

Breaking Barriers

Advancing Accessibility, Inclusion, and Efficacy of Mental Health

Supports and Services in First Responder Organizations

May 06, 2026

Marnie Bolin MSW, RCSW

Clinical Director

Psychological Therapies Section

Calgary Police Service

Kiersten Mohr, BSc., MA

Founder and Managing Director

Terra Firma Transition Consulting





Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that I live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina and the Iyarhe Nakoda. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “Mohkinstsis,” which we now call the City of Calgary. The City of Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation.





Overview



Who is Psychological Therapies Section

Our mandate, our team, our vision for care, and the values that guide our work.



Why This Project, and Why Now?

The strategic, cultural, and operational drivers that made this the right moment for change.



Building Inclusive Care Pathways

How we designed, built, and implemented the new system — from consultation to launch.



First 6 Months: Successes and Challenges

Early wins, challenges, and the learnings shaping our next phase.



Psychological Therapies Section

Who are we?

Wellness and Resiliency Division (WRD)



- We provide **evidence - based mental health services** for CPS employees and their families through our internal clinical team and a network of ~250 community health providers.
- Grounded in **ethical practices**, **cultural humility**, and a commitment to **inclusion** and **accessibility**, we ensure confidential, flexible pathways to care that support wellbeing, resilience, and operational readiness.



Psychological Therapies Section

Service Delivery Approach



INTAKE AND TRIAGE

Any civilian, sworn member, or family member can book and intake call.



REFERRAL FOR SERVICE

Intake and Triage Specialist will offer referral options that align with the intake assessment.



FOLLOW UP

Intake and Triage Specialist will offer referral options that align with the intake assessment.

Approx. 1000+ Referrals Annually

Objective

- Assess Risk
- Understand Presenting Concerns
- Understand Client Social Location Factors
- Understand Referral Preferences.

Objective

- Provide timely referral that is congruent to clinical need, social location factors, referral preferences.

Objective

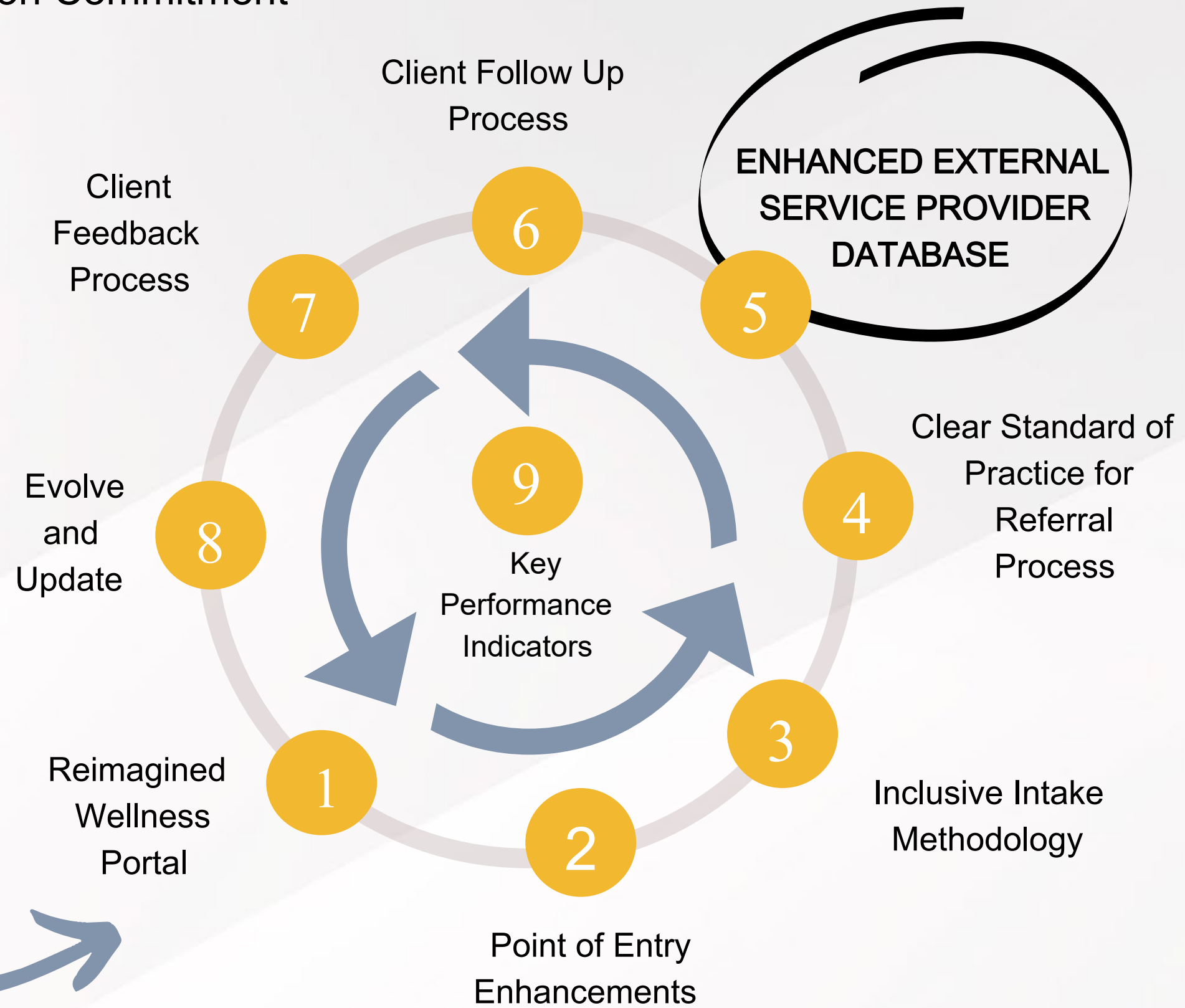
- Ensure Client Was Connected to Care
- Encourage Feedback
- Leverage Feedback to Improve Service.



