

Tips for Meeting Preparation/Information

Include as much information as possible in the request form. Feel free to add any relevant information that may not be covered in these tips. The more information interpreters have, the better they are able to provide good interpretation.

Preparatory meetings with interpreters are also very helpful. As a general rule 15 minutes before the meeting and 15 minutes after the meeting are scheduled for prep and debrief. If more prep is needed the interpreters may reach out to the contact person to schedule time beyond this standard 15 minutes.

When an interpreter(s) is confirmed, it is strongly encouraged that all meeting materials be sent to them. This helps especially with complicated information and spelling of names, for example. If you do this, please use SECURE email to protect any HIPAA or personal information contained in the materials.

1. **What?** *What is this meeting? Is it a clinical review? a status update? a staff meeting?*
2. **Purpose?** *What is the purpose of this meeting? What are the goals of the meeting?*
 - a. *Content Description (for example "we will be talking about a person's problematic sexual behavior"; details can help with interpreters' language choices and decisions)*
3. **Who?**
 - a. *Names of meeting participants, who is Deaf and who is hearing, and what are their roles?*
 - b. *Names that may come up during the meeting. (Area medical director, family members, team members not present and so forth. Help the interpreters get the names right!)*
 - c. *Names of client(s). Will the client(s) be present at the meeting?*
4. **Language Needs:** *Does anyone in the meeting (ie the client, family members, others) have specific language needs? For example, languages used other than ASL, languages used other than English, tactile language use, and so forth.*
 - a. *Will a C/DI be present? CART?*
 - b. *Will a non-English spoken language interpreter be present?*
5. **Relevant Places/Agencies/Services/Locations:** *(names and signs, for example DMH, WRCH, Advocates, Vinfen and so forth)*
6. **Relevant Acronyms** *(meanings and signs, for example HIPAA, MHIS, MIPSB, BPD, CBT, ROI and so forth. Don't assume everyone knows what acronyms mean!)*
7. **Relevant Signs** *(the agency Advocates as opposed to the concept of "supporting clients in the community"; signs that the team has used in previous meetings and will continue to use for specific concepts or words.)*
8. **Medication names** *(so interpreters can spell and also pronounce medications appropriately; also any signs the team uses for specific medications.)*

Using a sign language interpreter

A sign language interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between signed and spoken languages. Here are some tips on how to communicate through a sign language interpreter.

1. Look at and speak directly to the person who is Deaf. Face the person, don't look at the interpreter. Remember you are having a conversation with the person who is Deaf.
2. Be yourself; use your ordinary language and speaking style. Speak in the first person. Avoid phrases like "Tell her" and "Explain to them",
3. The interpreter will position themselves next to you, so that the person who is Deaf can glance at you both, picking up your non-verbal cues.
4. Speak in your normal tone, 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 or explain more.
5. If you are using written notes, or speaking from a presentation, it is helpful to offer a copy to the person who is Deaf and the interpreter.
6. Be aware that the interpreter must interpret everything that is said. Don't ask the interpreter to refrain from interpreting some of what you say.
7. Try to avoid personal conversations with the interpreter during the professional situation. They are working as a means of language-transmission, not as a participant.
8. Relax. If you are unsure of the appropriate way to proceed in a particular situation, ask the Deaf person for guidance.