's programs and resources needed to include the elements of identity construction, consider literacy and numeracy, and comply with the language management policy. Also, these programs had to be adapted to respond to the diversity of Francophone Ontario. Consequently, the French website was tailored to respond to the needs and approaches of the Francophone community and its education system, and is therefore not just a copy of the English site.

Success story

Since 2007, OPHEA has been working to implement its own plan for services in French. It now has the internal capacity to offer excellent services and integrate the Francophone component in designing, testing and offering its programs and services in French. Having involved Francophones in various committees and working groups (including its board of directors), OPHEA is ensuring that the needs and cultural attitudes of Francophones are considered in all aspects of their work. OPHEA has turned into a positive model in adopting the best practices for service provision in French.

Lessons learned

OPHEA has demonstrated that partnerships, specifically ones with the right partners, can be a key to success. By seeking the help of an organization that can serve as a model and a mentor, it started on the right path to understanding what it needed to do. The partnership with school boards enabled it to understand the issues and define the best solutions. And finally, the partnership with the Ministry of Education provided the necessary resources to do the work and support this ministry in setting up one of the key policies for the French language school system. OPHEA correctly understood the importance of cultural adaptation and integration of the Francophone component at each stage of the project from design to delivery and following through with evaluation.

Citation

“The way that OPHEA has engaged with the Francophone community and collaborated in its efforts to offer French language services has been an incredibly positive experience. Educators and promoters of health for Francophones have contributed directly to resource development and benefited from OPHEA expertise in this field.”

(Tammy Shubat, Department head, OPHEA, May 10, 2011).

Source: Interview with Tammy Shubat from OPHEA on April 15, 2011 and research on the OPHEA website: www.ophea.net

Child, Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County

Mandate and context

The Coalition is an alliance of organizations that offer services to children, youth and their families in Simcoe County. It was created in 1999 on the basis of a commitment by child services providers to find ways to implement a seamless and simplified process to provide the best possible outcomes for children. This vision rapidly progressed to become an infrastructure for strategic collaboration, enabling members to work both together and independently with the goal of building a concrete shared vision to improve the current and future well-being for children, youth and families.

The members of the Coalition include: the Children's Aid Society of Simcoe County, Clé d'la Baie in Huronia (a multi-services organization), Colibri Centre for Francophone women, the four Anglophone and Francophone school boards, the hospitals in the region, the Community Care Access Centre in Simcoe-North Muskoka, Georgian College, the Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe-York, community health centres including the bilingual Chigamik CHC, New Path Youth and Family Services and Kinark Child and Family Services. The Coalition is self-financing but receives logistical and strategic support from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The problem and the solutions

Even though French language service providers have been part of the Coalition since the beginning, the Francophone community and the provision of quality French language services were not a priority. The situation was similar for the Aboriginal community. One of the Francophone member organizations of the Coalition undertook the role of advocate/catalyst for French language services. The community also assumed its responsibilities by putting pressure on the service providers and building awareness of the Francophone situation and the efforts toward setting up services. After several years of work, the Coalition defined a vision of services in French, identified Francophones as a priority group and integrated services in French to its strategic and action plans. The Coalition is making progress in the area of French language services, but it still faces challenges. Offering services in French requires sustained efforts as well as financial, material and human resources.

Success

The Coalition adopted a charter of rights for children and youth that acknowledges the importance of "learning and living out the beliefs of the family culture, including language, traditions and religion or spirituality."

We are also starting to see concrete results in the services offered:

- There is a Francophone point of access to services for youth at risk of suicide (Clé d'la Baie).
- Clé d'la Baie plays a pivotal role in accompanying Francophone clients in the children and family services system.
- A roadmap has been created for young Francophones in trouble with the justice system to provide social support as well as education and employment support. Clé d'la Baie and Collège Boréal are involved in this program.

- Breakfast meetings have been organized to support French language workers in the various organizations in the field; these meetings include Francophones, Anglophones and bilingual workers (for professional networking and continuing education).
- Protocols have been signed jointly among various agencies to facilitate referrals of Francophone clients to services in French. For example, agreements have been set up with the Colibri Centre for Francophone women to offer services in French to Francophone children who have witnessed violence.
- An Anglophone organization transferred a Francophone worker to a Francophone organization, while continuing to provide him with clinical supervision so that he could be closer to his clientele and Francophone colleagues and not have to carry out his duties in isolation. This approach allowed the Francophone worker to remain in his position while improving access to services and safeguarding the professional quality of the services offered.

Lessons learned

The experience of the Child, Youth and Family Services Coalition in Simcoe County demonstrates that a partnership in the field such as this one can truly improve French language services. However, we can also take home a few lessons from this experience:

- Implementing French language services requires a sustained effort on the part of service providers and the community.
- Without explicit recognition of the importance of French languages services and the Francophone community, it is difficult to make progress and obtain the necessary resources to improve quality and access to services.
- Defining a common vision and developing and setting up strategic action plans to make them solidly applicable are elements that help a partnership reach concrete goals.
- Nobody can do this alone: partnerships among agencies are an essential key to success, and can only be accomplished through shared work (for example, shared human resources).
- Anglophone service providers are vital partners, especially in communities where Francophones are a smaller minority and where parallel Francophone systems are not possible.
- The presence of an advocate or catalyst organization can do a lot to help achieve progress.
- www.simcoecountycoalition.ca



Creating a bilingual organizational culture

Setting up and providing services in French means that your organizational culture will have to undergo transformation. How will you go about creating an inclusive and welcoming bilingual culture for your clients, employees and partners?

As with any other process involving change, you will need to seek out active support from all levels of the organization: the board of directors, senior management, workers, volunteers and your clients and partners. Next, you have to keep them apprised of your program and progress.

Even if your organization is not yet thinking about becoming designated under the law, the following criteria (established by the Office of Francophone Affairs as the conditions for designating an organization under the *French Language Services Act*) are excellent guides for your partnership project with the Francophone community in offering services in French.

- Offer quality services in French on a permanent basis.
- Guarantee access to its services in French.
- Have Francophones on its board of directors and in its executive.
- Develop a written policy for services in French that is adopted by the board of directors and that sets out the agency's responsibilities with respect to services in French.

Understanding the external and internal communities

A good place to start is to carry out an analysis of your community, and the Francophone community you want to serve. Make sure that you understand the composition of your local Francophone community as well as its needs for the services offered by your organization. Whenever possible, use the results of existing research and needs assessments to support your analysis.

In the first part of this guide we outlined a few of the factors to consider. The demographic profile of Francophones in your region is one factor, but you also have to consider the minority status of Francophones and the influence this has on their behaviour with regard to language. Victims of symbolic violence and interiorized oppression may hesitate to demand services in French, and may not want to identify themselves as Francophones, even – or perhaps especially – in situations where they are vulnerable. The geographic distribution of Francophones in your area must also be considered, since this has an impact on access to services in French. An increasingly important factor in this is the diversity of Francophone communities: ethnicity, culture, religion, economic and social status, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation. You will also have to look at the current access to services in French and the existing networks of services, associations and businesses that support life in this community. Finally, you shouldn't forget the importance of the French language as the cornerstone to building and maintaining identity. All of these factors will have an impact on demand for your services, on how you will attract and hold on to Francophone clients, and on the type and design of your programs, services and the mechanisms that will enable you to offer them.

It won't do any harm to consult the Francophones in your target clientele through discussion groups or survey questionnaires, seek out the expertise of staff members who work with Francophone clients, and consult the knowledge and experience of other organizations serving Francophones, including your partners: the Francophone community health centre, the French language school board, regional French Canadian Association of Ontario, or others. We have already listed other resources, and you will find an exhaustive list in Appendix 1.



You also need to know your own current capacity and then study the gap between the existing capacity and the resources you will need in order to adequately serve your Francophone clients.

Integrating Francophones in governance

In their study entitled *Participation citoyenne, francophone minoritaire et gouvernance des services de santé : les conceptions des acteurs* [Public participation, Francophone minorities and health services governance: perspectives of participants], Maurice Lévesque and Natalie Burlone⁴¹ demonstrated that for Francophones, governance and engagement are very important aspects of public participation in health service planning and provision. In general, Francophones want to participate in the decisions that concern them. Including them in the process of planning and consultation is an essential step if we want to take the needs and priorities of the Francophone community into account.

