



Working with Interpreters

A practical guide to achieve maximum results

Many Australians do not speak English as a first language. In a stressful situation, or when dealing with formal language, in an unfamiliar territory, they may experience difficulties in communicating in English.

What is and what is not the role of an Interpreter?

- An interpreter's role is to bridge the communication gap.
- Interpreters restate the spoken message from one language to another. Deaf people may require Interpreters who use Australian Sign Language (Auslan).
- Interpreters must interpret and or repeat all said, even if it is said aside or does not make sense.
- Interpreters are bound by a code of ethics.
- Interpreters are not advocates for either party and it is not their role to become personally involved in the information being conveyed.
- It is not the Interpreter's role to conduct the session or act as a cultural expert.

The benefits of working with an Interpreter

- Working with an accredited Interpreter can ensure information conveyed to your client is accurate and impartial, not the case when using a family member or a friend.
- An accredited interpreter has met the requirements set by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).
- Remember working with an Interpreter may take longer but communication is more effective.

When do you need an Interpreter?

- Look for signs that your client is having trouble understanding you or in getting their message across to you. Asking your client open-ended questions will help determine their need for an Interpreter.
- Even if your client insists they do not need an Interpreter, explain that communication between all parties will be more effective if you use an Interpreter.

Working with an Interpreter

- Some situations are sensitive and the cultural background, gender and or religion of the interpreter may be important.
- Talk directly to your client, not to the interpreter and maintain eye contact.
- Use short simple sentences, making one point at a time. Likewise speak in plain English, avoiding slang, colloquialisms and proverbs.
- The interpreter may want to clarify something with you or with your client. In some cases the Interpreter may need to take notes or consult a dictionary.
- Interpreting can be difficult and it is a highly skilled job. It requires a degree of concentration, linguistic ability and specific knowledge.
- If there is a problem with an Interpreter's performance, discuss this with the Interpreter first. If you cannot resolve the problem together, contact your language service provider.

Professional development training

CALD Group provides a practical, hands-on training session on "Working with Interpreters". Visit our web site at www.caldgroup.com.au to find out more about our diverse range of training programs on offer, review our training calendar, workshop programs or register on-line to attend a training session.

"Cultural diversity, seize the opportunity to discover the world"



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