

Best Practice when using Spoken Language Interpreters Tip Sheet

1. Only use CHFS approved/qualified interpreters.
2. Keep eye contact with the client and address the client directly, not the interpreter.
3. Speak directly to the client and not the interpreter. Example: “What is your name?” instead of “interpreter ask her what her name is”
4. Allow extra time for the interpreter to catch up, as well as extra time for investigations, home visits, or meetings where interpreters are present to ensure for accuracy in interpreting and respect for the process of interpreting.
5. Remember the interpreter will interpret everything that is said, spoken, or signed (even side conversations that can be heard).
6. Remember the interpreter is there to facilitate communication, not to give his/her opinions, advice, etc. The only exception being the interpreter offering advice on any translation disparities or differences.
7. Be aware of possible misunderstanding. Confirm understanding with the client, including asking the client to summarize the content of the conversation to check for clarity.
8. Staff may document the interpreter’s name, agency, license number, and credentials, if necessary.