A good way to include Francophones in planning and decision-making is to ensure they are present in the decision-making process and on the board of directors. The Francophones who sit the board of directors must reflect the surrounding Francophone community, as well as provide the necessary expertise in helping the organization make progress.



How can we make sure that Francophones are present on the board of directors? Positions on the board can be reserved for Francophones. This is what the Children's Aid Society of Sudbury and Manitoulin have done; the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre and Health Nexus have done likewise. You could also create a French language services planning committee in your organization.

Qualified Francophone candidates may not always be easy to find, but initiatives to raise awareness in the community can often attract the right candidates. This can be done in various ways – but don't forget that any activity you hope to use in attracting the Francophone community must be held in French!

- Place an announcement in French in the local Francophone media. Consult the following sites to obtain their contact information: Office of Francophone Affairs (www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/franco-media.html); Francophone media association (<http://apf.ca/>); MICRO (www.microontario.ca/).
- Ask the Francophone organizations in your area to provide a list of good candidates.
- Launch an email campaign through the various Francophone outlets.
- Ask the Francophone community organizations in the region and throughout the province to post and transmit your message: several of them post job openings, including the French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario RSSFE – Jobs and Health Nexus's Le Bloc-Notes www.leblocnotes.ca.
- Post the opening in French on your own website.

The explicit support of the board of directors is essential to successfully implement French language services. The board of directors sets the tone and defines the priorities of an organization. Therefore, the board must adopt a resolution to ratify planning and implementation of French language services, and clear the measures so that the necessary policies and procedures can be developed to offer these services. This is why it is so important to include Francophones who understand the situation in their community and that they participate in these decisions.

Here are examples of how to include French language services within the scope of your mission, values or vision to make the board of directors' involvement explicit:

- “provide children with services that are sensitive to their culture, their language and their religion” (Children’s Aid Society of Sudbury).
- “Language of services: In compliance with legislation, the CAS provides services in French and in English. If French is your chosen official language, you have the right to communicate with the CAS in French and to receive services in French.” (Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa)

Including French language services in the accountability framework

One of the guiding principles in providing any type of service is that the provider is accountable: to his financial supporters, to his clients and to the community at large. French language services are not an exception to this.

The board of directors is ultimately responsible for the responsible management of their organization. They approve the plans and activities, the service agreements signed with financial supporters and the reports presented to the government, members, clients and the community. To ensure that it meets its responsibilities regarding services in French, it must require that services in French be included in strategic planning and business plans as well as in the budget and reports. It must also keep up to date with the procedures, progress and challenges of providing services in French. For example, it can ask management to periodically provide a status report on services in French.

Developing a plan for services in French

To set up French languages services, organizations must use coordinated planning that hinges on all aspects of work carried out by staff and other members of your organization: human resources (including the union), policies and procedures, customer service, promotion and internal and external communication. Your community partners can also contribute in various ways, especially if you regularly refer clients to other service providers or if you work with clients who have been referred to you.

One recurrent problem is referrals of Francophone clients who need other types of resources or services that your organization does not offer in French. Your plan should address this question, and a few options should be presented. For example, you could use a case manager or pivotal staff member whose role will be to help Francophone clients navigate the health and social services system. Another possibility is to create, with the help of your community and professional partners, service maps or care pathways that will help you direct your Francophone clients to the relevant service provider offering French language services for the next service they will need.

Example of a good approach to use in developing French language services

French language services plan (Catholic Family Services Durham)

Mandate of Catholic Family Services Durham

In the Durham region, Catholic Family Services Durham (CFSD) offers individual, couple, family and group counselling services for adults, adolescents and children in situations of trauma, grief, family violence, and violence against women. Its mission is to improve the emotional and social well-being of individuals and families of all religious confessions by providing services in counselling, prevention and awareness.

Context and challenges

Upon the request of the Ministry of Social and Community Services, the CFSD began offering services in French to women victims of violence and child witnesses of violence in 2003. But it was not successful in convincing Francophones that its services were reliable, accessible and high quality. Francophones did not use them. A change was needed!

Solutions

The first step was to consult the Francophone community in Durham to learn how to engage with it and earn its trust, and which service models would be the most effective for the Francophones in the region.

The community representatives offered the following advice:

- CFSD needs to prove its commitment to offering French language services at all levels of the organization.
- CFSD must make an active offer of services in French.
- CFSD needs to recruit qualified personnel with experience, who speak and write fluent French.
- CFSD needs to be present and visible in the community, and establish permanent ties.
- For services to be effective and truly meet the needs and realities of the Francophone community in Durham, CFSD needs to culturally adapt its programs and services to the community. It is not enough to simply transpose/translate the services and programs offered in English.

CFSD took this advice to heart and began to act at various levels: governance, management, personnel, services planning and community engagement.

In governance, CFSD recruited two French-speaking directors who are active in the Francophone community. To find and recruit these directors, CFSD had consulted with the Francophone community and sought their aid. It also set up a committee for French language services within the board of administrators.

In management, CFSD decided upon the following actions:

- Recruit qualified Francophone counsellors.
- Commit specific resources to community development and create ties to the Francophone community and regional providers of French language services (networking, participation in work groups and consultation committees, developing partnerships).

- Provide in a prompt manner an active offer of services for Francophone clients (no waiting list).
- Offer training in French.
- Go through the process to become designated under the *French Language Services Act*.
- Adapt programs and all communications and educational tools to the needs of the Francophone community.
- Inform staff of any changes, and seek their support.

Success story

CFSD is already seeing the successful results of these changes at all levels of the organization. It recruited staff to provide quality French language services in reception, individual and group counselling, service coordination in French, and for the board of directors. It offered an internship to a student at Collège Boréal. It offered training for staff in the area of French language services and of Francophone women victims of violence (*Faire le pont/Across the Chasm*).

In services, CFSD developed an active offer of French language services. These services are available at reception; voice mail has a bilingual message; the website is posted in English and French; and the reception area features posters and brochures in both languages. CFSD is also studying the possibility of changing its name. The programs offered in French have a French title (e.g. *J'ai tout pour réussir; Femmes contre la violence*).

CFSD now offers individual, group and family counselling services as well as transitional support and group programs. For example, there are two group sessions in the Child Witness Program. It continues to develop the range of services and programs available in French. It is working on building the program “Sain et Sauf : vie sans violence”, with the goal of creating an integrated system of psychological and educational services in violence prevention and mental health adapted to the culture of French-speaking residents in the Durham region.

Commitment to the community and partnerships are ongoing priorities. CFSD has established ties to various related sectors such as police, counselling and support services for victims of sexual violence, French language schools and daycare, LHIN and community organizations such as ACFO, and it participates in different working groups such as the French language services planning team at the LHIN in the Centre-East region.

Lessons learned

CFSD's experience illustrates various principles in French language services development. These include the importance of working closely with the Francophone community in planning and establishing services in French, and the need to clearly establish the priorities and designate the appropriate resources. As well, CFSD includes Francophones on the board of directors and devotes resources to creating permanent ties with the Francophone community and service providers in the sector. It has also developed mechanisms to recruit qualified personnel needed for specific positions, and adapted programs and services for its Francophone clientele.

Sources: Presentation by Cindy Zemekis of CFSD at the 2011 Health Forum on March 23, 2011 and research on the CFSD website: <http://www.cfsdurham.com>

Organizational development and French language services (Sudbury & District Health Unit)

Mandate of the Sudbury & District Health Unit (SDHU)

The Sudbury & District Health Unit (SDHU) is a progressive and accredited public health agency that is dedicated to improving health and reducing social disparities in the health field using evidence-based policy making. Its headquarters are in Sudbury and there are four branches in the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. Its 250 employees provide public health programs and services that are mandated by provincial laws. The SDHU is governed by an independent health council and has established solid partnerships with community organizations and other agencies, including the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and Laurentian University. The public health unit offers a rich environment for public health practice, promoting research, continuing education and the creation of innovative programs and services.

The SDHU collaborates with individuals, families, the community and its partner agencies in promoting and protecting health and preventing disease. Programs and services are for people of all ages and are offered in various environments, including the workplace, daycare, schools, residences, health institutions, and community centres.

