

I D A H O O F F I C E F O R REFUGEES

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INTERPRETER CODE OF ETHICS

Introduction

Aside from ensuring that the communication between people who speak different languages is facilitated, the interpreters need to support clear and effective communication and ensure that the rights of both patient and provider are protected. This is achieved through the set of principles and rules of interpreter's conduct that are embodied in the Code Of Ethics.

Confidentiality

Interpreters must treat all information learned during the interpretation as confidential , divulging nothing without the full approval of the provider or patient.

Accuracy

The interpreters must transmit the message in a thorough and faithful manner, but be aware of the linguistic differences in both languages and convey the spirit and tone of the original message. The interpreter needs to determine the relevant concept of the message and say it in another language so it is culturally appropriate to the listener.

Completeness

Interpreters must interpret everything that is said by all the people in the interaction, without omitting, adding, condensing or changing anything.

Conveying the cultural framework

Interpreters shall explain cultural differences or practices to health care providers and patients when appropriate.

Non-judgmental attitude about the content to be interpreted

The interpreters are not responsible about what is being said by anyone for whom they are interpreting; they are responsible just for facilitating the communication. Even if the interpreter disagrees, or believes that what is said is a lie, or immoral, the interpreter needs to suspend judgment and interpret everything accurately.

Client self-determination

The interpreter shall not influence the opinion of any clients by telling him/her what to do.

Attitude toward clients

The interpreter shall strive to develop a relationship of trust and respect at all times with the patient by adopting a caring, attentive, yet discreet and impartial attitude toward the patient. The interpreter shall treat each patient with respect, regardless of the race, age, sex, religion or nationality.

Acceptance of Assignments

If levels of competency or personal sentiments are preventing the interpreter to perform by the any of the mentioned conditions, the interpreter shall withdraw from the assignment. Interpreters shall also disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest that could affect their objectivity (such as interpreting for close relatives or friends)

Compensation

The fee agreed upon by the agency and the interpreter is the only compensation that the interpreter may accept. Interpreters cannot accept additional money, favors or services. Also they will not use agency's time nor resources for private gain.

Self-evaluation

Interpreters shall represent their trainings, certificates, training and experience accurately and completely.

Ethical Violations

Interpreters shall withdraw immediately from encounters that they perceive to be in violation of the Code Of Ethics.

Professionalism

Interpreters shall be punctual, prepared, and dressed in appropriate manner, as well as being respectful and courteous. They shall maintain the professional behavior at all times while assisting clients.

Successful interpreter-agency relationship requires the following:

Reliability – be where you should be when you should be (please be careful not to book appointments so closely that you are not likely to be able to get to your next assignment on time or need to leave early before the assignment is completed)

Communication – when you have completed your assignments you follow up in writing or verbally with the person who assigned you.

Consideration – if an emergency prevents you from being at an appointment you have accepted - you should contact the person who assigned you as soon as possible (recognizing how hard it is to find a replacement on short notice.)

Professionalism – remember the principles you learned at this training for mechanics, ethics, and standards of practice. Make every effort to improve your skills, ask providers for feedback, consider their suggestions and make any necessary adjustments at your next session.

Good client relations – if a client does not believe that an interpreter is acting in a professional manner they may request that the agency not assign this interpreter to their family again. *These requests are never taken lightly, but are always examined to see that fair consideration is given to both the client and the interpreter.*