Intake and Referral Process

Continuity of Equity and Inclusion Commitment

CALGARY POLICE SERVICE
Employees and Families





Why Now?

Aligning Our Services With an Evolving Diversity Landscape

With this recognition, PTS set out to intentionally build services that are **equitable, inclusive, and accessible**, ensuring every person can navigate a clear and trusted path to care.

- 01 Shifting Demographics**
 By 2031, approximately 30% of the Canadian population will belong to a visible minority group.
- 02 Language**
 By 2031, Allophones (first language is neither English nor French) will increase by ~10% to make up ~30% of the Canadian population.
- 03 Ability**
 6 million Canadians (22%) over the age of 15 live with a disability that impacts their quality of life.
- 04 2SLGBTQ+**
 900,000 Canadians over the age of 15 self-identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (projected to be much higher).
- 05 Indigenous**
 1.67 million people in Canada (4.9%) self-identify as Indigenous.



Impact of Evolving Approach

Efficacy of Culturally Responsive Counselling

Inclusive Language

Therapy efficacy is **2X** more effective when delivered in their first language.

01

Culture Specific Interventions

Clinicians using culturally grounded interventions see up to a **4X** boost in treatment efficacy.

02

Understanding of Acculturation

Aligning therapy with a client's acculturation level is highly correlated with improved treatment outcomes.

03

Affirming Clinical Approaches

2SLGBTQ+ clients show greater hope, stronger coping, reduced stress, and higher engagement when working with affirming, clinicians.

04

OPPORTUNITIES

Research consistently shows that culturally responsive care **improves treatment outcomes** — and PTS is committed to ensuring our services are **as impactful , inclusive , and accessible as possible.**

