

IMPROVING THE ACTIVE OFFER OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES:

EMPOWERING
HOSPITAL MANAGERS
IN A REGION WITH A
LOW PROPORTION OF
FRENCH SPEAKERS

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PLAN OF THE PRESENTATION

- Impact of language on health
- Description of the linguistic context of Ontario
- Summary of the results of an implementation research project
 - Implementation: barriers and facilitators
 - Collaboration with regional partners

IMPACT OF LANGUAGE ON HEALTH

Language barriers can influence the safety of patients and the quality of services received.

(de Moissac et Bowen, 2018)

LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: FEDERAL LAWS

1969: French and English become official languages

1982: the Canadian charter of rights and freedoms protects the rights of individuals living in official language minority communities, whether English or French



LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: ONTARIO PROVINCIAL LAWS

1986: *French Language Service Act* confers the right to members of the public to receive government services in French in 26 designated regions of the province where 80% of the Franchophone population of Ontario lives.



BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ONTARIO LAWS: HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN FRENCH

1986: French Language Services Act

Exceptions: hospitals, Children's Aid, LTC, social programs provided by municipalities

Can request a designation

2010: French Language Health Planning Entities

Entities work with the LHIN (*Local Health Integration Network*) to identify the needs and priorities of the population and will recommend health service providers for the provision of French language health services in the area

LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Official language minority communities in Ontario

Total population	13 312 865
Individuals with French as mother tongue	527 690 (4%)
Individuals with French as first spoken official language	550 600 (4.1%)

Population survey 2016 (Statistics Canada)

LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

- In general, health care professionals tend to overestimate their client's ability to master their second language, in particular reading abilities (Bowen, 2011).
- 75% of francophones living in a linguistic minority situation consider it important to receive their health and social services in French, however, only 40% have used services in French (Gagnon-Arpin et al, 2014).

In general, francophones living in a minority context have a tendency NOT to request services in French.

STRATEGY: THE ACTIVE OFFER OF SERVICES IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

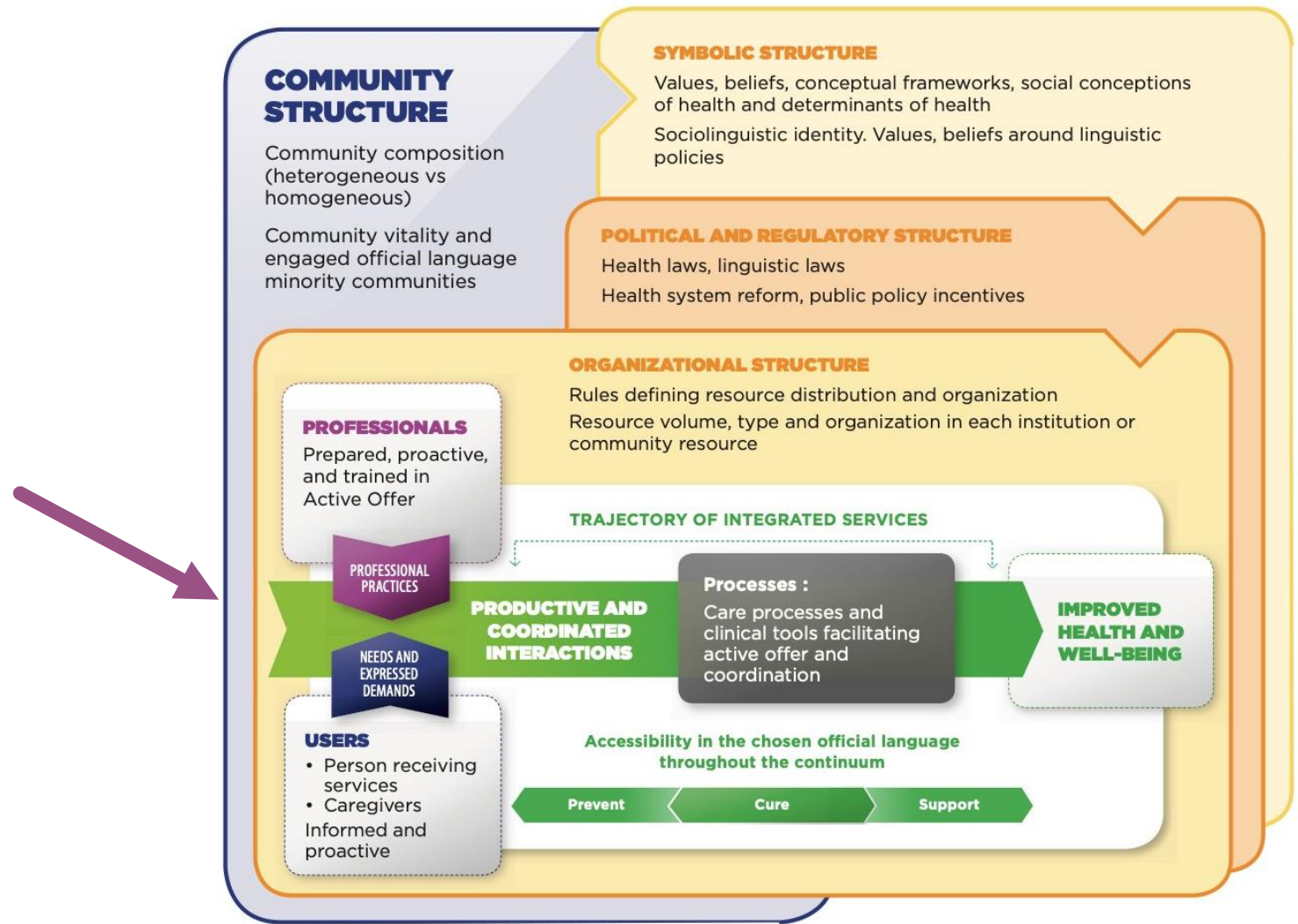
Active offer (AO) of services can be defined as an open and explicit invitation to members of the public to use one of the two official languages.

