

*Tips for Evaluating Resources*

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The following tips (adapted from Ender, Saunders-McCaffrey, and Miller, 1979) will be helpful as you evaluate referral resources.

1. Visit the service. Meet with staff members of the resources most frequently used by the students with whom you work. This process is time-consuming but provides many important benefits. It is easier to make an effective and reassuring referral if you know something about the beliefs and attributes of the persons at a particular office, as well as having a knowledge of the services provided.
2. Tour the facility. Ask for a tour of facilities and material resources such as library, media collection, or computer lab. Familiarity with the physical facilities will also enable you to refer a student to the most appropriate resource available. Ask to be on any mailing list the office has for announcing special events or programs. Get a copy of any descriptive brochure—with extras to hand out if they're readily available.
3. Understand the agency's referral process. Ask specific questions regarding referral procedures, activities of the office, office hours, and even the philosophy or attitudes of the staff toward providing service. Discover the process a student goes through when seeking assistance, such as filling out forms and scheduling appointments. Find out if the agency has a policy regarding confidentiality.
4. Check out willingness to serve as consultants. Explore the possibilities of using agency resource persons as consultants for helping you work with students. For example, if you were working with a student who has experienced a personal crisis, it would be very useful to know how to access a counseling psychologist or similar personal counselor to find out about dealing with crisis and referral.