Context and challenges

With branches in Sudbury, Chapleau, Espanola, Mindemoya and St-Charles, the SDHU provides services across an area of 46,475 square kilometres on the North shores of Georgian Bay. This area includes Greater Sudbury and the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin where 25.8% of the population speaks French as their mother tongue while 9.2% of the population are First Nations (compared to 2% in all of Ontario). The average family income is lower (\$78,433 compared to \$90,526 in all of Ontario) and the unemployment rate is higher (8.4% compared to 6.4% in all of Ontario). Only 17.7% of the population has a university degree compared to 30.7% in all of Ontario. The SDHU therefore faces the challenge of serving a population scattered over a large area; moreover, it is generally poorer and has less education than the Ontario average. It must also ensure that it meets the needs of a critical mass of Francophones.

Solutions

The SDHU has made a formal commitment to offering public health services in French. This commitment is reflected in the policy of its Health Council, its administrative policies and procedures, its practices as well as in research and evaluation.

The SDHU Health Council adopted the following policy on French language services:

The Council will deploy all reasonable efforts in order to offer access to culturally appropriate public health services in French to residents of the region served by the Sudbury & District Health Unit.

The SDHU established an advisory committee on French services made up of employees from all levels and departments. It has set up the necessary administrative policies and procedures, including policies on translation, communications, recruitment and bilingual personnel and practices.

In translation and communications, it has acknowledged the importance of offering services to its French language communities and committed to providing the public with documents that are written with an appropriate level of language in both official languages. Sometimes a simple

translation does not correspond to the needs of the Francophone culture; the SDHU then goes beyond translation to adapt its resources and develop the necessary materials or resources in French.

It has established a human resources plan, and with regard to practice, it concentrates on planning in the Ontario public health system, preparing resources in French, translating resources, communications and partnerships.

One of the challenges to services in French is the lack of evidence-based research on the health status of Francophones and lack of data to support decision making. The SDHU has therefore focused on research and evaluation. The creation of partnerships at all levels, including service provision and research is a preferred tool at the SDHU.

Success story

The SDHU is recognized as a leader in providing French language services in the public health sector—in its commitment to services in French, development of policies and procedures, communications, key partnerships, creation and transmission of resources in education, training and awareness, and research and evaluation reports. In research, this includes the 2000 and 2005 reports on the health of Francophones in Ontario and the Commission on Health Care Research for Francophones in Minority Situations.

In spite of the sustained efforts that over the years have allowed the SDHU to respond to most of the needs and priorities of the local Francophone communities, there are still challenges which are common to most French language service providers: in particular the absence of a complete dataset on health status and a lack of data to support decision-making; funding and issues regarding staffing, including recruitment and retention of employees; continuing education and tools to work with.

Lessons learned

A few elements have facilitated SDHU's success in providing French language services. Among these are the support of the Health Council and senior management of the SDHU, input from the Francophone advisory committee, education and training, bilingual staff who collaborate in providing services in French and translation services. A few resources and partnerships also contributed to this success, including Laurentian University, Collège Boréal, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Francophone community health centres and other resources such as translators and online tools.

Quotes

“We identified several elements to facilitate our work and make progress in developing public French language health services. The Ontario public health standards as well as the support of the Health Council and senior management were essential in getting the message across that services in French are required at the administrative level. As well, bilingual staff, a Francophone advisory committee and partnerships with bilingual and Francophone organizations have enabled us to increase our ability to offer quality French language services.”

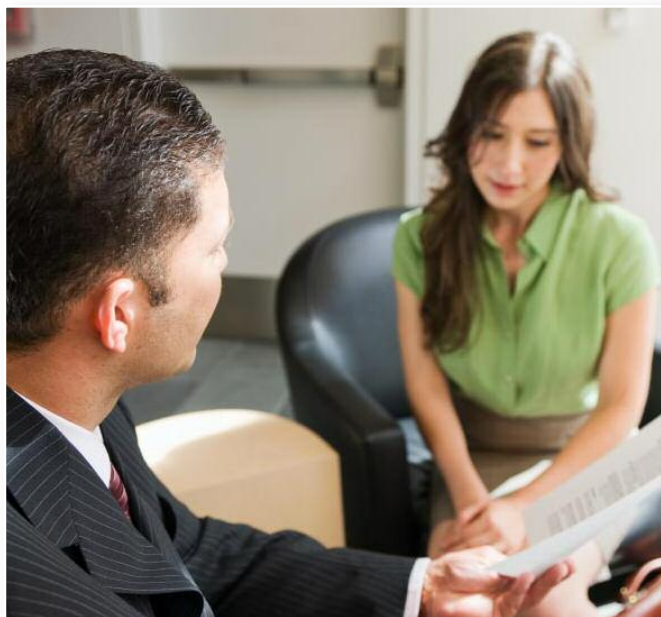
(Isabelle Michel, Director, Department of Resources, Research, Evaluation and Development, Sudbury & District Health Unit)

Sources: Conversation with Isabelle Michel, Director, Department of Resources, Research, Evaluation and Development, Sudbury & District Health Unit, presentation at the Ontario Public Health Convention on April 8, 2011 and research on the SDHU’s website at www.sdhu.com/index.asp?lang=1

Recruiting and retaining bilingual staff

Being able to provide French language services depends on having enough competent personnel at all levels of an organization – administrators and supervisors, front-line employees, volunteers. However, many bilingual organizations find it difficult to recruit and retain French-speaking employees and volunteers.

It is easier to fill positions in bilingual human resources if you have developed a human resources strategy and plan. You need to specify in the plan which positions will offer services in French as well as the level of French language ability required to fulfill the duties of the position. You can also examine the feasibility of options such as resource sharing among programs – and even with another organization in the same field.



One important issue hinges on the designation of bilingual positions. This is an approach that the Office of Francophone Affairs recommends and that many organizations are using. Designating a position lets you target efforts for recruitment, ensure continuity of services in French if an employee leaves, identify recruitment priorities and measure your progress against your plan for implementing French language services.

When bilingual employees need to be recruited, what can you do to attract the right candidates? Here are a few suggestions:

- Post the job opening in both official languages.
- Post the opening in French in the local Francophone media as well as in provincial resources such as Health Nexus's *Bloc-Notes* at www.leblocnotes.ca.
- Ask your networks and informal contacts to post the opening and always write it in both French and English.
- Post the opening on the French side of job search sites such as monster.ca.
- Ask the Francophone professional and community organizations in the province and region to post your opening – including the Francophone health networks, the Regroupement des intervenant(e)s francophones en santé et en services sociaux de l'Ontario (RIFSSSO) and its member groups, and the Assemblée de la francophonie ontarienne – and have them support your recruitment efforts
- Post the opening in French on your own website.

Of course, success is not guaranteed. But if your organization is well-known in the community and has a reputation for offering quality French language services and good working conditions for bilingual personnel, your chances are very good.

What exactly do we mean by good working conditions for bilingual employees?

Bilingual organizations often complain that it's difficult to retain their French-speaking employees. If this is the case in your organization, you should be asking a few questions:

- **Are your French-speaking employees regularly asked to provide services to mostly Anglophone clients?** This may discourage your French-speaking personnel and jeopardize the quality of their services.
- **Are they provided with the French language tools that they need to do their work properly?** These may be professional tools such as technical documentation or evaluation grids, documents they use with Francophone clients (introductory forms, consent forms, explanations of procedures, information brochures, etc.) or language aids such as a bilingual keyboard, French dictionaries, lexicons for terminology in their field and access to terminology banks such as Termium.
- **Do you ask them to translate or interpret on a regular basis?**
- **If a Francophone staff member has to leave his post to help a non-Francophone colleague serve a Francophone client, do you make the necessary adjustments to his workload?**
- **Do you account for the fact that bilingual staff members need to be familiar with both French and English communications** coming from your organization and the community in order to understand the context of their work within your organization?
- **Do you encourage your French-speaking employees to speak French among themselves** in the workplace?
- **Do you offer opportunities to your Francophone staff for training and professional continuing education** in French? Or to improve their abilities in French – to write reports and learn the vocabulary used in the field?

- **Do you acknowledge the special contributions made by your bilingual staff** – in performance reviews, and in employee recognition programs?
- **Is the manager able to directly evaluate** the quality of their work in French?
- **Do Francophone employees have the opportunity to connect with their French-speaking colleagues** in your organization or with community organizations?
- **Do they constantly have to convince people of the importance of their work** in order to be taken seriously within the organization?

Health Nexus /Nexus Santé is a designated bilingual organization that has been offering French language services in the health promotion sector for over 20 years. The bilingual organizational culture is visible at several levels in the organization and in many ways for employees at Health Nexus; this facilitates innovation and collaboration in providing French language services.

