

BMAGIC

Promising Practice

Interagency Referral Protocol

When a program participant is in need of support that your organization may not be able to provide, please follow the interagency referral protocol below:

- 1. Talk to all members of your organization regarding defining the point of referral.** Once agreement is reached on when to refer program participants, (i.e. a child displays on going signs of severe trauma, a young person casually mentions on more than one occasion wanting to die, an adult comes to program frequently intoxicated, etc.) document the agreements as an addendum to this protocol.
- 2. Talk to all members of your organization and identify criteria for what organizations must possess in order to feel confident in making a referral.** Ensure that everyone in the organization is clear on what the criteria is and document it as an addendum to this protocol.
- 3. Create an interagency referral binder and log sheets.** Separate the binder by month. Make sure everyone in the organization has a new log sheet at the beginning of each month and consolidates their previous log sheets at the end of the month in the binder. Place the Interagency Referral Protocol in the front of the binder.
- 4. Use the BMAGIC Resource Guide and Community Calendar to make local referrals.** Make it a point to familiarize yourself with the service providers in the Resource Guide. The Community Calendar often has updated opportunities and resources that may not be in the guide. Print the Community Calendar weekly and review for potential supports.
- 5. Respect where the program participants are in their development and support their authentic needs. Be honest about what your staff skill sets and capacity is. *Identify if the program participant needs deeper support beyond the scope of your work. Use your point of referral agreement as a guide.***
- 6. Sit down and talk to the program participant about your willingness to support their needs and be honest about your limitations.** Example: “You seem to be very angry and distracted lately. I know that you are having a tough time at home. I want to support you. Let us make an appointment to see a counselor at the Third Street Youth Center and Clinic. I believe seeing a counselor will help you address what is going on in a productive way and support our relationship”.
- 7. Make the referral using your organizations criteria and document it on the referral log sheet.**

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- 8. *Make it your business to go with your program participant to the first visit to the organization you referred them to.*** If you are not able to go, then make sure you are aware of the date and time the visit will take place and with whom so you are able to follow up. Do respect the program participant's wishes to visit the place of referral alone.

- 9. *Meet the person who will provide care to the program participant and exchange relevant up to date information on how to best contact each other*** (Note: Many business cards are outdated and do not have correct information. Always inquire if the information is accurate. Also, make sure to ask, "What is the best way to get a hold of you?" In this way you will establish a clear line of communication).

- 10. *If you are not able to meet the person who will be providing care to the program participant, ensure that you make phone contact and e-mail contact*** following the intent of step number 9 above.

- 11. *Whether you made a referral for a program participant that is no longer engaged in your programming or for one that is, follow up a month after you made the initial referral.*** If possible, check in with both the program participant and the referral contact. The point of this conversation is to ensure that the program participant is receiving services in our community.

- 12. *Document the follow up on the referral log.***

IMPACT

This process requires a commitment by organizations to co-create a community of regard. By engaging in this process we are creating bridges between organizations, people and places. We do not stop serving our community simply because they are not perceived as a good fit for our organizations. Our commitment to service extends beyond our organizations and into community.

The potential impact is as follows:

- Children, youth and families are highly regarded and the improvement in service results in a stronger system of care.
- More children, youth and families participate in our services.
- Less children, youth and families fall off the service continuum which to date justifies community members being labeled as "hard to reach populations".
- Children, youth and families have stronger relationships with service providers and feel supported.
- Partnerships between organizations are strengthened.
- Job satisfaction increases as we know we are taking shared responsibility in providing high quality supports, engaging in our personal best.