Examples of actions of Active Offer:

- Greet patients in both French and English
- Display posters that indicate that services are available in both languages

AOF: Active Offer of French language services

Framework for the analysis of health and social services access and integration for official language minority communities



Source: Savard J. et al. (2020). www.grefops.ca/cadre_analyse_en.html.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Research project: *Active Offer of Health Services in French: Empowering and Mobilizing Managers*

Goals of the research project:

To support and empower hospital unit managers to implement actions of AOF on their units

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO



RESEARCH PROJECT: THE SITE

Regional acute care hospital: *Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre*

- has been identified to provide services to the francophone population
- is working towards obtaining a « designation » as French language service provider

Local coordinators

- Upper level managers and administrative assistant



RESEARCH PROJECT

- Participating unit managers took part in a workshop
- With the support of the local coordinators, these managers
 - Chose 4 simple actions of AOF that they believed were feasible for their units
 - Adapted the actions to their local context
 - Implemented the actions

**RESEARCH
PROJECT:
ACTIONS OF AOF**

1. Change voice mail greetings or messages so that they are bilingual

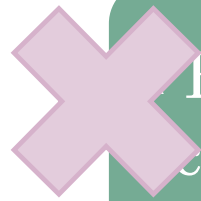
1. Display signs/notices in French and English

1. Provide « Je parle français » pins for unit staff members able to offer a service in French.

1. Translate each unit's educational resources and printed information so that they are bilingual

RESEARCH PROJECT: ADDITIONAL ACTIONS OF AOF

Two additional actions were initiated and implemented by the local coordinators...



Bonjour/Welcome » signs with instructions at all points of access.

Addition of a French sentence to the letters sent out to patients prior to procedures, indicating that they can contact the if they have questions.

RESEARCH
PROJECT:
IMPLEMENTATION
CHALLENGES

In general, the staff demonstrated a lack of conviction in the importance of AOF

- Rival daily priorities
- Concern for the needs of other language groups in their region

RESEARCH PROJECT: IMPLEMENTATION FACILITATORS

In this particular context

- Organizational support
- Local coordinator involvement
 - Supported staff to choose and prioritize actions: simple and feasible
 - Adapted actions to the local context
 - Organized implementation
- Using the term “project”

**RESEARCH
PROJECT:
SUSTAINABILITY**

Challenges to sustainability of the AO actions:

- 1) limited number of staff who can provide French language services
- 2) staff's limited belief that AOF is important

RESEARCH
PROJECT:
SUSTAINABILITY

What might counter these challenges?