“At Health Nexus / Nexus Santé, the bilingual reflex is fully anchored in the planning process. Services in French are not only the responsibility of the people who work in French. In their projects, our non-Francophone colleagues have a very good understanding on how to fully integrate French language services.”

Suzanne Schwenger, Program Manager

“Our Francophone clients know that they can always count on quality French language services. Over the years we have therefore been able to build an excellent level of credibility with Francophone communities in Ontario and with our financial supporters.”

Hélène Roussel, Bilingual Consultant in Health Promotion

“Health Nexus / Nexus Santé understands that bilingual employees are not professional translators. Out of respect for the linguistic community of Francophones, considerable efforts are deployed to achieve quality translations and French in all of our communications. We have procedures for editing and proofreading, and we work hard as a team to reach this goal.”

Ronald Dieleman, Program Administrator

“Speaking and living in French in our workplace happens naturally and this creates a strong sense of belonging in the organization.”

Roshni Juttun, Administrative Assistant

“French language services at Health Nexus /Nexus Santé are solidly anchored in values of inclusiveness and equity in access to services for Francophones. We recognize the participation of each and every Francophone in every project.”

Mélissa Potvin, Administrative Assistant

“As a long-time unilingual employee with Health Nexus, I have experienced the process of integrating FLS in our work since 1990. With the leadership of a board member, we realized that we would need to work in both official languages in building capacity for health promotion. Organizational policies and support have helped us work in a bilingual culture – whether or not we speak French.”

Peggy Schultz, Health Promotion Consultant, Health Nexus

Building bilingual capacity

Building capacity to offer French language services is a long-term project. Recruiting qualified bilingual employees is only part of the process. You also need to think about what you can do to provide professional development to the French-speaking employees you already have and to earn and maintain the active support of all your employees, including your volunteers and external service providers. You will need to be creative and flexible.



Here are a few ideas:

- **Offer language training to your bilingual personnel** – writing and terminology workshops, informal meetings, and noon hour seminars – to help them maintain and improve their professional linguistic abilities in French. These sessions can also be opportunities for your bilingual employees to do informal networking. To increase the opportunities for networking, you can collaborate with other institutions in the area.
- **Offer training and professional continuing education in French.** Many organizations offer opportunities for training in French, often through webinars, which allow your employees to participate without having to travel. If possible, offer the training session in French for a new program or service – it will be easier for your personnel to work with your Francophone clients after specific training.
- **If you don't find the ideal candidate when a job opening is posted,** consider hiring someone who knows the community very well, whose skills are complementary to those of your employees, and to whom you can offer an internship or mentorship.
- **Offer internships to French-speaking students in your field** and assign them to Francophone supervisors and clients, even if they are taking their courses in English. This is a long-term investment that may bear fruit once they graduate.
- **Investigate the possibility of sharing resources among different programs in your organization** or even with another organization in your region that offers French language services.
- **Make an arrangement with a Francophone organization in the region to have their Francophone employee assigned to you.** The employee will have the opportunity to work in a Francophone environment and use its resources while serving the Francophone clientele in an environment where clients will feel more comfortable. An agreement will have to be signed to specify the conditions and ensure professional and clinical supervision.
- **If needed, purchase French language services from a third party.** This may be useful for specialized expertise in fields such as psychology, speech therapy or audiology.
- **If a service is offered by contracting an outsourcer,** stipulate in the contract that the service must be available in French and ensure that Francophone clients are receiving quality French language services.
- **Non-Francophone employees play an important role in providing French language services.** Ensure that all employees are aware of your services in French and know what to do when in contact with Francophone clients. If needed, develop a protocol.

Language training and continuing professional education in French: opportunities to investigate

Healthy Communities Consortium and its member organizations

Workshops, webinars and documentary resources in health promotion, community development and organization, services in French. Most training sessions and resources are free. www.consortiumcs.ca

Valor Institute

Professional development services including programs for psychosocial and clinical interventions, management and human resources programs, technical programs in health and safety, computer training and advanced courses in French. Offers some of the compulsory courses for employees of Children's Aid Societies. www.instvalor.ca

Le CLÉ (Centre canadien de leadership en évaluation)

Organizational development programs www.lecle.com

Regroupement des intervenants en santé et en services sociaux de l'Ontario (RIFSSSO) and its member groups

Periodic training in various health and social services-related fields. Resources for graduates from other countries in health and social services fields. www.rifssso.ca

Collège Boréal

Programs in French as a second language, advanced French courses, French for immigrants. Campuses are located throughout Northern, Central and Southwestern Ontario. www.collegeboreal.ca

Cité Collégiale

Programs in French as a second language, French immersion, advanced French and French for immigrants. Campuses in Eastern Ontario and one branch in Toronto. www.lacitec.on.ca/web/lcc/accueil.htm

Maintaining an organizational culture conducive to offering services in French

The role of non-Francophone employees

Offering French language services requires more than just having bilingual employees. It requires a change of attitude, flexibility and open-mindedness. It means taking a close look at the myths, obstacles and misunderstandings in your organization that can affect your capacity to offer equitable and appropriate services to Francophones.

Not only do your employees need to be aware of the French language services offered by your organization, they must also be comfortable promoting and supporting them. You need to keep your non-Francophone personnel up to date and reassure them that their jobs are not in jeopardy. As with any process of change in an organization, implementing services must be done progressively, gently and with consideration of the needs of employees and the organization, and with respect for your administrative culture and its values. Encourage your employees to participate in developing and implementing services. Focus on the concept of *client-based services* and the desire to improve your response to their needs.

To keep your employees up to date with services offered in French and demonstrate the support from senior management, you could include articles on services in French in your internal messages – implementation, success stories, testimonies from Francophone clients, the contributions of your bilingual employees, your innovative initiatives and partnerships. Celebrate your success: this will help you motivate your personnel and win their support.

Setting up policies and procedures to support services in French

You will also have to take a close look at the changes needed in policies and procedures. Normally, an organization offering French language services sets up the policies and human resources that account for the need to recruit and retain bilingual staff: endowment, recruiting, language training and evaluation of language ability, professional training and continuing education and performance reviews. It will also be a good idea to focus on the policies surrounding volunteer recruitment and training, which is often a vital step in being able to provide services.

Adopting a complaints policy

The French Language Services Commissioner and other relevant entities strongly recommend that organizations adopt a complaints policy on services provided in French. To quote the Commissioner from his Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario, *“Filing a complaint is constructive when it has to do with ensuring respect for the user’s rights. It is the most effective way to express frustration and dissatisfaction with a lack of French language services or with their poor quality. Those who complain help to improve the quality of French language health services, and make the agencies that deliver them and those that gave them their mandate accountable.”*

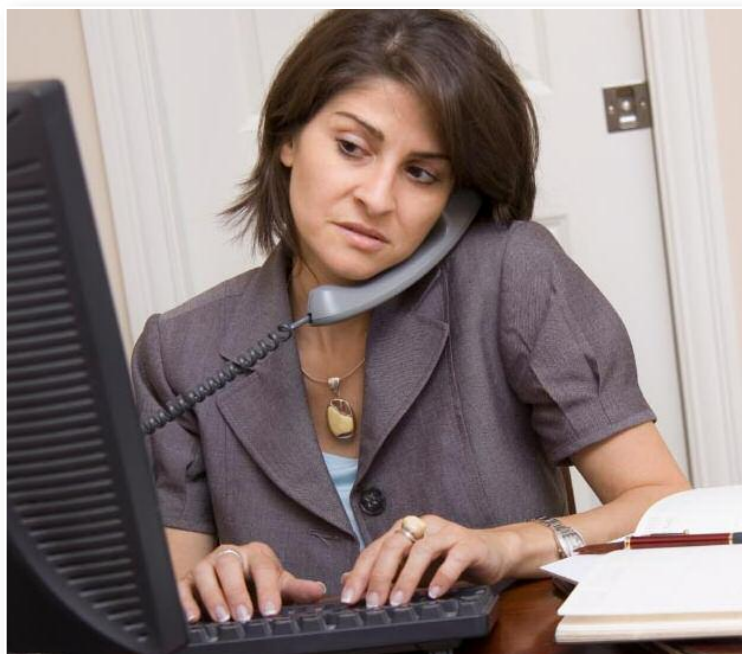
Perhaps the most important elements are policies and procedures for customer service, from start to end of interactions between the organization and the users – reception, professional services, individual or group counselling, orientation, case management, interpretation services and so forth. It is essential to identify the client’s preferred language for services at reception and to include this information in his file. Ideally, clients will be able to use French from beginning to end of the process, without having to express their preference for services in French at each new

step – and beyond, if they are referred to another service provider for any further interventions. Services in French, adapted to the needs of your diverse body of Francophone clients, must be part of the policies on cultural skills, client rights and responsibilities, staffing, and others.