**References will be included at the end of the presentation.*



Building Inclusive Care Pathways

External Mental Health Provider Database Construction

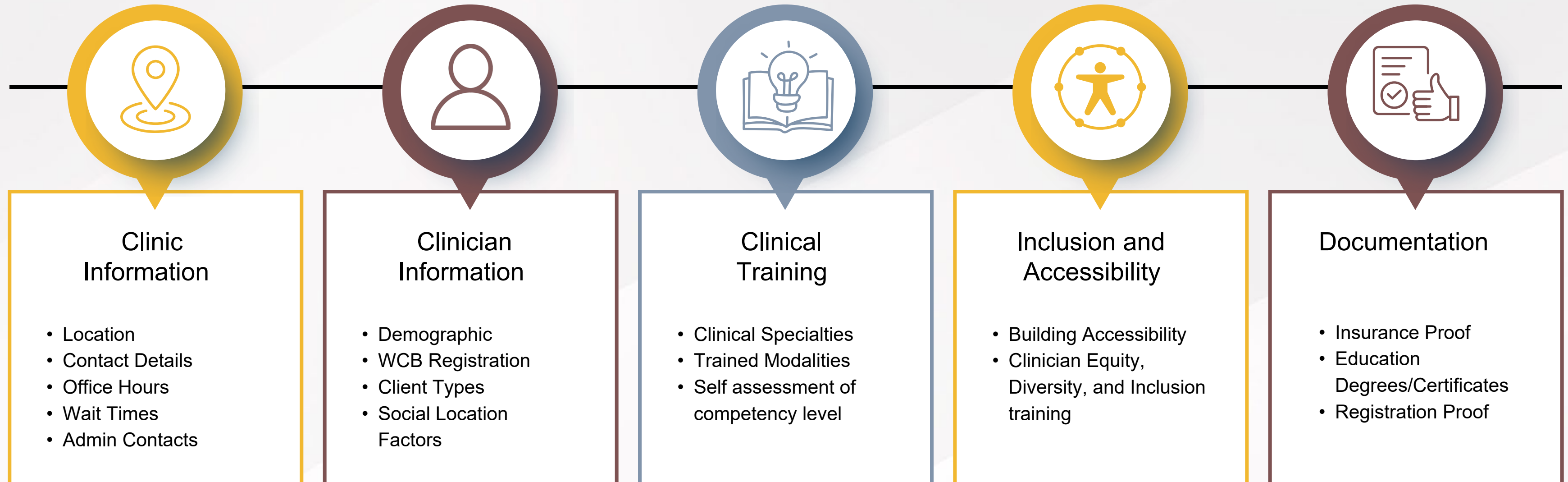


-  Begin using for all Intake and Referrals
-  Invited approximately 250 external mental health providers to register
-  Worked with IT to develop a web-based tool accessed by external mental health providers
-  Collaboratively designed survey for clinicians, incorporating clinical and social location factors
-  Understand Current and Future Service Needs



Information Gathered

External Mental Health Provider Database Construction



Information gathered from external health providers mirrors what each client can self-identify or request as a preference during intake and triage.



What External Providers See

External Mental Health Provider Database

Psychological Therapies Section (PTS), has been an essential part of the of the Calgary Police Service (CPS) since 1978.

PTS provides personal and professional services and resources to promote the mental health, well-being, and resiliency of employees and their families. To do this, PTS objective is to,

Prevent
Through interventions such as individual, couples', and family counselling; organizational development, training, and forensic support.

Protect
By providing training and development to help employee learn self-care and resiliency to support their well-being.

Preserve
By participating in or providing guidance to internal wellness programs.

[Start Registration](#)

[Download Invoice form](#)

Registration Form

Clinician Information | Clinic Address | Clinic Hours | Counselling Options & Direct Billing | Experience with First Responders

Clinical Modality Experience | Clinical Focus and Experience | Facilities & Access | Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Training | Documents

REGISTRATION DATE

Date *

6/24/2024

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Why are we asking?
To ensure that we have the most up-to-date contact information for all of our external clinicians.

CLINICIAN PRONOUNS

Why are we asking?
At PTS, we recognize that using appropriate pronouns is a first step toward respecting an individuals gender identity and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders. Therefore, we are collecting this information to ensure that gender identity is not assumed which ensures that our interactions with external service providers is both inclusive and respectful.

Please choose **all** that apply:

Clinician Pronoun *

Select or search options

- External mental health clinicians can log in and update their profile **at any time** .

- Clinicians are encouraged to keep training, availability, and wait times current to support timely referrals.

- Refreshes nightly at 10 p.m., ensuring the PTS clinical team has accurate, up - to - date information to improve access for clients.



What PTS Clinicians See

External Mental Health Provider Database

Each tab opens
a new search
window



Clinic & Client

Building

Specialities

Modalities

Search Results

Psychological Therapies Section

Clinic Details

Client Factors

First Responders

EDI Factors

Services Provider(s)

199

- Clinicians can search database in real - time.