- Implementing actions of AO that do not depend on staff
- Intergrate actions of AO as permanent hospital processes

3 actions have become permanent hospital processes

IMPLEMENTATION: COLLABORATION

Regional networking allowed the sharing of the first site's success story – this encouraged a second site to implement actions of AO



IMPLEMENTATION
COLLABORATION:
similarities between
the 2 sites

Regional language context: low
number of French speaking patients

Implementation via the local
coordinators

Similar challenges and facilitators to
implementation



CONCLUSION

- Create collaborations/
partnerships
- Start small and with find actions
that will have a high impact for
patients
- In a context where there are few
French speaking patients: find
ways to identify these patients
who require language support

**WE WOULD
LIKE TO
THANK...**

- Société Santé en français
- Institut du savoir Montfort
 - François Durant, Denis Prud'homme, Céline Delluc
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
- Réseau du mieux-être francophone du nord de l'Ontario

ACTIVE OFFER OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES: IDEAS OF ACTIONS

- Signs indicating the availability of French language services are clearly and visibly posted on the unit.
- Train the reception staff to consistently welcome users in both official languages. If services are requested in French, explain what is available.
- Post signs indicating that users may request services in both official languages.
- Post signs for employees on the procedure to follow if a user would prefer French language services.
- Have all signs on all units in Canada's two official languages.
- Inform potential users about the institution's commitment to providing services of equal quality in both official languages (community outreach) – for example during francophone events.
- Have intake questionnaires available in both French and English.
- Train staff on the topic of the impact of language barriers for French speakers when they use their second language (English) and on strategies to overcome these barriers.



ACTIVE OFFER OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES: IDEAS OF ACTIONS

- Translate all information booklets, education tools, and resources in both official languages.
- Consider using trainees from the translation program from the local University or College to help with this work.
- Ensure that employees have access to a glossary of health and social service terminology in French (specific to their area of practice).
- Have access to distance French speaking professionals or specialists (for example, telehealth psychiatrist).
- Choose evaluation questionnaires that are available in both official languages to give French speaking users the choice (for example, the Beck Depression Inventory or the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale)
- Document patient's preferred language in the local chart and ensure transfer of this information to all following services and referrals.
- Indicate patient's preferred language on tools that can be easily accessed by all staff, such as porters or nutrition aids. For example, on a white board in patient's room, on a bracelet or posted on the foot of the bed.



ACTIVE OFFER OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES: IDEAS OF ACTIONS

- Have an up-to-date list of professionals and organizations in the region or city that can provide services in French. Make this list easily available to staff.
- Create and foster links between the unit and representatives from the French community groups in the region as well as with the provincial French health networks. For example, encourage staff to participate in francophone community events, invite francophone community artists to your organization.
- Create a francophone nurse liaison position.
- Create a French service coordinator position.
- In pre-surgery letters being sent to patients, include a sentence in French stating that they are welcome to call a French liaison person to translate or ensure understanding of information.
- Visit college and university health professional programs in your area to inform students of the possibility of placements or employment for bilingual students.
- When your organization accepts trainees from the local colleges and universities, indicate to the placement coordinator your preference for bilingual students on certain units.



ACTIVE OFFER OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES: IDEAS OF ACTIONS

- Advertise open bilingual positions on the *Réseaux de santé en français* website and with francophone college and university health programs.
- When advertising for your organization, indicate that there are opportunities to work with francophone clients.
- Visit local immersion high schools to inform students about the need for bilingual healthcare providers (explore collaborations with the Consortium national de formation en santé).
- When consulting the community (for example, surveys or questionnaires) or when recruiting a member of the community for a committee, ensure to advertise these opportunities to the francophone community.
- Translate all telephone greetings in both French and English.
- Ensure that the organization's website is both in French and English.