You will have to provide some flexibility when applying your policies and procedures to accommodate cases that are not an easy fit with your policies. In the health sector, for example, you will sometimes need to refer clients to a Francophone service provider that is located in the area of another LHIN.

And remember to provide a means for clients to evaluate the services they have received in French. This is a good indicator of your organization’s performance, and it will help you find the areas requiring improvement.

Communicating in both languages and adapting your message



Communications are a vital area. As a French language service provider, you have the obligation to transmit and provide information in both languages. For this, you need a policy that explains what must be published in French for the general public, for your clients and their close relations, for your members and volunteers. It should also include instructions about what to publish on your website.

It is highly recommended that you hire professional translators to produce the French version of your documents and to set up a means of evaluating the quality of your translations. The

French version of any document must have the same high standard of written language and be as accessible as the documents in English. But it doesn’t necessarily have to be identical; sometimes it’s better to create an adaptation of a resource rather than a translation, so that the message reaches your clientele more effectively.

Adapting your programs to your Francophone clientele

The principle of adaptation (rather than translation) also applies to your programs and services. Sometimes, we can simply offer the French version translated from a program or service, but this isn’t always the case. A program that works in English may not work as well in French. The same approach or format does not necessarily work for the entire Francophone population. Knowing and considering the features and needs (culture, values, background) of your target clientele is always important. A group of elderly persons in a rural region of Northern Ontario and a group of elderly persons originally from Africa who are living in Hamilton are not necessarily facing the

same issues, do not have the same life experience and may not even define health, family roles and responsibilities in the same way. Even though this does not change your message, it can affect the way in which you communicate with them.

You should also consider the daily realities of your Francophone clients. The key principles in services is “client-centred” and for this you need to know and understand your target clientele and consider their language, culture, values and way of life.

- **Does the program you are offering truly correspond with the priorities of your target clientele of Francophones?**
- **Do you offer the program in French as often as the program in English, or do people have to wait six months for a program in French while the English one is offered monthly?**
- **Is the program offered on your premises or at a Francophone partner organization?**
- **Is it offered separately, or combined with an existing program?**
- **Are you able to accommodate the non-Francophone partner** in an exogamous family – documents in English, explanations in English if needed, encouragement for using French?
- **Do you accept smaller groups** in French?

Examples of programs adapted to specific needs in Francophone communities

The TEACH project for Francophones (Centre for Addiction & Mental Health)

Mandate of the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH)

Affiliated with the University of Toronto, the CAMH is a large health sciences centre for mental health and addiction treatment. It offers direct care on site, and consultation services off-site. Its other mandates include research, education and health promotion.

CAMH’s headquarters are in Toronto, but it offers programs throughout the province. It is a designated organization providing services in French, and is also highly aware of its responsibilities toward increasingly diverse populations throughout the province. In its mandates for research and providing support to health professionals, CAMH develops tailored programs to respond to the needs of various clienteles, including the diverse population of Francophones in Ontario.

Context and challenges

Launched in English in 2007, the TEACH program “*Training Enhancement in Applied Cessation Counselling*” offers specialized intensive training to first-line counsellors in smoking cessation. The goal of the program is to train care providers who can then transmit their knowledge effectively; with this more specific preparation they have a better chance of success with their clients.

The Francophone population in Ontario has a higher rate of smoking addiction than the Anglophone population. However, Francophones may have difficulties in accessing treatment. Often, the available treatments do not correspond to their experience or cultural attitudes, and consequently they may not be as effective.

Goals of the project

The TEACH project for Francophones aims to train clinical workers, health professionals and other workers providing services in smoking cessation to Francophones. The program is designed to further their knowledge and improve their expertise in intensive interventions to help clients quit smoking. The objective of the project is to reduce the prevalence of smoking among Francophones by improving screening and the treatment capacity of service providers.

Solutions

The French adaptation of the program reflects the need to integrate cultural skills in the treatment of smoking addiction, particularly for linguistic minorities who cannot access treatment as readily. The French version of the program takes into account the particular issues of smoking addiction in Francophones, and the different cultural attitudes toward smoking. It identifies the key strategies in reaching out to Francophones who smoke.

An essential element of the project is to establish and maintain a practicing community, a network among professionals who work in clinical practice to share information and expertise.

The project offers a basic course that teaches the essential strategies and skills in addiction treatment plus three specialized courses – interventions for people with mental health problems or addiction, motivational interviewing and smoking cessation, and Francophones and smoking addiction. The courses are part of the University of Toronto's Certificate Program in Intensive Smoking Cessation Counselling.

The project includes a website (<http://www.teachproject.ca/francophone.htm>) as well as a review of the resources in French in the fields of smoking cessation and treatment for alcohol addiction.

Success story

Launched in October of 2008, the program had 37 participants in that same year. This was followed by 48 in 2009 and 22 in 2010 in four regions of the province. All the participants (100%) stated that the TEACH training enriched their knowledge on smoking cessation “enormously” or “a lot”. Over 70% went on to offer intensive counselling to at least six clients.

Lessons learned

The keys to success in this program are adaptation to Francophones' special needs and French language training tailored to people who work with Francophones. The success of the program created a positive atmosphere for the expansion of this approach to other courses and activities in health promotion and disease prevention. The fact that this course was accredited by the University of Toronto was a positive factor in its acceptance.

Quotes

“To be effective, the programs and interventions intended for Francophone communities must take into account their special needs. To our knowledge, this program is unique.”

(Jean-François Crépault, Project Coordinator)

“Not only did this training further my knowledge of smoking addiction, it also increased my confidence level as a health worker.”

(Denis St-Pierre, Health Promotion Agent, Sudbury Community Health Centre (TEACH bulletin, November/December 2009))

Sources: Presentation to the French Language Services Committee in Toronto in March 2009 by Jean-François Crépault, and research on the website: www.camh.net

Culturally Adapted Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy/ Francophone / Creolophone Populations from Caribbean countries (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

Mandate of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Affiliated with the University of Toronto, CAMH is a large health sciences centre for mental health and addiction. It offers direct inpatient care as well as outpatient services. Its other mandates include research, education and health promotion. CAMH's headquarters are located in Toronto, but it offers programs throughout the province. It is a designated organization for French language services, and as such it is very conscious of its responsibilities on behalf of an increasingly diverse population across the province. In its research and support mandates for health professionals, CAMH develops programs tailored to the specific needs of various clienteles, including the diverse population of Francophones.

Context

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is an intensive and short-term method of treatment centred on problem-solving. The goal of CBT is to enable clients to develop the long-term skills they need to stay healthy. It is used to treat common mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and substance abuse issues. Over the years it has proven to be an effective method of treatment that can be used with all populations. However, its techniques can be improved by adapting them to a specific cultural group, which has given emergence to culturally adapted cognitive-behavioural therapy. CA-CBT aims to improve the accessibility of CBT interventions with populations that often do not receive adequate services from the mental health care system.

Goal of the project

The goals of the project were to:

- Develop three models of intervention based on cognitive-behavioural therapy as well as guidelines for workers in the Greater Toronto Area who work with three groups of immigrants, including black Francophones from Caribbean or African countries.
- Create training manuals and offer workshops to workers to equip them to offer counselling sessions that are better adapted and more effective for individuals and groups.

Challenges

Francophone and Creole-speaking immigrants from Caribbean and African countries face special barriers when it comes to accessing mental health treatment that responds to their needs; and providers of these services face similar challenges when it comes to effectively serving these populations. Part of the problem comes from the power-based relationships in society that can result in the abasement or marginalization of certain minority groups, a dynamic that may even prevent them from seeking help. This can also reduce the effectiveness of a method of treatment that depends on creating a healthy relationship based on collaboration between the therapist and the client. The language component also plays a very important role in this issue.

Solutions and success

To address these problems, CA-CBT uses the principles of cultural safety in responding to life experiences, patterns of thought and the needs of the targeted cultural groups as a starting point in improving the results for these clients. We need to understand how current and past practices have contributed to the disadvantaged social and health status of these groups and the disparities in the health care system and adapt them in response. Users of the system are called upon to contribute their observations and help define the changes required.