- Ability to search on all factors collected during the registration process.

- Refines external support options to align with clinical need, social location factors, and referral preferences.

- Built in the Power BI platform and embedded in a SharePoint site.



Client Feedback

External Therapist Database

- A fully embedded feedback process was created to gather structured input on **intake experience, therapy experience, and equity, inclusion, and accessibility**.
- All feedback goes directly to the Clinical Director for review and action.
- These insights are used to guide decisions and optimize the quality, inclusivity, and accessibility of clinical support options for clients.

Client Feedback

Psychological Therapies Section

The following feedback form is intended to provide you with an opportunity to provide feedback on your intake and counselling experience. The information you provide will be kept in confidence and is intended to aid the Psychological Therapies Section to continually enhance and improve the quality, accessibility, and inclusiveness of our supports and services. It is our hope that this continuous improvement approach will ultimately help PTS improve the quality of service we can offer Calgary Police Service employees and their families.

All feedback received will be reviewed by the Psychological Therapies Section Clinical. If you would prefer to speak to the Clinic Director in person, feel free to reach out to them at [403-428-8381](tel:403-428-8381).

Thank you for helping us improve!

Intake	RESET TABLE				
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt that I was able to access Psychological Therapies section with ease?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that the triage specialist was responsive and supportive of my request for support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that triage specialist was inclusive and accessible relative to my individual needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that the triage specialist effectively listened to and understood my support needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that the triage specialist made a well informed and congruent referral relative to my individual needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt confident that my confidentiality and privacy was protected when connecting with Psychological Therapies Section.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Comments Triage Experience					



External Mental Health Provider Database

Evergreen Approach

CLINICAL INTAKE

Conduct a thorough intake and triage process to gain insight into both clinical and social location factors, as well as referral preferences.



REFERRAL FROM DATABASE

Utilize the database for relevant referrals based on clinical and social location factors.



