

Instructions for clients on working with an interpreter

Instructions to clients

I am going to talk to you about how we are going to work with the interpreter. The role of the interpreter is to make sure that we understand everything that we say to each other. Everything we talk about is confidential, meaning the interpreter and I cannot tell anyone else what we talk about today without your permission. To ensure that everything is interpreted you and I will need to pause after every sentence to allow the interpreter to interpret. If I need you to pause while you are speaking for the interpreter, I will raise my hand like this. Today will be talking about... (include purpose of meeting, i.e. "...a request for a protection order, so it is very important I hear everything as it is said, including graphic or violent information."). Do you have any questions for me about working with the interpreter or our meeting today?

Follow up questions after interview to confirm client understanding

Sample questions:

1. We talked about an order of protection. Could you explain to me what you understand an order of protection is?
2. I spoke to you about some options you have. Before you leave, could you tell me about the options you have to decide on?
3. For our next meeting, I have asked you to bring some documents, could you tell me what documents you're supposed to bring with you?

Tips:

Write down the interpreter's ID number in case there is a misstep to report or keep track of. Or keep track of their name if it is in person.

Direct speech is important for accuracy and to decrease the likelihood of the interpreter summarizing/adding or intervening.

Consider that an interpreted session may take double the amount of time than a non-interpreted one (be patient).



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Summarization by the interpreter indicates that your interpreter is not interpreting everything. If your client is speaking for a minute and the interpreter only speaks for 10-15 seconds, then you or your client are missing parts of the conversation.

If your client responds with a few words, and the interpreter responds with several sentences, then the interpreter is adding information or details not spoken by your client.

Keep a record of who the qualified interpreters are for future needs.

Post interpretation check-in (Should be asked using a different interpreter)

I wanted to check-in with you on working with the interpreter. Could you tell me how you felt about working with the interpreter? (Follow up questions: Did you feel comfortable with the interpreter? Did you feel like the interpreter did a good job? Did the interpreter say anything that made you feel uncomfortable?)