The CA-CBT manual is the fruit of a professional and community-based team effort that included documentary analysis, discussion groups with the Francophone/ Creolophone Caribbean community, interviews with mental health workers who serve this group, comments on the preliminary version of the manual and follow-up consultations with the community and mental health workers who serve it. The manual's goal is to improve cultural skills of therapists who offer CBT services to black Francophones and Creolophones from Caribbean and African countries.

The results of the project were recently communicated in Toronto and Windsor, followed by other workshops in Ottawa and Sudbury. A total of 140 Francophone workers participated in the workshops; more than 200 manual and accessory materials were distributed. Among the Francophone workers who participated in the workshops were health professionals as well as community workers who work with these groups.

This program is destined to become a larger province-wide program that responds to a very specific need.

Lessons learned

This project clearly indicates the importance of understanding the needs and experiences of clients, especially those who are the most marginalized, and to adapt interventions so that they can be as effective as possible. They also show to what degree adaptations are the result of teamwork that calls upon the experience and expertise of researchers, health professionals, community workers and clients and their close relations.

“Their mother tongue is Arabic, Swahili or Creole, but it’s French that we use to communicate with all the immigrant groups we provide services for.”

Antoine Dérose, Program Advisor, PEHP-CCE

Sources: Antoine Dérose, Program Consultant, PEHP-CCE (CAMH), and research on the CAMH website.

Reaching your clientele with an active offer of services

Francophones face various barriers that make them hesitant to demand services in French. We should remember that Francophones in a minority situation have experienced and continue to face barriers in living out their cultural experience for various reasons. This creates fear and a reaction preventing them from demanding services. Often, their biggest fear is that they won't receive the service they requested. The very fact of having to demand a service to which one has the right often produces a submissive attitude that can be humiliating. Add to this the frustration of having to wait for the service; the fear of being noticed; the reflex of assimilation that pushes people to join the majority; and an environment that reinforces interiorized oppression⁴². In these circumstances, it's understandable that someone in a crisis situation, or someone who is vulnerable, will hesitate to demand a service in French, even when he needs it the most.

Progressive and positive practices in client services are usually based on the principles of an active offer, whether the services are for Francophones or other minority groups. When you adopt the principles of an active offer it shows that you take the needs of your target clients seriously, in addition to facilitating the removal of barriers that reduce access to services. An active offer is part of any good strategy for community engagement and helps create a sense of belonging in populations that would otherwise feel excluded. An active offer presumes that the service provider understands the importance of not placing the onus on clients for access to services: instead, services are offered proactively.



The French Language Services Commissioner made this clear when he addressed the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and health services providers in the region of Peel-Halton where Francophone citizens are leading a struggle for access to services in their language for the past 20 years – during which time they have been systematically rejected.

*“The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is ultimately responsible for the lack of French language health services in the region of Peel-Halton. It is up to the Ministry to respond quickly to the Francophone community with solutions, not the other way around. Responsibility for solving this problem is not just up to the community. Consequently, I expect the Ministry to take action, in cooperation with the Local Health Integration Networks that serve this region, in order to remedy this situation, which is a violation of the French Language Services Act.”*⁴³

With regard to services in French, here are a few elements to consider for an active offer of services.

- **The employees working in the reception area welcome clients** in both official languages.
- **Bilingual telephone services.** Voice mail, if used in the office, has a bilingual message and offers the choice of language for services.
- **Bilingual signage outside** and inside the premises.
- **A sign at the reception area offering clients the choice** of French or English.
- **Ideally, your organization has a French name**, and this name is posted right beside the English name, for example Health Nexus/Nexus Santé; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health/Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale.
- **In addition to posting the name of the organization in both French and English**, the names of the programs you offer are bilingual: Aging at Home/Vieillir chez soi; Best Start/Meilleur départ.
- **In the reception area, posters and general information** as well as documentation are bilingual and readily visible in both languages.
- **The receptionist speaks fluent French** and knows how to refer French-speaking clients to the right person in order for them to receive quality French language services.
- **At reception, the client’s language preference is recorded** and this information always accompanies clients throughout all of their interactions with your organization.

However, you must not underestimate the input and reactions of your non-French-speaking employees to providing French language services. The following excerpts highlight several possible objections (and responses to the objections) to the concept of an active offer as the basic element to providing services in French.

Myths and resistance to the active offer of services in French

1) “Why do you need a social worker who speaks French at this school? Don’t all the children speak English among themselves?”

It’s true that young Francophones in the French language education system are in a minority situation and are very often influenced by social pressures from the English-speaking majority. We need to understand that most of these young people have few opportunities to live in French within their community and the reflex to assimilate is a very heavy influence in their lives. School offers them a social space to be Francophones. It is therefore very important to respect that space. Francophones are above all a linguistic community, and respecting their space shows that the service provider understands them. This attitude will help build a trust-based relationship with institutions in the community.

2) “Why offer services to Francophones when they make up barely 5% of the population?”

As stated prior in this guide, it should be remembered that according to Statistics Canada data from 2006 on the composition of non-Anglophones in the Ontario population, Francophones come in second place after people from South Asia. This said, there are many other minorities that make up a small percentage of the overall population. Should they be overlooked? Francophones are protected by a law that ensures they can have access to services. Offering services to any minority is not a question of numbers, but fundamental human values such as inclusion, equity and access to quality services.

3) “All Francophones speak English, so why do they refuse to speak English when they want services?”

In each linguistic minority community, there is always a certain percentage of people who do not speak English fluently. As explained by the French Services Commissioner in his Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario:

“It simply is not true that all Ontario Francophones are bilingual and therefore do not really need French language services. Patients are not going to insist on being heard, understood or cared for in French when they are at their most vulnerable and legitimately preoccupied with their health.”⁴⁴

The impact of the lack of an active offer of services in French in the health and social services system is undeniable. The study by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) provides us with some understanding of the issue of the access to health and social services in Ontario:

- 74% of Franco-Ontarians state that they have never or almost never had access to hospital services in French.
- 59% have never or almost never had access to home care services for elderly persons offered in French.
- 77% have never or almost never had access to treatment centres for alcohol abuse offering services in French.

- 66% have never or almost never had access to treatment centres for addiction offering services in French.
- 66% have never had access to emergency shelters or centres offering services in French to victims of family violence.
- 53% have never or almost never had access to mental health services in French.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the lack of access to services and/or the lack of an active offer means that Francophones must regularly speak English in order to receive services, and as explained in the following situation, there are potentially serious consequences for people's health:

A Francophone man was prescribed a nitro pumpspray by his Anglophone cardiologist. When he returned to the health centre for follow-up on his prescription and heart condition, the nurse practitioner discovered that he had not understood how to use his pumpspray due to his limited understanding and ability to express himself in English. The patient thought it was a respiratory inhaler. He therefore had not used it, even though he really needed it. The consequences could have been seriously harmful for this patient if he had not gone for a follow-up visit as promptly as he did at the Francophone health centre.

(Jocelyne Maxwell, Director General,
Community Health Centre in Témiskaming)⁴⁶

4) So why should we treat French differently from any of the other languages spoken in Ontario?

