



## Talking with Newcomers about Artificial Intelligence (AI)

### A Guide to Building Trust and Confidence

[Artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) tools are becoming a regular part of resettlement work, supporting providers with tasks like translating and interpreting during intakes, running housing searches, and enrolling clients in benefits. As these AI-supported tasks become more common, talking openly with clients about how the tools are used and how client data is handled is an important part of building trust. This guide provides information, sample scripts, and a case scenario to help you inform clients about AI tools, address their questions, and support in making decisions that feel right for them.

### Introduction

**Artificial intelligence (AI)** can refer to any engineered or machine-based system that creates content, makes predictions, or generates decisions based on defined objectives. AI is not a specific technology but a broad classification encompassing various tools and capabilities that mirror aspects of human intelligence.

These tools analyze large amounts of data to produce an output, but they do not think, verify facts, or understand context the way a human does. As a result, AI tools can produce outputs that sound accurate but actually contain errors that may not be easy to notice. When planning to use an AI tool, it's crucial to prepare.

Learn how the tool works, know your organization's AI policies, understand how to identify appropriate uses of AI, and anticipate the questions your clients may have.

**Before incorporating AI into your work, start by reviewing Switchboard's toolkit [Using Artificial Intelligence in Service Delivery: A Framework to Evaluate Organizational Readiness](#).**

## Preparing to Use AI in Service Delivery

### Know Your Organization's AI Policies

Confirm the following with your supervisor or relevant leaders before using AI tools in your work:

- **Which tools are approved:** Only use tools that are approved by your organization.
- **What client information can be entered:** Know exactly what types of personally identifiable information (PII) must be removed or concealed.
- **Consent requirements:** Your organization may have protocols for obtaining client consent.
- **How to document AI use:** Some organizations require notes in the client files about consent and identifying any AI tool that was used.
- **Data retention and storage:** Understand how your organization stores data, who has access to it, and what happens to the data after a session ends.

### Learn When to Use and Not Use AI

Although AI tools are becoming common in [resettlement work](#), they are not appropriate in every situation. For example, you may want to use AI tools for certain parts of appointments and not in others.

#### AI tools may be helpful for:

- **Translating and interpreting in low-stakes situations.** AI translation can speed up communication, but always have bilingual staff review for accuracy.
- **Searching for resources or information.** AI can help identify rental listings, benefits programs, community services, or [research evidence](#).
- **Summarizing information.** When you need to condense a long document or set of notes, AI can produce a useful first draft for your review.

#### AI tools are generally not appropriate when:

- **The client has not consented, feels uncomfortable, or has limited [digital skills](#).** Proceeding in these situations can damage trust.
- **The conversation involves sensitive data.** Avoid using AI for discussing legal matters regarding immigration, mental health, or safety planning, where errors can cause harm.

- **The tool is not approved by your organization.** Only use AI tools that your organization has vetted and authorized.
- **AI output is not going to be reviewed.** Always review and verify AI-generated content before sharing it with a client or using it to inform a decision. AI should not be used as the final decision-maker.

Before using an AI tool in service delivery, you also need to be familiar enough with it to explain it clearly to clients. Consider the following:

- **What the tool does:** Do you know if the tool is translating, summarizing, or something else?
- **Your comfort level:** Are you confident enough to demonstrate the tool?
- **The tool's limitations:** Are you familiar with where errors are likely to occur?

If there are gaps in your own knowledge, research and consult with colleagues so you feel better prepared prior to discussions with clients.

### Prepare for Common Client Questions

Clients often have questions and concerns about privacy, accuracy, and who is in control. Some of these questions may arise from unfamiliarity or past experiences. Some typical questions about AI include:

- Is the computer listening to us?
- Who sees my information?
- Will this affect my case?
- Do I have to use this?
- Will AI make mistakes?

You can respond with more confidence by anticipating questions ahead of client meetings. The sample scripts on the next page offer language for these moments.

## Introducing AI to Clients

With that preparation in place, you're now ready to speak with clients about using AI tools in your service provision. **Informed AI consent** is a practice you should build into your services so your clients can think, ask questions, and make choices about using AI tools without pressure. Many clients fear that saying no will cost them services. Create an environment where saying yes and saying no feel equally possible and silence is never read as consent.

The following checklist gives you step-by-step **practices for introducing AI to clients** before, during, and after each appointment:

### Before the Appointment

If your organization makes pre-appointment confirmation calls, use that moment to:

- Inform the client you'd like to use an AI tool during their next appointment, and give them time to consider it
- Confirm an alternative will be available if they say no or are unsure
- Tell them that saying no will not affect the services they receive in any way

*Note: If a confirmation call is not possible, the sample script in the next section offers a way to introduce AI tools in the moment.*

### During the Appointment

- Name the AI tool and confirm whether the client has agreed to use it
- Honor their decision without hesitation
- Reassure them that their services will not be affected by their choice

### After the Appointment

- Document their preference in their file so it is respected across appointments with other staff
- If the client declined, revisit AI use later, when trust is further developed

### Sample Script

Introducing AI to clients prior to using it in services is the preferred approach. Ideally, clients will have time to think, choose, and arrive at the appointment knowing what to expect. In practice, however, this is not always possible. Walk-in appointments, short timelines, and urgent situations are common. Sometimes you may need to introduce a client to an AI tool for the first time in the moment.

