

Identify Francophone clients



Receiving health services in the appropriate language is a basic need. Therefore, linguistic identification is important for person-centered services and for the health care system. Legally speaking, Ontario recognizes two official languages, English and French. The French Language Services Act guarantees the active offer of French-language services in its designated establishments.

Three good reasons to capture the linguistic identity of the clientele :

- 1) Requirement 5 of the designation under the French Language Services Act of the government of Ontario includes linguistic identification.
- 2) Linguistic identification of the clientele allows the matching of clients with staff members who have French language skills, to ensure safe services.
- 3) Data on linguistic identity of the clientele can support performance indicators to better plan, measure and evaluate the offer of, and access to French-language services.

Questions to capture the linguistic identity of your clientele :

According to the Government of Ontario, the inclusive definition of Francophones is the best measure to capture linguistic identity. Since 2016, the French Language Services Network of Eastern Ontario (also known as “Le Réseau”) has recommended adopting the following questions to capture the linguistic identity and linguistic need in a health context:

Linguistic Identity

What is your mother tongue ?

Answer : English/French/other (include relevant choices)

If your mother tongue is neither French nor English, in which of Canada’s official languages are you most comfortable ?

Answer : English/French

Linguistic need in a healthcare context

In which language are you most comfortable receiving your healthcare services?

Answer : English/French

Note : The first two questions are useful for service planning purposes. The last question is useful in the context of service delivery and is related to language preference. Unlike linguistic preference, linguistic need is a necessity, a requirement, an essential.

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