On this issue, in his Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario, the French Language Services Commissioner explains:

“This issue of the relevance of French when the province has hundreds of other languages is often raised. French has special status in Ontario under the Constitution and a number of provincial statutes. French also has special status by virtue of the contributions that Francophones have made in the past and continue to make today to the fabric of Ontarian society. Rights entrenched in the FLSA are not special privileges accorded Francophones. Over the last centuries, the latter have fought long and hard, with courage, determination and conviction, to gain political and legislative recognition of their rights. Furthermore, there is often a tendency to forget that French is a langue d’accueil or second language for many newcomers. These myths persist and we must fight hard to dispel them.”⁴⁷

Demonstrating a proactive attitude in offering services to Francophones is a service quality issue and shows that the service provider understands the particular issues of Francophones and respect for the rights of this community

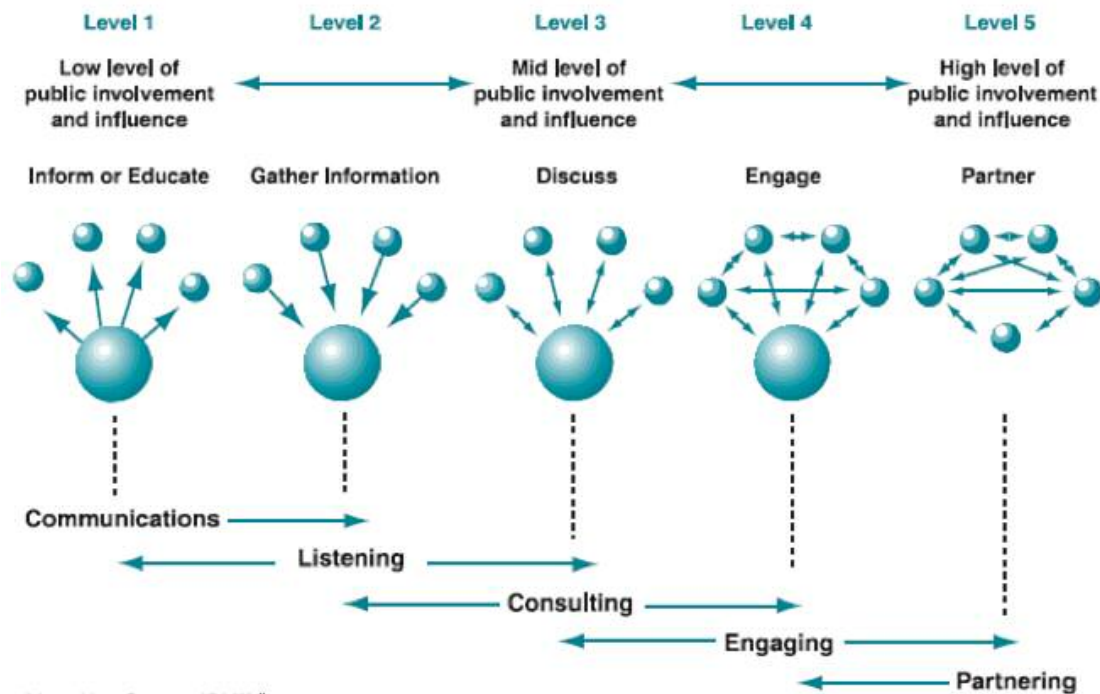
Community Engagement

If you hope to offer the services and programs that truly respond to the needs, and which reflect the values, culture and experience of Francophones in your region, and if you want the Francophone community to know who you are, to partner with you and use your services, you need to create ties with the diverse segments of the community and the organizations that are already serving them.

According to Sheedy et al, citizen participation provides advantages to members of the general public as well as to the organization providing a structure to them: participation facilitates viable decision-making in the eyes of the public; it contributes to the development of better policies; it reinforces the ability of communities to work together; it makes citizens responsible, reinforces their skills and engages them in political life; and it encourages the inclusion of minority groups⁴⁸.

Several models and levels of public participation exist, ranging from simple information sharing to the creation of partnerships. The following model has been developed by Health Canada, and is often used in the health sector. According to Sheedy et al, only levels 3 to 5 correspond to a meaningful form and degree of community engagement.

HEALTH CANADA'S POLICY – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTINUUM⁴⁹



For people in minority situations in the health sector, citizen participation, partnerships and networking appear to be promising strategies. If we analyze how Francophones think about citizen participation using the example of the health system (Lévesque and Burlone)⁵⁰, we can see that they appear to prefer an approach based on governance and engagement.

Summary of the results:

When I think about the participation of citizens in the context of French language health care services in a minority situation, I think about:

- Governance and engagement (4.06)
- Mobilization (3.82)
- Conditions and terms of success (3.68)
- Respecting the conditions on the ground (3.46)
- Identity and belonging (3.02)
- Inclusion of languages and diversity (2.99)

Other researchers have also found that community engagement and mobilization are special features of the Francophone vision of health care services. Quoting from *Le Rapport national de la cartographie conceptuelle : les représentations de l'avenir des services de santé en français en francophonie minoritaire* [National Mind Map Report: perspectives for the future of French language health services for Francophone minorities] published by Louise Bouchard, Martin Desmeules and Isabelle Gagnon-Arpin in December 2010, we learn that:

“Regarding the movements in the education sector, or the way the community was engaged to preserve Hôpital Montfort, all groups have displayed enthusiasm toward the opportunities provided through community mobilization. The role of communities is highlighted in planning, organizing and managing services, with an emphasis on the fact that we need to find ways to involve communities in these processes. Community engagement, especially through the opportunities offered through French language health networks, is a way to provide care that is more attentive to people’s needs and an opportunity to rethink the way services are offered within a decentralized organization.”⁵¹

Contributing to the debates that aim at creating policies, programs and services as well as participation in decision-making is therefore very important. It’s preferable to avoid community engagement processes that are conducted only for the sake of appearances.

According to a study of the literature conducted by the Tamarack Institute, the process of community engagement must:

- Serve as a basis for developing policies at the local level.
- Improve targeting and effectiveness of services.
- Facilitate performance reviews of organizations and partnerships.
- Encourage a sense of belonging to the community.⁵²

“Connecting the Dots: A Handbook for Chronic Disease Prevention through Community Engagement” offers a multisectorial model for engagement that has been proven effective: www.healthnexus.ca/events/CTD/pdf/CTD_handbook.pdf

In general, the following statements describe good practices in the greater Francophone community:

- **Define the target groups according to the goals of community engagement.**
- **Know and understand the context and the environment** – this includes the cultures, values and life experiences of the target group.
- **Do not make unnecessary consultations.** Francophones have all too often been consulted in the past without seeing any concrete results.
- **Adopt an targeted approach** for the recruitment of participants and be ready to work with smaller groups; work with the ones who show up; this is a starting point in building relationships of trust and collaboration.
- **When advertising**, use official outlets - the Francophone media - as well as informal means (network of organizations, news lists). Work with community groups to get the word out.
- **Make a special effort to accommodate** and attract the more marginalized groups – immigrants, ethnic communities, disabled individuals, GLBTQs, the elderly, aboriginals or Métis – according to the demographic profile of the region and the goals of community engagement.
- **Take into account the different cultures of the participants**, for example, in choosing menus, selecting images for brochures and other documents, welcoming participants, etc.
- **Provide documents in both official languages** if necessary, using plain language.
- **Have a bilingual coordinator who speaks fluent French.** If this person is enthusiastic about the subject and is known in the community, this will be even more effective.
- **Investigate the opportunity of partnering with a Francophone community organization** – community centre, community health centre, multi-purpose centre – and hold sessions on their premises. Access will thus be easier for participants, who will feel more comfortable there.
- **Provide daycare services and organize transportation** – carpooling, funding, etc.
- **Provide feedback to participants with notes** or a report on the discussions and make them aware of the follow-up and results.
- **Use community engagement to build your credibility** with the Francophone community and develop working relationships for long-term partnerships.



In the next section, you will find practical tools to help you in setting up services in French. You will find others on the Heritage Canada site at the following link:
www.pch.gc.ca/special/guide/index-eng.cfm.

Worksheet for developing French language services: two useful tools

If you are an identified service provider, totally or partially designated, or if your financial supporters require that your program reach Francophones, or simply if you are interested in offering services to the Francophone community, this exhaustive checklist will help you become more sensitive to the various aspects of setting up quality French language services. It will help you design your organizational development plan to provide French language services.

Checklist

CATEGORY	✓	COMMENTS
<p>Governance/Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have Francophone members on our board of directors and working committees. • We have Francophone executives and administrators in key posts. • Our board of directors has stated its explicit support to make French language services a priority. • Services in French are part of our strategic and development plans and framework of accountability. • We regularly evaluate our French language services and make the necessary adjustments along the way. 		
<p>Appropriation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our board of directors, executives and administrative personnel are well-informed of our procedures and our progress. • Our staff, members, volunteers and unions are well-informed of our procedures and progress. • We have sought the support of our unions in setting up services in French. 		

<p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We answer the telephone in English and French. • Our answering service and voice mail answer in both English and French and offer the choice of language. • We welcome people in both languages. • We are careful to identify the preferred language of services of our clients. • We refer French-speaking clients to an employee who speaks fluent French. • The services we offer in French are available at all times. • The quality of the services we offer in French is the same as that of our English language services. • We have a policy regarding French language customer service. • Documents intended for clients are in French – intake forms, consent forms, instructions, etc. • Bilingual employees are identified with a lapel button. • We ask clients to evaluate the quality of the services they have received in French. • The programs and services we offer in French are adapted to the needs, values and cultures of our local Francophone community. 		
<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have determined which of our services we will offer in French. • We have an implementation plan with benchmarks to measure our progress. • We have a method to monitor services. • We report our progress on a regular basis to our executives, board of directors and the Francophone community. 		

