**Linkage and Referral**

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**Step 1: Research**

[Insert]

Use key search terms on the internet, as well as your known contacts to find as much information as possible about the issue, opportunity or problem, including existing laws, systems, policies, processes, resources, advocacy organizations and direct service supports that can provide immediate relief.

*Example: Sexual orientation was added to the state’s civil rights law in 2018. The Civil Rights Commission handles these complaints and provides relief. In addition, there is a local LGBTQ organization that provides support groups and counseling services. Include links to resources in your records for referrals and documentation.*

**Step 2: Linkage**

[Insert key agency or representative names, website links, phone numbers and contact information to be passed along.]

Whenever possible, a direct linkage or personal introduction is advisable. This means you have called or emailed the agency and have confirmed this is the appropriate resource for the person or situation in question before making the referral. Be sure to maintain confidentiality and avoid providing specifics the person may want to withhold or report themselves.

*Example Linkage Introduction: Hi, my name is Janice, and I’m a human rights advocate. I’m working with an individual who says their landlord has denied them a lease based on their sexual orientation. I understand your agency provides assistance. Can you tell me about the process, who they can speak with and what I should recommend for them?*

**Step 3: Make the Referral**Once you have completed your research and made linkage (if applicable), it’s time to make the referral.

An empowerment-based, human rights advocacy referral includes the following points:

* Affirmation of entitlement to human rights, basic needs and accessibility and inclusion
* Information regarding background, rules and processes
* Opportunity for immediate relief (and/or advocacy engagement)
* Encouraging intent from the person or people impacted to follow through
* Follow up plans and expectations

[Insert your intended email or talking points.]

*Example: Hi Sandy, I saw on your post on social media. I’m so sorry that happened to you. I want you to know you always have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free discrimination based on your sexual orientation.*

*Discrimination based on sexual orientation is never okay and is a violation of our state’s civil rights laws. I spoke with a person named Jonah at our state’s civil rights commission. Jonah advised me there is an online form you can access to file an official complaint. Once received, they will review the complaint, and initiate a process within 10 days to investigate the landlord’s action. You can fill out the form online or contact Jonah directly at (123) 456-7890.*

*I know facing discrimination can be a traumatic experience, and no one should have to face that alone. If you ever need someone to talk to, I also found support groups and counseling services at the local LGBTQ Center. Their website is \_\_\_\_\_, and their phone number is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

*Standing up for yourself can be scary, but it can also be empowering. I always encourage people to do what’s best for them to make themselves feel whole.*

*If it’s okay with you, I’ll plan to follow up in a couple of weeks to check in on how things are going.*

*Again, I’m sorry this happened to you, but I hope this information can help you and your wife.*

*Sincerely,*

*Janice*

**Step 4: Document and Save**

Once you’ve completed the referral, you’ll want to document what you provided for your or your organization’s records. This should include the date of service, as well as any documentation of follow up. Limiting identifying information in your records is critical to maintaining confidentiality. If you are working on behalf of an organization, be sure to follow their internal record-keeping policies.

**NOTE: If you are not a licensed counselor, lawyer or acting in an official organization role, you’ll want to be sure to confirm the person you’re working with understands that you are providing personal advice based on industry standards and best practices, but that you are not licensed to provide professional legal, mental health or medical advice.**