
Appendix H: Interpretation Tips & Tricks

CIFE (Araújo-Lane, 2014)

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- **Confidentiality:** Interpreters must keep everything private.
- **I (First-Person) Language:** Interpreters serve as the voice of the speakers, stating what is said in first-person language. You should speak to your client and your client should speak to you via the interpreter.
- **Flow:** Interpreters work with you to manage the pace of the conversation to slow or stop.
- **Everything:** Interpreters should interpret everything. They should not filter or summarize content. The interpreter must interpret everything that occurs during the session, including side conversations or interruptions.

Short Script with a Client Present

[To interpreter] Hello, my name is _____. I'm a therapist and I'm here with _____ for an intake appointment. Could you please introduce yourself to the client?

[To client] Can you understand the interpreter okay?

The interpreter will interpret exactly what has been said. If the interpreter needs clarification, they will interpret what they understand and state what they need clarification on.

The interpreter will keep everything confidential. Please speak slowly and pause often.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

More Detailed Script Without A Client Present

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a therapist here. What experience have you had interpreting for mental health services? Have you interpreted for clients who [any specific nuances to the client you are working with that may pose interpretation complications]? You may have heard this before, but I'd like to go over a couple of expectations I have when I work with interpreters to make sure we understand expectations of each other.

- It is important for me to develop a relationship with the client. **Please sit behind or beside the client** and try not to make eye contact so that the client can sit across from me. This way, the client and I can talk directly to each other.
- It is extremely important that you **maintain the client's confidentiality**. Please do not repeat anything that is said in this session. Do not greet the client in the community unless they greet you first. **Do not have a relationship with the client outside of therapy**. I will remind the client of this as well.
- Please interpret **exactly what the client says**, even if it doesn't immediately make sense to you. For example, clients sometimes [any items that might seem odd to someone and are likely to come up in therapy with this client]. To the best of your ability, please try to communicate the speech patterns and intonations of the client.
- It is also very important that you **interpret exactly what I say**. I choose my words and way of speaking very carefully. Please do not second guess or change my message.
- There might be times **when you need clarification or sense a communication barrier**. If that is the case, please interpret the last thing that was said to the best of your ability. Then address me first, identifying that it is you speaking (not the client) and ask about the problem or tell me what needs clarified. **Interpret our entire interaction for the client**.
- I will try my best to make sure the client and I speak slowly and pause often. **If a pause is needed, please give me a signal**.
- It is fine for you to take notes if that would be helpful, but **I will shred the notes at the end of session**.
- Silence is normal. **Please sit with silence** and do not make noise during those times.
- Sometimes interpreters feel the urge to offer advice or share their own thoughts. Please remember that your job is to help me understand what the client is communicating and help the client understand what I am communicating, not to decide what we communicate. **Please interpret ONLY what the client and I say**.
- It is common for clients in therapy to cry and to share very sad stories. I don't expect you to be emotionless (in fact, sometimes clients' stories make ME cry), but it is important to not weep uncontrollably. **If you find yourself getting overwhelmed, please give me a signal** so we can take a break if needed. **Here are**

some things I do when I feel overwhelmed [provide simple grounding exercises, such as deep breathing, wiggling toes, five senses grounding, etc.].

- **Please also take care of yourself outside of session!** Many times, interpreters find it helpful to work with their own therapist. I cannot be your therapist, but I can help you find someone if you would like. Just let me know.
- I will check in with you at the end of the session, so **please do not leave with the client.**

Do you have any questions for me?