Tips for Working with Interpreters

✓ **Use a qualified interpreter.**

Interpreters should be trained in medical interpreting. Working with untrained individuals such as family members may be warranted in emergency situations, but can contribute to miscommunication and errors.

✓ **Face the patient and speak directly to them.**

Allow for everyone in the room to introduce themselves and for the interpreter to interpret the introductions. Use first person language throughout the interaction and maintain direct communication with the patient, even if the patient focuses on the interpreter.

✓ **Ensure comments are respectful and professional.**

Some individuals who require or request an interpreter may understand English well. Comments you make to others might be understood by the patient. Try not to have side conversations with other staff as all communication should be interpreted to patients.

Learn more at **EthnoMed.org**

✓ **Ensure understanding from all parties.**

Ask the interpreter if they are filling in any details for the patient. Allow the patient to restate the information to confirm understanding and allow time for questions.

✓ **Allow extra time for the visit.**

Everything will be communicated at least twice unless using simultaneous interpretation. Ensuring there is enough time allocated in the appointment for interpretation and questions by the patient is very important for you, the patient, and interpreter.

✓ **Use simple language and avoid medical or healthcare jargon.**

Allow interpretation to occur sentence-by-sentence. Providers should avoid using medical or healthcare jargon to ensure clear and accurate communication, as complex terms may be difficult to translate or understand, leading to potential misunderstandings about the patient's condition or treatment.

Learn more

Scan the QR code to read **The Guide to Providing Effective Communication and Language Assistance Services** or visit **thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/communication-guide**

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