



## **GUIDELINES FOR SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPISTS WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS.**

### **GENERAL**

- *Interpreting* is the oral transmission of meaning from one language to another, which is easily understood by the listener. This covers the conversion of speech from one language (including British Sign Language, and other sign languages) to another.
- *Translation* is the written transmission of meaning from one language to another, which is easily understood by the reader. This covers the conversion of written texts from one language or format to another.
- Where possible, ensure that a professional interpreter is used and not a member of the family or a friend. Since this could lead to problems with confidentiality and accuracy of translation. Adults may take sides, and unable to be neutral and objective. Children may be placed in a position of unacceptable strain, and may be exposed to issues which are inappropriate.
- An interpreter is expected to be able to interpret objectively all thoughts and views verbally expressed by the SLT and client.
- An interpreter is expected to assist and facilitate communication.
- It is important that an interpreter understands your service, and your role within the service.
- See guidelines for use of formal assessments in Assessment page.

### **PRE-SESSION**

- It is worth checking that both the client and interpreter will be attending. It can be helpful if the interpreter can ring the client the day before to confirm arrangements of time, venue, and attendance.
- Extra time should be allocated when using an interpreter in any session.



- Inform the client that an interpreter has been booked with their appointment letter. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, a client will resent the presence of an interpreter even though you thought there was agreement on the need for an interpreter to be present. This will need to be addressed before the session can continue.
- It is helpful to allow extra time to meet with the interpreter before the first appointment to clarify issues regarding the practicalities of interpreting.
- It is important not to discuss the content of the case in detail with the interpreter so s/he remains as impartial as possible and confidentiality is respected. It is important to give general details e.g. sex, age who is attending.
- Establish that the interpreter is able to speak the same dialect as the client.
- An interpreter can give information about culture, religious beliefs and customs, or language and dialects. You may want to ask advice on the cultural implications of using particular play, or assessment material.
- Explain to the interpreter what s/he will be required to do in the session assessment, therapy, advise etc. Preparing to tell a parent about their child's difficulty.
- If an assessment is going to take place run through this with the interpreter. Rehearse and prepare instructions. The SLT should allow extra time to explain what assessment tasks s/he maybe using. E.g. Using the Derbyshire Language Scheme and delivering a 3 word level instruction. Ensure the interpreter knows not to repeat the instruction or break it down into three chunks.
- Ensure the interpreter is aware of the meaning of technical terms. It is important that this is clarified.
- Make sure that the interpreter knows you want all interactions translated, including those between the parent and child or parent and other family member/friend, or additional comments addressed to the interpreter.
- The seating needs to be arranged for the most direct communication between you and the client. The interpreter may be required to sit on the floor and play with the child. Discuss the cultural appropriateness of seating with the interpreter. Warn the interpreter that they maybe asked to play with the child and check the interpreter is comfortable with this.



## **DURING THE SESSION**

- The interpreter is essential in the smooth exchange of information between the client and SLT. The skilled interpreter will know to translate clearly and directly.
- Despite interpreters being asked before the session to interpret everything, they sometimes stop doing it in the session, if the client seems as though they understand English well. If this occurs, the SLT should remind the interpreter during the session that s/he needs to continue interpreting everything to ensure the client understands all the information exchanged.
- Address the client not the interpreter. Talk in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person rather than the 3<sup>rd</sup> person e.g. “What do you think about his talking” rather than “What does she think about his talking?”
- Make sure you are looking at the person whom you are directing your message. Do not look at the interpreter. This may feel uncomfortable at first and needs practise.
- Try to use words, which are easily translated. Avoid ambiguous or complex language. Use short sentences. If appropriate explain the purpose of the questions asked.
- Moderate the speed of your speech and encourage the interpreter to reduce his/her pace of speech. Ensure the pace of the session is appropriate for both parties to comprehend.
- Check assumptions and clarify language. Avoid colloquial expression, which might be difficult to translate. Summarise and check what has been understood.
- The client may speak too quickly, or for too long; this may make it difficult for the interpreter to do more than offer you a summary. This may exclude the therapist and undermine his/her confidence in the information s/he is receiving. There issues need to be addressed if you are to be able to work successfully with your client/s.
- It is important that the interpreter is told not to change, repeat, break down or add words.
- If the SLT is interviewing a client, (e.g. taking a case history) the interpreter should translate exactly what has been said by both parties, (SLT & client). If this is unclear always clarify.



- Ensure that the interpreter informs the SLT about any difficulties in translating certain words, e.g. 'autism'.
- Interpreting for an assessment is a highly skilled task. It is important to discuss with the interpreter the skills that will be required.
- The SLT needs to assess in detail the words and sentences the client understands without any other support. Therefore during an assessment of language the interpreter should be advised to copy what the SLT says, but not use any other means to communicate. Explain that the interpreter should resist the intuitive temptation to help the client express him/herself. Explain this first step is important to see what the client can do without help.
- The interpreter should be asked not to look or point to the object.
- Not to break down instructions into chunks. This can be practised before the assessment, to ensure appropriate exchange of information.
- If the interpreter is asked to copy what a client says, copy exactly what is heard. Even if it does not make sense, and if the grammar is incorrect, or the speech is not clear.
- If the client comprehends English (at any level), and you are assessing the client's other language. It is important to prepare written instructions to be interpreted, so that the client does not have a cue from the English model previously heard. This would compromise assessment validity.