<p>Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have set up a human resources plan. • We have designated bilingual positions. • We have adopted policies and procedures for recruitment, endowment, training and continuing education, performance reviews, cultural skills, etc. • Our designated positions are occupied by permanent bilingual staff members. • We formally acknowledge the contribution made by our bilingual personnel. 		
<p>Work tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our bilingual employees have professional work tools in French. • Our bilingual employees have language support tools. • Our computer/data entry system accepts entries in French. 		
<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our documents containing publicly available information are bilingual – books and articles, brochures, information bulletins, press releases, annual report. • Our letterheads and business cards are bilingual. • Our website presents documents in French and English; the quality of the site is the same in both languages. • We answer, in French, the correspondence we receive in French within the same timeline as letters received in English. • We regularly mention our services in French in our internal and external communications and bulletins. 		

<p>Links with the Francophone community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We collaborate actively in coordinating/planning committees for French services in our region. • We participate in Francophone community activities such as career days, festivals and information days. • We have set up agreements with other French language services providers regarding client referrals, resource-sharing, continuing education for professionals and mentorships, and others. • We are aware of the resources in French in our region and we direct our Francophone clients to them. • When we conduct community consultations, we offer a session in French for Francophones. • We invite key people from the Francophone community to work with us in setting up services in French (consultations, participation in the French language services committee, involvement in designing new programs or services). • We encourage our bilingual personnel to create links and network with their bilingual colleagues from other organizations (including organizations devoted to serving Francophones). 		
<p>Bilingual organizational culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We adopt an attitude of reflection toward administrative resistance to French language service provision. • We have identified and educated our administration and employees on the myths, aspects of symbolic violence etc. in our organization. 		

Action plan: our three priorities for the short and medium term

After having evaluated your services in French using the checklist and after comparing the results with your French language services plan (if you have one), it's recommended that you set three priority goals to reach in the short and medium term.

Goal	Anticipated results	Actions to take to attain the goal	Resources required	Timeline

CONCLUSION

In this guide, we have presented the concepts, along with suggestions and tools to guide you in providing French language services and building ties with the Francophone community in your region. As we have stated throughout the guide, there are many fundamental values that must be continuously promoted by any organization to build appreciation and effective services for Francophone communities. These values are: respect for language, culture, rights and services in French, community engagement, providing quality services and accountability to the community, your financial supporters, clients, employees and members.

APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES AND USEFUL LINKS

Regions designated under the French Language Services Acts

You will find a list of designated regions as of March 31, 2011, on the OFA website at the following address: www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/flsa-mapdesig.html. Following its 2010-11 Results-based Plan, the Office is currently conducting an analysis of three applications for designation of additional regions: Niagara, Durham and Cambridge-Kitchener-Waterloo.

Working together with Francophones: Understanding the context

Demographic profiles of Francophone communities in Ontario

Office of Francophone Affairs/Ontario Trillium Foundation. Profile of Francophones in Ontario. Toronto. 2009. Available on the websites of the OFA and the Foundation at: www.ontario.ca/en/communities/francophones/profile/index.htm; [www.trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/Ontario%20Community%20Profile.pdf](http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/Ontario%20Community%20Profile.pdf)

Ontario Trillium Foundation. *Profile of the Francophone community of Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin, Sudbury*. Toronto. 2010. Available on the OTF website at the following address: [http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/ACMS Community Profile.pdf](http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/ACMS_Community_Profile.pdf)

Ontario Trillium Foundation. *Profile of the Francophone community in Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Timiskaming*. Toronto. 2010. Available on the OTF website at the following address: [http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/MNPST Community Profile.pdf](http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/MNPST_Community_Profile.pdf)

Ontario Trillium Foundation. *Profile of the Francophone community of Champlain*. Toronto. 2010. Available on the OTF website at the following address: [http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/Champlain Community Profile.pdf](http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/Champlain_Community_Profile.pdf)

Ontario Trillium Foundation. *Profile of the Francophone community of Essex, Kent and Lambton*. Toronto. 2010. Available on the OTF website at the following address: [http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/EKL Community Profile.pdf](http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/EKL_Community_Profile.pdf)

Ontario Trillium Foundation. *Profile of the Francophone community of Toronto*. Toronto. 2010. Available on the OTF website at the following address: [http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your Community in Profile/english/reports_pdf/Toronto Community Profile.pdf](http://trilliumfoundation.org/Your_Community_in_Profile/english/reports_pdf/Toronto_Community_Profile.pdf)

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne. *Francophone Community Profile of Ontario*. Ottawa. 2009. Available on the Federation website at the following address: http://profils.fcfa.ca/user_files/users/44/Media/Ontario/ontario_en.pdf

Jean-Pierre Corbeil and Sylvie Lafrenière. *Portrait of Official Language Minorities in Canada: Francophones in Ontario*. Division of Social and Aboriginal Statistics, Statistics Canada No 89-642-X in catalogue – No 001. Analytical Paper. Ottawa. 2010. Available on the website of Statistics Canada at the following address: www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-642-x/89-642-x2010001-eng.pdf

Characteristics of the Francophone community of Ontario

Here are links to some sites indicating the state of research on Francophones in Ontario and Canada.

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Publications. Studies/reports on the status of services in both official languages in federal agencies, analyses of the status of official language communities in minority situations across Canada, analyses of Francophone immigration and the status of official languages in different fields: www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/html/publications_e.php

Consortium national de la formation en santé. Focus on health and related fields including training of professionals, needs in health services and health behaviors: <http://cnfs.net/fr/publications.php>

Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities: <http://icrml.ca/index.php?lang=en>

Office of Francophone Affairs. List of studies divided by subject, including literacy, education, immigration, health and women. The site includes links to relevant studies and suggests avenues for further research: www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/franco-studies.html

Access to services in French

Consultative Committee for French-Speaking Minority Communities (CCFSMC). *Report to the Federal Minister of Health*, Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa, 2001. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/olcdb-baclo/cccfsm/index-eng.php.

Consultative Committee for French-Speaking Minority Communities. *Towards a New Leadership for the Improvement of Health Services in French*, Report to the Federal Minister of Health, Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa, February 2007. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/olcdb-baclo/cccfsm/2007-cccfsm/index-eng.php.

Ontario health networks in French:

Réseau francophone de santé du Nord de l'Ontario: <http://santenordontario.ca>

Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario : www.francosantesud.ca

Réseau santé en français du Moyen-Nord de l'Ontario : www.rsfmno.ca

Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario : www.rssfes.on.ca

Société Santé en français : <http://santefrancais.ca>

Institutional support

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The site provides an overview of minority language rights in addition to studies made by the Office of the Commissioner over the years about the official language communities in minority situations, including their vitality and Francophone immigration to Canada: www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/html/index_e.php

French Language Services Commissioner: www.flsc.gov.on.ca/en/node/

Office of Francophone Affairs: www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/index.html

Ministry of Education. French-language education: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/

Ministry of the Attorney General. French-language services:

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/justice-ont/french_language_services/Default.asp

Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. French-language Health Services Office:

www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/flhs/flhs_mn.html

Working together with Francophones: Using Promising Practices

Creating partnerships with Francophones

Heart Health Resource Centre. *@ a glance, Winter 2010: Engaging the Francophone community.*
www.hhrc.net/pubs/skills/@aglance_6.pdf

Heart Health Resource Centre. *@ a glance, Fall 2009: Partnership Development.* This electronic resource explores several facets of development, expansion and maintenance of partnerships.
www.hhrc.net/pubs/skills/@aglance_5.pdf

Creating a bilingual organizational culture

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes. *Across the Chasm – Facilitation Guide*
<http://francofemmes.org/aocvf/index.cfm?Id=3047&Voir=nouv>

Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. French language services best practices. Site on best practices and resources related to services in French and the official languages in various Canadian jurisdictions. www.bonjour-hello.ca/en/?nav=home

Best Start. How to Reach Francophones – Maternal and Early Years Programs Health Nexus, Toronto, 2008. Available at the following address:
www.beststart.org/resources/howto/pdf/Francophones_manual_en.pdf

Canadian Heritage. Making Your Organization Bilingual. PDF version of the website dated August 2006, Ottawa, 2006. See also the Canadian Heritage site at the following address:
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