

Case studies

Carrefour de l'offre active



CONSORTIUM NATIONAL
DE FORMATION EN SANTÉ

Case studies

Case studies represent real or fictional situations intended to explore more concretely the various elements related to the provision of health care services in French.

Encourage students to keep a log book about the active offer of health services. This log book can be used throughout the year to record their thoughts about the active offer of health services, and could therefore allow them to see how their understanding is improving with regards to active offer concepts and issues related to accessing health care services in French in a minority context.

Suggested use of case studies:

Introduce the scenario:

Verbally describe the situation or hand out the document.

Explore:

- What is the possibility of such situation happening in your province or region? Please explain.
- Is this situation solely related to a minority context?
- What is the link between this situation and language barriers?
- Does the situation look realistic? Why?

Read:

- Print and hand out the suggested thematic sheet, or any another that seems relevant.
- Recommend an excerpt from a research report (refer to References and Bibliography on the fact sheets).

Think:

Students answer the suggested reflective questions, with the class or in small groups. You can modify, remove or add questions.

Conclusion:

Following this educational activity, students can write down their answers in their log book, as well as their reactions and thoughts.

Case studies

Description

Case study 8

Tensions among health care staff members

Working in a minority context

A health care facility implements a policy to encourage staff members to make an active offer of services.

However, staff members were not trained in active offer prior to the adoption of the policy. In addition, all are overworked and do not have the necessary resources in French (pins, forms, brochures, etc.).

This causes discomfort for team members.

Anglophone staff members feel helpless, and they fear that this change will have an impact on their work. Will employee retention now be conditional on the acquisition of language skills? Francophone staff members fear that they will be overworked if they are too often called upon to act as interpreters.


Management cares about this new policy and needs to implement measures to ease tensions.

Reflective questions

- 1 In your opinion, what explains the reaction of Anglophone staff members? Of Francophone staff members?
- 2 What steps should have been taken by the management of the facility to avoid tensions?
- 3 What steps could be taken by the management of the facility to remedy the situation?
- 4 What are the challenges facing bilingual professionals in these workplaces?

Read this sheet
[Working as a Health professional in a minority context](#)

10

 CNFS

Annotations:

- Title of the case study
- Topic
- Scenario
- Suggested reflective questions
- Link to the thematic sheet that will inform the discussion

Table of contents

Language, health, quality, and safety

<u>Linguistic insecurity</u>	1
<u>(Poorly) informed consent (Doris' case)</u>	2
<u>Occasional interpreter</u>	3

Active offer

<u>Language of written medical record</u>	4
<u>User responds to lack of services offered in French</u>	5
<u>Language service</u>	7

Working in a minority context

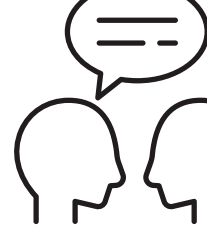
<u>A greater workload</u>	9
<u>Tensions among health care staff members</u>	10
<u>Policy on language of work</u>	11

Leadership

<u>Demonstrating commitment to the active offer of services in French</u>	12
---	----

Linguistic insecurity

Language, health, quality, and safety



During her studies, a young nurse was made aware of the risks associated with language barriers and the importance of health services in French. She now works in a small coastal community in Nova Scotia. Several times, she works regularly with Francophone users, and she feels fortunate to be able to speak French and offer them quality services.

However, on a few occasions when Francophone users were undergoing treatment sessions, she noticed that they were switching to English after a short while.

She also noticed that a colleague, who is also a Francophone, was using English with Francophone users.

Knowing that communication is a key factor in health care situations, she is concerned about the risks that could affect the quality of services and the safety of users, and she would like to be able to do something about it.

Reflective questions



1

What could justify the behaviour of these Francophone users?

2

What could justify the behaviour of this Francophone colleague?

3

Describe what is linguistic insecurity, and provide examples.

4

What impacts can linguistic insecurity have on the quality of services and the safety of users?

Read this sheet [Linguistic insecurity](#).

(Poorly) informed consent (Doris' case)



Language, health, quality, and safety

In 2009, Doris, a 69-year-old widow, was referred to a specialist after a lump was discovered in her left breast.

When they met, the specialist, who only speaks English, provided Doris with information that was hard for her to understand since she has very little knowledge of English. Yet, she understood that the mass is cancerous and should be removed, and she was shaken by the news.

No one offered her French health care or an interpretation service. Doris did not take steps to obtain services in her own language.

