

TIPS FOR USING A HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER



✓ Look at and speak directly to the person who is deaf. Don't look at the interpreter (this is considered rude).

✓ The interpreter will leave the room when the hearing audience has left; this is particularly the case for health care assignments.

✓ Be yourself! Use your ordinary language and speaking style. Speak in the first person, avoiding phrases like "Tell her," and "Explain to him." You are speaking to the person who is deaf, not the interpreter.

✓ If you lower the lights during part of an event, maintain enough light so that the interpreter can still be seen. Use a small directional "spot-light" if you can.

✓ When interpreting conversations, the interpreter will position themselves next to you, so that the person who is deaf can look at you both to pick up on non-verbal cues.

✓ Be aware that the interpreter must interpret everything that is said. Don't ask the interpreter to not interpret something.

✓ Speak at your normal pace. The interpreter will tell you if you need to pause or slow down. If you use a word that the interpreter is unfamiliar with, he or she may ask you to spell it.

✓ Try to avoid personal conversations with the interpreter during the professional situation. He or she is working as a means of language-transmission, not as a participant.

✓ Give the interpreter and deaf participant a copy of the presentations and any other materials ahead of time.

✓ A person who is deaf may speak for themselves, but they still may require an interpreter.