

WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

Best Practices for Working with Interpreters

Ask your survivor client who they feel most comfortable using as an interpreter.

Your client may feel more comfortable with someone who is the same gender or ethnicity as them, or, conversely, who is not the same gender or ethnicity.

Interpreters must be a neutral party.

You should not use a family member, friend, or someone they knew from being trafficked as an interpreter. You should avoid conflicts such as the interpreter and client attending the same place of worship. It is important that the survivor feel free to speak candidly without worrying whether what they say will be repeated to others by the interpreter.

Speak to the interpreter beforehand to make sure they understand what is expected of them.

For example: the interpreter should only translate exactly what is said; they should not offer opinions or summarize while interpreting; and they should not develop a personal relationship with the client. While professional interpreters are trained on these ethical guidelines, a community member helping with interpretation may not be.

Explain terminology.

Explain terms specific to a particular field to the interpreter beforehand if you will be using them during the interview.

Speak directly to your client.

It may feel awkward to speak through an interpreter. Make sure you focus your attention on the client and look at them while speaking and listening.

Take Breaks

Give your interpreter a chance to rest during the interview to ensure the quality of their interpretation.



WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

Resources

Human Trafficking Task Force: Interpreters

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/3-operating-a-task-force/34-addressing-common-operational-challenges/interpreters/>

Selecting, Vetting, and Preparing Interpreters for Human Trafficking Cases

<https://www.warnathgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Warnath-Group-Practice-Guide-Selecting-Vetting-and-Preparing-Interpreters-Practice-Guide.pdf>

Interpretation Logistics for TIP Cases

<https://www.warnathgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Warnath-Group-Interpretation-Logistics-for-TIP-Cases-Practice-Guide.pdf>

Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center: Best Practices for Communicating through an Interpreter

<https://refugeehealthta.org/access-to-care/language-access/best-practices-communicating-through-an-interpreter/>

Interpretation for Deaf Clients

<https://vawnet.org/sc/use-interpreters>