Despite her concerns and unanswered questions, she did consent to undergo a mastectomy. Her recovery was slow enough to affect her mental health.

With hindsight, this patient regrets that she did not communicate her language needs. She found the experience to be cold, mechanical, and dehumanizing. Sometimes she still doubts the diagnosis that has been made. (Scenario inspired by Bowen, 2000, adapted from the Active Offer Toolkit)

Reflective questions

1

Does this scenario reflect a current situation? In your opinion, have there been any changes in the provision of health care services in French? Please explain your answer.

2

Identify any breach of professional ethics in this scenario.

3

Trace Doris' journey from the moment she received a call to book an appointment with the specialist until she recovered from the surgery. Note any points where services provided in French could have had a positive impact on her situation.

Watch the videos (in French):

[Active Offer - Doris' case \(nonexistent offer\)](#).

[Active Offer - Doris' case \(existing offer\)](#).

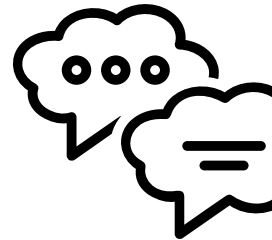
Read these sheets

[The ultimate goal of health care : Quality](#)

[The patient-centered approach](#)

Occasional interpreter

Language, health, quality, and safety



A man in his fifties and his daughter show up at a small community hospital in a very small Francophone minority setting.

They are greeted in English. The man has a hard time explaining to the triage nurse that he fell and has a very bad headache.

The doctor who is doing the examination only speaks English. Because he is extremely busy, he asks the patient's daughter to translate to speed up the exam. The patient's daughter refuses to translate. She seems very shy. A volunteer attendant is requested to translate what the patient is saying.

The volunteer attendant listens to the man who describes his symptoms. The patient has trouble pronouncing correctly and is searching for words. He explains that since he fell, he has been vomiting and the back of his head hurts. The volunteer attendant informs the doctor that the patient has nausea and a very bad headache. But he does not mention the fact that the patient has trouble pronouncing correctly and that he is searching for words.

Reflective questions

1

What are the possible consequences for the patient's safety? For his care? On the diagnosis he will receive?

2

What training could be offered to volunteers who sometimes act as interpreters? What knowledge and skills should be shared with volunteers?

3

What ethical issue can you identify in this situation?

Read this sheet [Interpretation services](#)

Language of written medical record



Active offer

Jean-Paul is from the Hearst area in Northern Ontario. Retired for seven years, he decided to move to St. Catharines, in Southern Ontario, to be closer to his children and grandchildren.

Since his wife's sudden death five years ago, Jean-Paul has suffered from severe depression. He was under the supervision of a Francophone physician and team from HKS Counselling Services (Hearst—Kapusksing—Smooth Rock Falls).

His medical file was transferred to a unilingual Anglophone physician in St. Catharines. The entire medical record is written in French.

Reflective questions

1

What would be the responsibility of the English-speaking physician who receives a medical record written entirely in French?

2

What role could HKS Counselling Services have played?

3

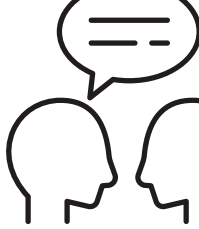
Who is responsible for ensuring good communication in such situation?

Read these sheets

[The ultimate goal of Health care : Quality](#)

[The challenges of providing French-language health and social services](#)

User responds to lack of services offered in French



Active offer

Elsa is from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She grew up in a predominantly anglophone environment, but one of her parents is Francophone. She is fluent in both languages, even though she uses English more often than French in her home community and even with her family members.

Elsa has completed a personal care attendant training program in French and is now working at a designated bilingual facility in Pine Falls, Manitoba. She notes that English is the preferred working language. Medical records are written in English and all team meetings are conducted in English.

During a first meeting with a new patient, she speaks to him in English and continues the conversation in English even though the patient speaks to her in French. The patient becomes uncomfortable and practically no longer participates in the conversation. She does not notice the patient's discomfort and continues her day's work as usual.