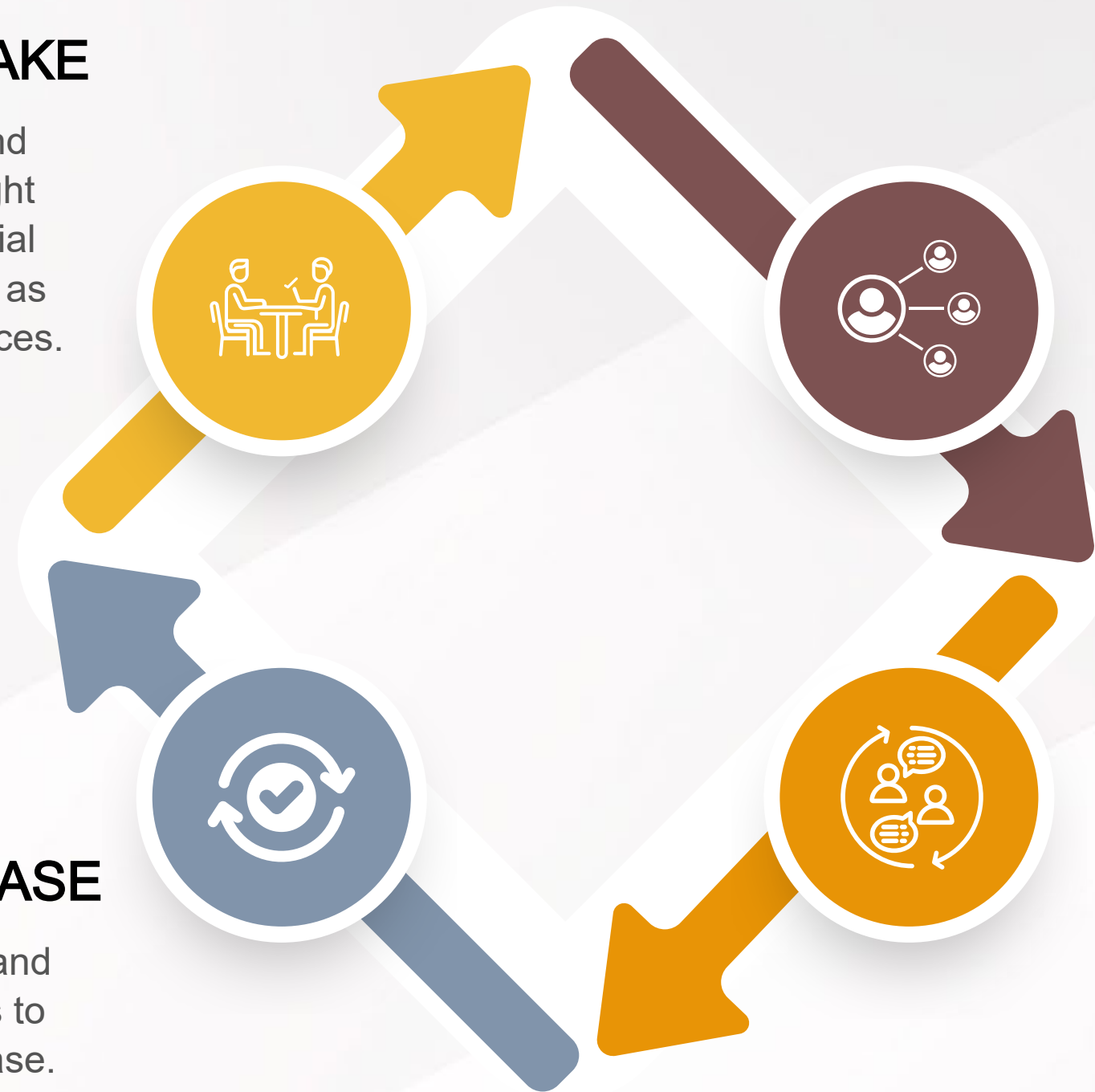
UPDATE DATABASE

Leverage feedback and evolving clinical needs to optimize database.



CLIENT FEEDBACK

Collect feedback from the client (voluntarily) and leverage to optimize referral options.





First 6 Months - Lessons

What we have learned

- External clinicians not updating their information on timely basis (i.e., wait times, etc.)
- Digital invitation was shared beyond clinicians that were invited
- Some resources required to ensure database is kept clean (i.e., duplicate profiles, etc.)

Challenges



Successes

- External providers keep their own information up to date - less administration for PTS.
- Proactive approach to external clinician management
- Enhanced referrals through multimodal strategy that incorporates both clinical and social location factors.
- Feedback process is being used and improves ability to ensure high quality clinicians.



Next Steps

Evergreen Approach



- **Use Portal for Two Way Communication**
Use the portal to share relevant content with providers (i.e., FAQs, research, intervention approaches, relevant organizational information).
- **Refine Internal Search Dashboard**
Refine the internal dashboard to enhance functionality and improve clinical workflow.
- **Proactively Identify and Fill Gaps in Providers**
Build a dashboard of registered external clinicians to proactively assess and address gaps in the provider population (e.g., skill sets, location, specialties).
- **Provider Contracts**
Establish direct contact with each provider to strengthen governance and enhance mutual benefit for both CPS and clinicians.



Questions and Discussion





References

- 150.StatsCan.gc.ca
- Craig, S.L., Eaton, A.D., Leung, V.W.Y., Iacono, G., Pang, N., Dillon, F., Austin, A., Pascoe, R., & Dobinson, C. (2021). Efficacy of affirmative cognitive behavioural group therapy for sexual and gender minority adolescents and young adults in community setting in Ontario, Canada. *BMC Psychology*, 9(94).
- Olotu S. (2023). Integrating Cultural Awareness to Improve Mental Health Services in the Multi-Ethnic Community: A Systematic Literature Review. *BJPsych Open*, 9(Suppl 1), S66. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2023.225>.
- Peyton, K., Weiss, C. M., & Vaughn, P. E. (2022). Beliefs about minority representation in policing and support for diversification. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 119(52), e2213986119. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2213986119>
- Raval, V.V., Gopal, B., Aggarwal, P. et al. Training in Cultural Competence for Mental Health Care: A Mixed-Methods Study of Students, Faculty, and Practitioners from India and USA. *Cult Med Psychiatry* 48, 699 – 730 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-024-09867-3>
- Sue, S., Zane, N., Nagayama Hall, G. C., & Berger, L. K. (2009). The case for cultural competency in psychotherapeutic interventions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 525 – 548. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163651>