

## 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 is sometimes difficult and 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 can not resolve the problem together, contact the VITS Language Services Co-ordinator.



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