Interpreter's role

What skills to look for in an Interpreter?

In all contexts :
- Respect confidentiality.
- Accountable, impartial and no conflict of interest.
- Seek accuracy and convoy idiomatic nuances.

In emergency situations or at border cross points :
- Strong resilience capacity and self-control.

NOTE!
Different crisis have different interpretation needs and experiences

CHALLENGES

- Difficult to strive for ethical and psychological independence and the advocacy for user's right due to institutional context.
- Users may be reluctant to use the interpretation service in smaller communities due to potential personal connections to the interpreter.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Consistency enhances connection.
- In crisis context, interpreter should be informed about the clinicians' expectation and the established protective measures.

Interpreter's Appreciation

Users

Pros:
- Users with access to interpreter are more satisfied spiritually and emotionally.
- Intercultural mediation reduces user complaints.

Cons:
- Interpreter presence may be troubling for some users.

Doctors

Pros:
- Interpreter presence is desired when equipment works well and interpretation is undisturbed.

Cons:
- Working with an interpreter doubles the time for a clinical task.
- Users may get more compressed information.

Nurses

Pros:
- Facilitates patient contact.

Cons:
- Interpretation process can cause delay.
- Patient may feel abandoned or more stressed when a nurse leaves to get the interpreter.

Interpretation Strategies

PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETERS

Pros:
- Preferred for somatic and psychiatric emergency due to specific characteristics of mental health status of the patient.
- Required for diffuse condition and complex care.

Cons:
- In crisis situations, intervention can be delayed until an interpreter is obtained.
- In-person interpretation entails high travel cost.

MULTILINGUAL FAMILY, FRIENDS, OR BYSTANDERS

Pros:
- Patient satisfied.
- Alleviate the need to wait for a professional interpreter
- Easily accessible and potential added feeling of security and trust.
- More information on the patient and their condition could be gathered.

Cons:
- Could violate patient confidentiality and autonomy.
- Emotional state and lack of language competency can lead to inaccuracy.
- May subject patient's family or bystander to social stress and emotional harm.
- Use of children can undermine the relationship in the family.

MULTILINGUAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Pros:
- Saves time.
- Easily accessible.
- Foreign language skills mastery.

Cons:
- Can be problematic if health professionals are not neutral when interpreting.
- Limited language and cultural knowledge.

Digital Resources

Computer-based Tools
- Computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) facilitates the work of interpreters :
  - Software for terminology extraction and glossary building.
  - Software for note taking while interpreting and CAI tools for training.
- Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) provides real-time voice translation which may be adequate for humanitarian crisis contexts.

Pros:
- Improve frequency and quality of communication.
- Increase quality of health care and patient satisfaction.
- Reduce misunderstandings, health disparities and cost of care.
- Interpreters consider digitals tools as a support.
- Interpreters worry about the efficiency, the adaptability, the level of complexity, and the price of the tool.

Cons:
- May be unavailable during disaster conditions.
- Not everyone has or wants access.
- May be complicated, leading to frustration.
- Automated translation system is not precise enough to be safely used or have limitations.

Phone Interpretation

- Insure fast and accurate translation while maintaining confidentiality, and anonymity.
- Often used in general practice, hospitals, and urgent care clinics.
- May have delays or malfunction.
- Not suitable for all patient (eg. the very sick).
- Phone interpretation has delays but can be beneficial in short-term, emergency and sensitive situations.
- Some health professionals believe that trust is more quickly established and taboo subjects were more easily discussed by phone.

Video conference

- Interpreters must have access to a videoconferencing system, make the appointment, bring the equipment, and manage technical problems.
- Health professionals need access to a booking system.
- Not adapted for announcement of bad news and with schizophrenic patient.
- Videoconferencing allows interpreters to face emotionally charged, aggressive interventions indirectly.
- Technical issues in videoconferencing lower patient satisfaction.

Training

Training for Crisis Situations

1. Different trainings are needed for different kind of crisis.
2. Interpreters lacking the necessary training tend to experience psychological stress and have difficulty in deciding and shifting to the most pressing task.

Training for professionals Working with Interpreters
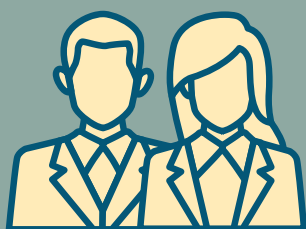
1. Interpretation situation can be improved if staff had training in working with interpreters as they will be able collect useful and relevant cultural and clinical information from users.
2. Training professionals in cultural awareness could mitigate the challenges due to the lack of understating of different cultures.

Training for Interpreters in Healthcare contexts

1. Training in medical skills is recommended so that interpreters can assist with basic medical needs if isolated from the team.
2. Interpreters need to know about the context of healthcare delivery and to train to fit well with the medical team for a more effective assistance.
3. Medically relevant training can reduce the challenges of communication in emergency and crisis.

Academic Training

1. Academia should offer courses on the latest developments in the software for interpreters.
2. Nursing curricula should include training for effective work with interpreters.

🔍 *Learn more*

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