

Supplemental Material

Tab #12: Making Referrals

Connecting clients with resources is fundamental when identifying and responding to family violence. It is important for you to be aware of intervention options, including supports for both victims and abusers. This will allow you to concentrate on your area of expertise – family law – knowing that other professionals are working with your client on other issues (e.g. mental health, housing, financial assistance).

1. Be prepared

Find out in advance what supports and resources for family violence are available in your community. It will be helpful if you develop a list of community resources for clients and keep it up-to-date. See the list below for more information. You may find it helpful to visit or have a personal contact at places like shelters, sexual assault/domestic violence centres or related services. This will help you understand the services they provide and give referrals. A direct referral to someone you know can make the process much easier for the client.

Keep in mind the gendered nature of family violence services in Canada. For instance, women's resource centres or shelters can provide support services to clients; however, these organizations only provide services to women and to some members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, along with their children. It is often more challenging to find community resources for male and 2SLGBTQ+ clients.

The following two links can help you start developing a list of local community resources:

Public Health Agency of Canada, “Find family violence resources and services in your area”, *Stop Family Violence* (last updated 2020-10-22): <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/services.html>.

Women and Gender Equality Canada, “Provincial and territorial resources on gender-based violence”, *Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre* (last updated 2021-05-07): <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence-knowledge-centre/provincial-territorial-resources.html>.

You may want to connect with your local law association or legal aid clinic to see if they have an existing list of services that they can share with you. You may also want to reach out to other legal advisers in your area, as they may have already identified services to which they refer clients.

If your client is a victim

Consider the context of the relationship, and the type, severity and impact of the family violence being experienced as well as the client’s needs. For instance, if your client received threats related to their immigration status or sponsorship, you could refer them to an immigration lawyer or provide them with information on immigration laws and regulations. If they have received threats to “out” them, you could refer them to 2SLGBTQ+ advocacy and support groups and provide them with information on hate crimes. Refer to the [HELP Guide](#) for more information.

If your client has been abusive

Consider the following services if relevant to your client’s situation:

- ▶ specialized family violence intervention programs for perpetrators,^{viii} which provide participants the opportunity to change attitudes that led them to abuse and to develop skills to better deal with their coercive and controlling behaviours;
- ▶ specialized parenting programs for those who engage in family violence;
- ▶ culturally appropriate counselling; and
- ▶ mental health or substance use programs.

^{viii} These programs are distinct from anger management programs, which are not generally appropriate for those who commit coercive controlling violence because they do not explore the dynamic of power and control in intimate relationships or assist participants to unlearn or change socialized gender-based attitudes.

2. Helping to complete a referral⁷³

The following are some suggestions about making referrals for your clients:

- ▶ Offer to call or to have an office staff person call to make an appointment for them while they are in your office if this would be helpful. For example, you could ask your client:
 - *“Would you like me to call with you now, and I can put it on speaker phone so we can hear the options together?”*
- ▶ If possible, provide details such as contact or website information, location and the name of someone they could speak to.
- ▶ Suggest that the client may want to arrange for a trusted person, such as a friend or family member, to accompany them to the first appointment.
- ▶ Ask your client about their past experiences with community resources to help you consider which services would be appropriate. For example, newcomers from war-torn countries may have a mistrust of the police, and may not feel comfortable calling the police.
- ▶ Avoid making assumptions about your client; be sure to ask them whether they would be comfortable with referrals to services within their cultural community. Cultural communities can be small and cohesive, and some victims may not want to access these services due to shame, confidentiality concerns or concerns about their social status within their community.
- ▶ If your client says that they find it challenging to go to a referred service, think creatively with them about solutions. Problems you might discuss include:
 - lack of childcare while accessing services;
 - ex-partner finding out and trying to prevent access;
 - no transportation and/or travel is too expensive;
 - employment implications, such as loss of work time;
 - cost of services; and
 - cultural barriers.
- ▶ Many people will not immediately take up a referral. If this happens, here are some things you can say:
 - *“When you feel ready, there are services that can help. Here’s some information. If it’s not safe to keep or take home, do you have somewhere safe to keep it?”*
 - *“You can always come back here to discuss this some more. It’s very common for people to take some time to make these decisions.”*
 - *“Here’s a link to a website. If you do choose to visit it, remember it is safer to use devices at a different location if you’re worried your ex-partner might check your online activity at home.”*

3. Local community resources

The list below includes some examples of resources that may be available in your community. If appropriate, you could develop a sheet with available resources to share with your clients.

It can be difficult for victims of IPV who have experienced trauma to navigate a long list of resources and contact information. In these cases, it may be more helpful for you to make the connection with or for your client. If you are planning to share the list with clients, make sure that the contact information is easy to navigate, for example, by including specific URLs that may be useful as opposed to just the homepage of a website.

Potential Community Resources	
Emergency Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 911 (police) • local police domestic violence unit • other police numbers (OPP) • child protection services • adult protection services 	Clearinghouse Referral Portals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltersafe.ca • Public Health Agency of Canada • Women and Gender Equality Canada • 211
Housing/Shelters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation Army • advocacy groups • housing programs 	Crisis Lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual assault crisis lines • suicide-prevention lines • distress centres • helplines • domestic violence help lines
Support and Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocates/support workers (family law information centres, family court support workers) • sexual assault/abuse supports (sexual assault 24-hour crisis line, sexual assault programs) • victim services (local victim services contact information) 	Legal Information and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI; PLEI websites, family court information) • other family law support services (supervised parenting (access, visitation exchange) programs) • other legal professionals (legal aid, law society lawyer referrals, criminal lawyers, immigration lawyers)
Newcomer and Immigrant Community Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immigration services • newcomer information services • multicultural community centre 	Indigenous Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Friendship Centres • Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada • Hope for Wellness Help Line • Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society Crisis Line

Potential Community Resources	
<p>2SLGBTQ+ Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Coalition for the Homeless – LGBT • LGBT Youth Line • 2SLGBTQ+ community centres 	<p>Mental Health Services and Hospitals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hospitals, family doctors • mental health crisis teams, psychologists • family violence counselling programs for victims and children • Wellness Together Canada website
<p>Resources for Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth services • Kids Help Line • youth centres • child and youth advocacy centres • children’s hospital • child abuse teams 	<p>Family Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family resource/support centres • YM/YWCAs • parenting programs • Caring Dads programs
<p>Alcohol/Addiction Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addictions treatment helplines • addiction clinics • addiction programs • Wellness Together Canada website 	<p>Services for Abusers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized family violence programs • family violence intervention programs
<p>Financial Assistance and Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal aid • employment insurance • disability support programs • child tax benefits • financial planners • debt restructuring advisers 	<p>Language Interpretation Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Language interpretation/translation • international languages interpretation services
<p>Other Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transportation (public transportation, Uber, taxi numbers) • emergency food services (local food bank, Salvation Army Family Services) • pets (foster animal services) 	<p>Safety Planning Online Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Agency of Canada webpage: How to plan for your safety if you are in an abusive relationship • myplanapp.ca

See also [Tab #10: Safety Planning](#)