### **CONCLUDING THE SESSION**

- Check with the client that they have understood everything.
- Allow the client to ask supplementary questions or seek clarification.
- Any non-verbal/observations should be feedback.
- Make any necessary follow up sessions and then confirm with the interpreter.
- If the session has been traumatic offer the interpreter support and notify his/her co-ordinator.



## **Guidelines for Interpreters working with Speech and Language Therapists SLTs**

### **GENERAL**

- SLT are health professionals trained to assess, diagnose and treat a range of communication and eating/drinking difficulties. SLT provide a service to a range of clients across all ages from newly born babies to older people.
- As an qualified interpreter you are expected to behave professionally an follow the SLT directions, as closely as possible. You should keep all information confidential and seek clarification if you are unsure. You **MUST** tell the SLT exactly what the patient has said.
- An interpreter is expected to assist and facilitate communication.

### **PRE-SESSION**

- Please obtain the name of the SLT that you are interpreting for.
- Please ensure that you arrive at least 10 minutes before the appointment time, and you have all the appointment details with you. E.g. patients name, venue, etc.
- If requested please ring the client to confirm attendance, time and venue.
- For you to be aware of your role and direction, you must request to meet with the SLT prior to the session.
- The client's confidentiality must be respected at all times. You will be provided with general information about the purpose of the appointment. Further details about the client may be revealed as the session progresses. You must disclose this information to anybody, unless otherwise directed by the SLT
- Ensure that you speak the same dialect as the client.
- If required please give the SLT information about culture, religious beliefs and customs, or language and dialects. You may want to discuss cultural implications of using particular play, or assessment material.
- During the session, all interactions have to be interpreted, including those between the parent and child or parent and other family member/friend, or additional comments addressed to the interpreter.
- The seating needs to be arranged for the most direct communication. The interpreter may be required to sit on the floor and play with the child. Discuss the cultural appropriateness of seating with the SLT
- The interpreter may be asked to play with the child, ensure you are comfortable with this.



### **DURING THE SESSION**

- Ensure that you continue to interpret all interactions and conversations with yourself. If the client begins a lengthy conversation do not be afraid to ask for them to pause whilst you translate this information back to the SLT.
- If the client requests you not to tell the SLT what they have said. Please explain to the client this is not possible, because your role is to interpret everything that is said, and then Inform the SLT what the client has said.
- As a qualified interpreter you will be aware that when the SLT speaks they will address the client and not you. Please ensure you follow this procedure during your interpretations.
- The SLT will use words, which are easily interpreted, avoiding ambiguous or complex language, and using short sentences. Request clarification if you do not follow the conversation or what requires interpretation.
- Moderate the speed of your speech and encourage the client to reduce his/her pace of speech. Ensure the pace of the session is appropriate for both parties to comprehend.
- Check assumptions and clarify language. Summarise and check what has been understood.
- The SLT needs to assess in detail the words and sentences the client understands without any other support. It is important that you do not change, repeat, break down or add words. Remember you are facilitating an assessment procedure.
- Therefore during an assessment of language the interpreter should be advised to copy what the SLT says, but not use any other means to communicate.

### **CONCLUDING THE SESSION**

- Check with the client that they have understood everything.
- Allow the client to ask supplementary questions or seek clarification.
- Any non-verbal/observations should be feedback.
- Make any necessary follow up sessions.
- If the session has been traumatic ensure you seek support from your co-ordinator.



**Using Parents as Interpreters for Key Word Comprehension Assessments**  
**1-3 word level only.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

- Parent/Carers may only be used as interpreters when they are fluent in English and their additional language.
- If the child is functioning between a 1-3 word level comprehensively and expressively this method maybe used. If the child is functioning at a higher language level, they will require and interpreter for a reliable assessment.
- The therapist should be clear and concise, and model the instructions below. If you have any doubts on the translating process using a parent please re-book the session with an interpreter.
- Be aware of the appropriate and professionalism with this method of assessment. Document fully in the clinical notes.

**SESSION GUIDELINES**

- Try to use words, which are easily translated. Avoid ambiguous or complex language.
- Moderate the speed of your speech and encourage the parent/carer to reduce his/her pace of speech. Ensure the pace of the session is appropriate for both parties to comprehend.
- It is important that the parent/carer is told not to change, repeat, break down or add words.
- The SLT needs to assess in detail the words and sentences the client understands without any other support. Therefore during an assessment of language the parent/carer should be advised to copy what the SLT says, but not use any other means to communicate. Explain that the parent/carer should resist the intuitive temptation to help the client express him/herself. Explain this first step is important to see what the client can do without help.
- The parent/carer should be asked not to look or point to the object.
- Not to break down instructions into chunks. This can be practised before the assessment, to ensure appropriate exchange of information.



- If the parent/carer is asked to copy what a client says, copy exactly what is heard. Even if it does not make sense, and if the grammar is incorrect, or the speech is not clear.



