

Conditions favourable to sexual health *These strategies do not have a direct impact on HIV transmission, but include different practices and contexts that promote good sexual health and contribute to putting other strategies in place.*



ADVOCATING FOR BETTER ACCESS TO SERVICES

Engaging in activism to improve access to health services in terms of transparency, acceptability, availability, cost, and better coordination between different services

Description

- Even if a number of organizations and agencies offer a range of services, these services must above all be accessible for people to use them.
- Various factors influence access to services: the service must maintain a certain level of visibility, be suited to the user's values and lifestyles, be easy to access in terms of hours of operation and geographic location, be affordable in terms of cost, and be able to respond to the user's needs in an integrated and ongoing manner.
- Organizations need to work together to facilitate access to their services and ensure collaboration.
- Individuals can help improve access to services in a number of ways, such as by sharing your comments or complaints to the organizations in question, by getting involved in campaigns for better access to services, by taking part in committees, or by participating in community projects or events that address access to services.

Effectiveness

- Ultimately, improvements in access to services should lead to¹
 - people making more wide-spread use of services,
 - people making more use of services suited to their needs,
 - more people actually making use of services when they need them,
 - more wide-spread use of different HIV prevention strategies,
 - improvements in health among men who have sex with men,
 - use of more than one service at a time as part of a combined approach to HIV prevention,
 - more equality and social justice.

Acceptability

- Advantages of advocating for better access to services:
 - Can give rise to the feeling that you are doing something to help improve your community.
 - May lead to improvements in your experiences with these services.
 - Makes it possible for those in charge to respond to your concerns and ideas.
 - Makes it possible to improve access for marginalized groups (e.g. trans people, sex workers).²
- Disadvantages of advocating for better access to services:
 - May be difficult to come up with concrete ideas for to put strategy into action.
 - May require getting involved in an organization that campaigns for these issues.
 - Does not offer any direct protection against HIV and STIs.
 - May give a false sense of security.²

References

1. Lévesque, J.-F., Harris, M., & Russell, G. (2013). Patient-centred access to health care: conceptualizing access at the interface of health systems and population. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 12 (18), doi :10.1186/1475-9276-12-18.
2. Projet MOBILISE!. (2017). *Données issues des équipes citoyennes de projet MOBILISE!* (internal document).