The patient completes the satisfaction survey as follows:

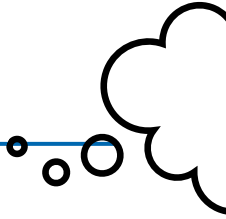
1. <i>Avez-vous reçu un message d'accueil bilingue (Hello/Bonjour)?</i> Did you receive a bilingual greeting (Hello/Bonjour)? <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Oui/ Yes</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Non/ No</i>
2. <i>Vous a-t-on demandé dans quelle langue vous étiez le plus à l'aise de recevoir un service?</i> Were you asked which language you were most comfortable receiving service in? <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Oui/ Yes</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Non/ No</i>
3. <i>Quels services avez-vous reçus en français?</i> Which services have you received in French? <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Soins directs/ Direct care</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Information sur la santé-éducation sanitaire/ Health information-education</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Information générale sur la région d'Entre-les-Lacs et de l'Est/ General Interlake-Eastern Information</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Autre/ Other: _____</i>
4. <i>Saviez-vous que les publications ou les communications indiquées ci-dessous sont offertes en français?</i> Were you aware that the following publications/communications are available in French? <u>ORS d'Entre-les-Lacs et de l'Est/ Interlake-Eastern RHA:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rapport annuel/ Annual report</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Plan des services en français/ French Language Service Plan</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Publicité/ Advertisements</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Documents liés à la promotion de la santé/ Health Promotion Material</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Plan stratégique/ Strategic plan</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Page Web sur les services en français/ French Language Services Webpage</i>
5. <i>Quel était votre niveau de satisfaction relative à l'offre des services en langue française?*</i> What was your level of satisfaction with staff effort to provide Active Offer?* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Très satisfait/ Very Satisfied</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Satisfait/ Satisfied</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Assez insatisfait/ Somewhat satisfied</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Insatisfait/ Not satisfied</i>
6. <i>Commentaires/ Comments: _____</i> <i>La préposée m'a parlé seulement en anglais et j'étais mal à l'aise de lui répondre.</i>

Continued on the next page

User responds to lack of services offered in French

(continued from previous page)

Active offer



Reflective questions

1

What can explain Elsa's behaviour?

2

What could be the consequences of this behaviour on the patient?

3

Why is it that the patient did not insist that Elsa speak to him in French?

4

What should caregivers and managers do to improve the provision of services in French?

Read these sheets

[Linguistic insecurity](#)

[Language barriers](#)

Language of service

Active offer



An occupational therapist and physiotherapist assistant welcomes a new client in both official languages. The customer responds in French and the assistant continues the conversation in French. The bilingual therapist responsible for the treatment plan joins them and continues the consultation in English.

The customer responds to the therapist in English.

When the therapist leaves the room, the assistant, speaking in French, checks with the client to see whether he understood correctly and whether he has any questions.

The assistant wonders if he should discuss this with the manager of the rehabilitation department. A mechanism to assess users' satisfaction with the choice of language of service has just been implemented by the facility.

Reflective questions



- 1 Was the assistant correct to check with the client to see if he had any questions? Please explain.
- 2 What would you have done if you were the assistant? Should the assistant complain to the manager? Should he discuss it with the therapist? Please explain.
- 3 If you were the therapist, how would you have reacted when finding out that the assistant checked with the client after the meeting to make sure he understood correctly?
- 4 What behaviours should be used to effectively address this situation?
- 5 In your opinion, why did the client not insist on obtaining services in French?

Read this sheet

Active offer



A greater workload

Working in a minority context

Abdi has just accepted a nursing position at a community health centre in a small rural community in a designated bilingual region of Manitoba. He quickly integrated into the team and he is building ties with a few colleagues and their respective families. He is very enthusiastic about his new position and does not hesitate to go beyond his responsibilities. Among other things, because he is fluently bilingual, Abdi agrees to act as an interpreter for other users on his colleagues' requests, which happen on a regular basis. He also translates forms or brochures for Francophone users.

After a few months, he is overwhelmed and stressed because he does not have enough time to do his own work properly. He senses that his supervisor feels dissatisfied with his performance.

Reflective questions

**1**

In your opinion, which of the following statements best describes Abdi's situation? Discuss these statements in small groups and explain your choice to the class.

- a. Knowledge of the vocabulary of one's profession in both official languages is a key component of a complete range of services in French, but it can be difficult to maintain one's language skills.
- b. For health professionals, not having access to French language training means that the active offer of services in French relies on the department's few bilingual employees and that the provision of services in French will become practically nil over time.
- c. When quantifying tasks, the lack of recognition of the complexity of a bilingual person's work (mastering both official languages, translating for colleagues, looking for French resources, etc.) can lead to overexertion.

2

The creation of a network is an excellent way to overcome the challenges of working in a minority environment. For example, we can call on other Francophones in our workplace who are experiencing similar situations. We can join forces with Anglophone and Francophile colleagues. How could Abdi build a network, given the remoteness and size of his community?

