

Working Effectively with Interpreters in Aged Care Webinar - 6 April 2021

Case Studies

Scenario 1

Setting: Aged Care Facility (Care Team and Family Meeting) CARE PLANNING SESSION

- Julie works at a residential aged care facility and is conducting a care planning session with a resident and their family who don't speak English.
- Julie booked an onsite interpreter via TIS National for two hours and provided a short briefing in the job booking form on what will be covered in the session, including who will be present and the topics being discussed.
- The interpreter has read the notes and accepted the job knowing they are confident interpreting in this setting.
- The session starts well with Julie introducing herself to the client and their family. Julie pauses to allow the interpreter to interpret the introduction and for the interpreter to introduce themselves also.
- The interpreter outlines their role in the session, highlighting they are bound by the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. This ensures they remain impartial and that all information interpreted remains confidential.
- Once Julie worked through the care treatment, she introduces the topic of finances. As the information is complex, she refrains from using acronyms, talks in short sentences and allows time for the interpreter to interpret the information.
- She also checks in with the client regularly, to ensure they understand what is being said. On one occasion Julie asks the client to repeat what has been asked, which the interpreter relays back to her.
- At the one hour mark, Julie calls for a short break to allow all parties to grab a glass of water and use the bathroom. The interpreter is very appreciative.
- As the session continues, Julie notices that the family members are having private conversations amongst each other. When Julie questions the family member, she is told they do not want the interpreter to interpret all of the information, as they are worried about their mum's reaction.

- The interpreter proceeds to interpret this information to the client in line with their commitment to communicate all that has been said without omission. However; this makes the family members quite agitated.
- Julie picks up on their bodily language and immediately advises the family members that she has a duty of care to ensure the client understands what will be involved in their care plan. Omitting information to the client would be unethical.
- Julie reiterates to the family that the interpreter's role is to ensure that everything that is spoken, is communicated to the client in their language, without omission. If a family member doesn't want something interpreted, they should refrain from saying it, because the interpreter is required to relay this information.
- The session continues to run smoothly and Julie walks away feeling confident the client and the family have understood the information, despite the issue they had earlier with the family members.

Important points to note:

- Julie utilised the booking form to brief the interpreter prior to the job.
- This allowed the interpreter to undertake some research and refresh terminology used in the aged care sector.
- Julie paused often, which allowed the interpreter enough time to communicate the information
- Julie identified an issue and made sure it was clear to everyone that all that was spoken needed to be interpreted.
- Julie politely led the conversation and did not allow the family or interpreter to dominate the session
- Julie provided a break for the interpreter and provided support to the interpreter, when the family became agitated.

Scenario 2

Setting: Older person's home (Aged Care Assessment with a Team member, non-English speaking client, a family member and an interpreter)

- Georgia works in the Aged Care Assessment Team and is conducting an assessment with a client and their family, who don't speak English. The client is also hearing impaired and not wearing a hearing aid.
- Georgia booked an onsite interpreter and when the interpreter arrives early she uses the time to provide a short briefing on what the job will involve and notifies the interpreters that the client has a hearing impairment. The interpreter states they are confident interpreting in this setting.
- The session starts well with Georgia introducing herself to the client and their family. Georgia pauses to allow the interpreter to interpret the introduction and for the interpreter to introduce themselves. The interpreter outlines their role in the session, highlighting they are bound by the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct in particular by confidentiality and impartiality.
- During the assessment a family member continually interrupts the conversation, either to answer questions or to help out the non-English speaking client.
- The interpreter proceeds to interpret these interruptions in language, in line with their commitment to communicate all that has been said, without omission.
- However, the family member also talks over the top of the interpreter while they are interpreting, which becomes very confusing and makes Georgia frustrated because the assessment is taking a long time to complete and the client appears to be struggling with the dynamics in the room.
- Georgia suggests they take a break and have some time to go to the bathroom and have a glass of water, where she considers how the assessment could be improved.
- When Georgia returns from the break she is feeling more in control and proceeds to re-arrange the seating, so that the interpreter is directly facing the non-English speaker. This allows for easier communication, as the non-English speaker can now see the interpreter's face.
- Georgia politely asks everyone to take turns in talking and not to talk over one another, as this can make it very difficult for the interpreter to do their job, she also requests that the interpreter speaks louder to assist the non-English speaking client.

- Georgia also reminds the family member that the non-English speaker needs to answer the questions directly and that given the clients hearing impairment they should relay the information directly to the interpreter, to avoid any confusion or errors.
- The session runs a lot smoother and Georgia feels confident the client has understood the information, despite the issue they had faced earlier.

Important points to note:

- While Georgia didn't put notes in the booking form, she was able to brief the interpreter prior to the job.
- Briefing the interpreter prior to a job, reduces the risk of any conflict of interest and provides an opportunity for the interpreter to prepare for the job.
- By pausing often, Georgia allowed the interpreter time to process and communicate the information accurately.
- Georgia identified an issue when the family member attempted to dominate the session and requested a short break to clear their heads.
- On return Georgia politely took the lead in the conversation and clarified the role of each party and arranged the seating to ensure a more effective flow of conversation.