6 Steps to Help Your Client with a Legal Issue

1 Ask your client to share

When asking your client to share with you, remember to actively listen and ask open-ended questions. It can take time to build trust and rapport so that your client feels comfortable sharing their personal life with you.

2 Look for common signs of a legal issue

Common signs your client has a legal issue include:

- documents from a court or lawyer
- eviction from their home
- end of a relationship
- job loss
- experiencing abuse or violence
- owe debts

3 Identify the areas of law

Criminal law deals with wrongs against society. **Civil law** recognizes wrongs between people or businesses. There are many branches including family, landlord and tenant, employment, foreclosure, and contract. **Other areas of law** involve the government, such as immigration, social assistance, and tax.

4 Triage legal issues

Make a list of your client's issues. Rank them as high, medium and low priority. Deal with the high priority, urgent issues first.

5 Find reliable legal information

If your client does not need immediate legal help, connect them with reliable legal information. In many cases, good legal information can answer some of your client's legal questions. Legal information can also help your client decide whether to seek legal advice. Remember though, you cannot give legal advice unless you are a practicing lawyer!

6 Refer your client for legal advice

Your client may also need legal advice. As a justice navigator, you cannot advise your clients on what they should do about their legal issues. Legal clinics, lawyers, legal coaches, and more can help.

Centre for Public **cplea** Legal Education Alberta

This poster supplements CPLEA's free self-directed course **Helping Clients with Legal Issues**. For more information visit **learn.cplea.ca**