Continued on the next page

A greater workload

Continued from previous page

Working in a minority context

Reflective questions

3

Read the following excerpt from de Moissac et Drolet (2017), p. 190, and make the connection between Abdi's situation and the study described in the text.

A recent study conducted in hospitals in four Canadian provinces revealed that despite consideration for the language of the minority when planning service delivery, human resources management, and written and oral communications, access to services in French appears to be coincidental (Forgues et al., 2011). Among factors that contribute to the near-absence of active offer are: a lack of recognition on the part of employees and managers alike of the importance or necessity of providing services in the minority language; management practices that favour hiring unilingual Anglophone staff; and lack of commitment from senior management regarding language access provision (Forgues et al., 2011).

Read these sheets

[Working as a Health professional in a minority context](#)

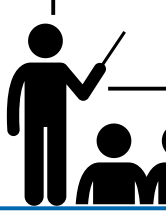
[Laws and policies](#)

References

De Moissac, D. and Drolet, M. (2017). Issues and Challenges in Providing Services in the Minority Language: The Experience of Bilingual Professionals in the Health and Social Service Network. In S. Savard, F. Giasson, J. Benoît, I. Arcand, J. Lagacé, C. Dubouloz, et al. (authors). (2017). Accessibility and Active Offer: Health Care and Social Services in Linguistic Minority Communities. University of Ottawa Press. ISBN 978-0-7766-2564-5 (PDF)

Tensions among health care staff members

Working in a minority context



A health care facility implements a policy to encourage staff members to make an active offer of services.

However, staff members were not trained in active offer prior to the adoption of the policy. In addition, all are overworked and do not have the necessary resources in French (pins, forms, brochures, etc.).

This causes discomfort for team members.

Anglophone staff members feel helpless, and they fear that this change will have an impact on their work. Will employee retention now be conditional on the acquisition of language skills? Francophone staff members fear that they will be overworked if they are too often called upon to act as interpreters.

Management cares about this new policy and needs to implement measures to ease tensions.

Reflective questions



1

In your opinion, what explains the reaction of Anglophone staff members? Of Francophone staff members?

2

What steps should have been taken by the management of the facility to avoid tensions?

3

What steps could be taken by the management of the facility to remedy the situation?

4

What are the challenges facing bilingual professionals in these workplaces?

Read this sheet

[Working as a Health professional in a minority context](#)



Policy on language of work

Working in a minority context

Two young Francophone health professionals have just been hired by a designated bilingual hospital in a predominantly Anglophone setting.

They both work in the dialysis department. Being new to the team and the only Francophone members, they often get together at break time and for lunch, and their discussions take place in French.

They usually work with Francophone users and occasionally act as interpreters.

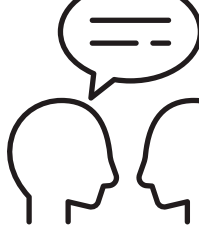
One day, while being near the reception and discussing the work schedule in French, an Anglophone colleague tells them that she feels excluded from their conversation and that it makes her uncomfortable.

A few days later, during a team meeting, the manager raises the language of work issue. She indicates that French is to be used only when interacting with Francophone users. She asks that English be used in common spaces. The two new employees do not dare object to this guideline.

Reflective questions

- 1 What would be your reaction in such a situation?
- 2 What arguments could the two professionals have used in order to be able to discuss with each other in French in common spaces?
- 3 What reasons could the manager have given for requesting that English be used in common spaces?
- 4 What are the challenges facing health care facility managers with respect to language at work?
- 5 What are the challenges facing Francophone health professionals in a predominantly Anglophone setting?

Demonstrating commitment to the active offer of services in French



Leadership

Misha is a social worker at a health care centre in Nova Scotia. During her studies, she was trained in the active offer of health services in French. She interacts quite regularly with Francophone users. Although she works in a predominantly Anglophone facility, she sometimes works with other Francophone colleagues.

However, Misha noted that her French-speaking colleagues often use English when exchanging with Francophone patients. She raised the issue at a team meeting, but no one seemed concerned about the situation.

Reflective questions

- 1 Demonstrating leadership means influencing or motivating others to contribute to the achievement of a vision or goals. How can Misha positively influence the active offer of services in French in her workplace?
- 2 What steps could she take with the facility managers to make them aware of the importance of implementing an active offer policy?
- 3 In your opinion, can anyone demonstrate leadership?
- 4 Does playing a leadership role involve risks?

Read this sheet

[Leadership and provision of Health services in french](#)