The following script can be adapted for most situations. When your relationship with the client is newer, keep

your description of the AI tool simple and literal, and avoid analogies or overpromising what the tool can deliver. As trust develops, you will have more room to name the tool's limitations directly and invite the client's input on how they want to proceed. In all cases, offer an alternative to using AI, and make clear that their choice will have no bearing on their services.

**Conversation Starter:** *Before we get started, I want to tell you about a tool I sometimes use. It is called [name of tool your agency uses], and it uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help with translation. When I type or speak, the words go through this tool and are translated. It is usually accurate, but it can make mistakes, so I always check in with you as we go. The information is handled according to our agency's rules to protect you, and I can walk you through those rules if you would like. Would you like me to explain more about this tool, or would you prefer to use an interpreter instead? Either way, the choice is yours. It will not affect your services.*

This first conversation about AI does not need to be complete. The goal is to open the door and let clients know they will always have a say.

### Responding to Client Questions and Concerns about AI

When clients ask questions and express concern about AI tools, this is a moment where trust can potentially deepen. As you respond, keep in mind that questioning how AI tools work and how they use information is part of AI best practice. Acknowledge clients' concerns, and provide direct, clear answers to their questions. Always respect client choice about whether to proceed with using AI tools or not.

### Privacy Concerns

Some clients may express worries that the computer is listening to conversations and/or storing personal information. Validate concerns before correcting any inaccuracies. Clients who raise privacy questions are exercising exactly the kind of caution one should use with AI tools. If your relationship with the client is new, offer to set the tool aside rather than push through their discomfort. When the relationship is more established, you can be more direct and invite the client to look at the screen with you as you discuss how the AI tool works.

**Sample Response:** *You're right to ask, and your concern is worth taking seriously. Some AI tools do keep what people type into them, and different tools handle this in different ways. The tool I'm using is called [name of tool]. I follow our agency's guidelines about what information goes into it, and your personal details are not part of what I have entered. I'm happy to show you what the tool is displaying as well as its privacy policy. If you'd prefer to continue without it today, we can do that too.*

### Concerns About Accuracy

When working with AI-generated content, such as pre-filled forms, clients may notice and point out errors or ask you if the information can be trusted. Tell the client that questioning AI output is the right response—reviewing what AI produces is part of the process. Reassure the client that no forms will be submitted until they feel ready to do so. (Keep in mind that using AI to pre-fill forms can involve significant client data and must only be done with agency-approved tools that meet data-handling and privacy standards. Confirm your agency's guidelines before using AI in this way.)

**Sample Response:** *You're right to look carefully at this form. AI tools help get us started, but they can make mistakes. Everything AI does needs to be checked by me and you, even when the information looks complete and sounds convincing. What do you see that does not look right? We'll fix it together, and we won't submit anything until you feel ready.*

### Conclusion

AI tools are ubiquitous, but newcomers may be unfamiliar with this technology or have questions about how it is used. Build trust with clients one conversation at a time. Name the tools you are using, answer questions clearly, and tell clients that they always have a choice about whether to use AI. Being transparent about AI shows clients that you will honor their choices. Practice these conversations in every client session, with every AI tool you use.

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### Case Scenario

Imagine Zohra is an older newcomer who has limited experience with technology. Soon she will be attending her first appointment with a caseworker. Zohra is feeling nervous and is balancing multiple concerns: learning how U.S. systems work, what services and benefits are available to her, and whom she can trust.

**Prior to the appointment:** The caseworker, Maria, contacts Zohra to tell her what the upcoming intake meeting will involve. Maria mentions an AI tool that she sometimes uses for translation and interpretation during appointments. Maria explains that using the tool is optional, and an interpreter will remain available if Zohra prefers. This phone call gives Zohra time to consider whether she feels comfortable with using the AI tool before she attends the meeting.

**At the appointment:** Maria reviews the purpose of the AI tool, how it would be used, and what safeguards are in place to protect client information. Zohra agrees to try the AI tool for certain portions of the meeting but declines for others. While using the AI translation tool, Maria continuously confirms with Zohra that the information is correct. Her focus remains on Zohra feeling comfortable and participating in decisions.

**Reflection:** Maria created an opening for Zohra's informed consent by mentioning the AI tool in the pre-appointment phone call, explaining that it is optional, and discussing safeguards at the outset of the appointment. Although Zohra had limited experience with technology and was cautious about trusting new people, the information and choice Maria gave her increased her comfort level and sense of agency. When Zohra agreed to use the AI tool during portions of the meeting, Maria honored her partial acceptance without hesitation, building trust between them.