

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERPRETATION



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**Cross Cultural
SERVICES, LLC**

*Facilitating Communication for Persons
with Limited English Proficiency*

NATIONAL, CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER™

10 TIPS FOR PROVIDERS WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS:

- 1. Work with a qualified interpreter.** Do not depend on children or other relatives and friends to interpret.
- 2. Ensure** that the interpreter is appropriate for the encounter,(e.g., language/dialect, gender, religion, etc.).
- 3. Hold a brief meeting with the interpreter, if needed.** Explain the purpose of the session. Let the interpreter brief the patient on the interpreter's role.
- 4. Read body language during face-to-face encounters.** *Making eye contact is key to provider-patient relationship.* Arrange yourself so that you and the patient have direct eye contact and advise the interpreter where you need them positioned to best facilitate communication. Watch the patient's eyes and facial expression – when you speak and when the interpreter speaks. Look for signs of comprehension, confusion, agreement, or disagreement.
- 5. Talk to the patient directly, using first person and not in the third person as in "Tell him xyz".**
- 6. Be brief, explicit and basic.** Remember that you are communicating with the patient through an interpreter. Pause after a full thought for the interpretation to be accurate and complete. If you speak too long, the interpreter may not remember and include everything you say.
- 7. Don't ask or say anything that you don't want the patient to hear.** Expect everything you say to be interpreted, as well as everything the patient and his family says.
- 8. Speak in a normal voice, clearly, and not too fast or too loudly.**
- 9. Avoid jargon and technical terms.** Avoid idioms, technical words, or cultural references that might be difficult to translate.
- 10. Be patient and avoid interrupting during interpretation.** Allow the interpreter as much time as necessary to ask questions, for repeats, and for clarification. Be prepared to repeat yourself in different words if your message is not understood.

10 TIPS FOR INTERPRETERS WORKING WITH PROVIDERS:

- 1. Abide** to the National Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.
- 2. Explain interpreter protocol** (e.g.“I will speak in the first person, please make direct eye contact with the provider, the goal is for you and the provider to establish trust, I am your voice and everything you say will be interpreted).
- 3. Speak in the first person.** When interpreting speak in the first person when communicating for provider and patient. That is, use “I” in reference to the speaker rather than “he/she said.”
- 4. Be prepared and carry a note pad at all times** to write dates, times and doses, etc. (e.g. providing discharge instructions, prescriptions, etc.) and a dictionary when necessary.
- 5. Position yourself to best facilitate communication** - The interpreter should be seen and heard by both parties, but should position themselves in the place that is least disruptive to direct communication between provider and patient, and most respectful of the patient's physical privacy, unless otherwise directed.
- 6. Preserve the register and style of language used in the source language when transmitting in the target language.**
- 7. Never omit, make up, or inaccurately interpret information and/or concepts you do not understand or completely hear.**
- 8. Interrupt the provider in order to clarify a term.** (e.g. “Interpreter needs to clarify a term”).
- 9. Request repetition of a statement from the provider.** (e.g. “Interpreter needs repetition”).
- 10. Do not allow exchanges** where one of the parties (either the provider or patient) does not know what is being said for an extended period of time. (e.g. Do not have side conversations with family members).