



Below are some suggested considerations when working with an interpreter in mental health settings. This is not an exhaustive listing.

Information to provide to the interpreter when arranging the appointment

- Always seek a nationally certified interpreter highly qualified to work in mental health settings.
- Purpose of appointment (assessment, ongoing counseling, etc.)
- Consumer's language if known. Be as specific as possible.
- Racial/ethnic background
- General diagnostic information
- Educational background, if known
- Gender preference, if clinically significant
- Logistical information (location, contact person, security requirements, etc.)

Pre-Session

- Schedule enough time to allow 5-15 mins for pre-session briefing and post-session review.
- Arrange an area for the interpreter to wait separate from the consumer and/or family.
- Meet with the interpreter prior to the session and discuss:
 - Purpose of the appointment
 - Who will be present
 - Seating arrangements
 - Specific vocabulary with clinical meaning (e.g. mindfulness, black out)
 - Discuss how you and the interpret will provide feedback to each other during the session.
 - Cultural “landmines” or “tips” (knowing these may not apply to this specific client)

In Session

- Introduce the interpreter and explain their role
- Speak directly to the consumer, not the interpreter
- Give the interpreter enough time to interpret, depending on whether you are using a simultaneous or consecutive model
- Ask consumer for feedback to demonstrate understanding

Post Session

- Discuss how the session went
- Identify both problems and solutions
- Clarify any confusion or ambiguity of meaning
- Expect the interpreter to provide you with information about language usage, dysfluency, or problems related to the interpretation process.