

An interpreter is a person who conveys orally the meaning of the spoken word from one language to another. You can use interpreters more effectively and achieve better communication with a non-English speaking client by both you and your client understanding the role of an interpreter.

The Interpreters role is to convey the whole message accurately and appropriately from one language to another. To allow the interpreter to do this you should:

- Allow extra time for the interview
- The first step in any interpreting situation is to introduce yourself to the interpreter and brief them on the situation. Then allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to your client.
- When using an interpreter your role is to manage and conduct the interview, it is your responsibility to ensure a free flow of communication.
- You can assist the interpreter to accurately recount what you say by using some simple strategies, keeping your sentences short limited to 2 ideas per sentence, use simple language and avoid jargon
- Be patient, sometimes one short sentence in English may require several sentences in the other language.
- Pause often, this gives the interpreter time to interpret and for your client to respond.
- If something is unclear, or if the interpreter is given a long statement, the interpreter may ask you for a complete or partial repetition of what was said or clarify what was meant by the statement.
- Speak directly to your client, addressing them when speaking, maintaining eye contact.
- Ask if the limited English proficient (LEP) person understands – Please don't automatically assume that the LEP patient understands you. In some cultures, a person may say "yes" as you explain something, but it doesn't necessarily mean they understand. It may just mean they want you to keep talking because they are trying to follow the conversation. Also, keep in mind that a lack of English does not necessarily equate to a lack of education.
- Do not ask for the interpreter's opinion – Avoid asking the interpreter for opinions or comments. The interpreter's job is to convey the meaning of the source language and not allow opinion.
- Try to avoid private conversations with your colleagues. Whatever the interpreter hears will be interpreted.
- Professional interpreters are familiar with the culture, and customs of the limited English proficient speaker. During the interpretation session, the interpreter might identify and point out a cultural issue of which you may not be aware of. Also, if the interpreter feels that a particular question is culturally inappropriate, he or she may ask you to rephrase it.

