

# Working with Interpreters

## ROLE OF INTERPRETERS

Professional interpreters are bound by the ethical and professional standards of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

WHY WE NEED TO WORK WITH INTERPRETERS	WHEN WE NEED TO WORK WITH INTERPRETERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is our legal obligation to do so.</li><li>• We have a duty of care to our clients to minimise the risk of miscommunication.</li><li>• It ensures that our clients receive all the information they need to make informed decisions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A client that is usually fluent in English becomes unable to communicate fluently because of distress related to their situation or health condition.</li><li>• A client is unable to understand communication by a staff member.</li><li>• A client is unable to communicate fluently in English.</li><li>• A client shows a need to engage with an interpreter for any reason.</li><li>• Where possible, ensure the interpreter matches the client in gender.</li><li>• Providing health education.</li></ul>

Government-funded aged care providers can use Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National for FREE to meet their responsibilities as approved providers. Contact TIS National on 131 450 to know more.

Other translating and interpreting services:

- For under 65 years, Support with Interpreting, Translating and Communication (SWITC)
- National Relay Service

## CAN FAMILY OR FRIENDS BE INTERPRETERS?

Family, friends, or close community members should NOT be used as interpreters, even where clients may ask them to:

1. You may not know how proficient the friend or relative's language is in either English or the client's language.
2. Unaccredited bilingual speakers can be used to help with communication in emergencies, urgent situations or where no accredited interpreter is available. Under no circumstances should children (minors) be used.
3. The use of unqualified or inappropriate interpreters can have serious implications for all parties concerned, particularly where there is confusion or legal and/or health matters are involved.
4. By using a registered interpreter, it can help keep the dignity and privacy of the client particularly when sensitive matters are discussed, or decisions are made.

# Topic 5: Working with Interpreters

## CULTURAL SUPPORT

Encourage using a cultural support person or advocate when the client asks. They should not be engaged in replacement of a registered interpreter. Contact your local Government Services in your area to find suitable interpreter services.

## CLIENT REFUSING TO ENGAGE WITH AN INTERPRETER

If a client refuses to engage with an interpreter, which is a right that they have, make sure that you document it. You will also need to report this to a Team Leader as it is classified as a workplace incident.

STARTING OFF	POSITIONING	SPEAKING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell the interpreter the goal of the appointment. This can be done in the notes section of the booking form or at a pre-meeting 10 minutes prior to the appointment. This will help the interpreter prepare for the appointment and all parties to be better understood.</li> <li>An interpreter can be a cultural aide who is able to give you cultural feedback that increases your understanding of reactions and responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is ideal to position yourself so that the non-English speaking client is directly facing you and the interpreter is sitting to the side.</li> <li>Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to the client. Maintain eye contact with your non-English speaking client to show that they are the centre of your attention, unless not considered culturally respectful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always speak in the first person to avoid confusion. This ensures that the message is being understood correctly by all parties.</li> <li>Use plain language and short sentences.</li> <li>Pause often to allow clients or interpreters to absorb information and consider questions.</li> <li>Encourage the interpreter to seek clarification or ask for repetition when it is needed.</li> <li>Avoid using jargon, slang, idioms, or proverbs.</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES

Queensland Health. (2007). *Working with Interpreters Guidelines*. [https://www.health.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0033/155994/guidelines\\_int.pdf](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0033/155994/guidelines_int.pdf)

Queensland Health. (2019). *Interpreter Services in Queensland Health - information for staff*. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/interpreters/qhis-for-staff>

The CALD Assist App. <http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/good-practice-stories/713-cald-app>

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS). <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

