



All Graduates' Interpreter Information

Guidelines for Interpreters in The Cognitive, Dementia and Memory Service at the St George's Hospital campus of St Vincent's (CDAMS)

The Cognitive, Dementia and Memory Service at the St George's Hospital campus of St Vincent's, provides a specialist diagnostic service for people who are concerned about memory loss and changes in thinking (cognition). The clinical interview, which forms part of the home visit, medical assessment and neuropsychological assessment, provides a range of invaluable information. It allows us to determine a patient's understanding of their difficulties, their ability to provide a history, and their verbal ability to express this information. Attention is paid to their vocabulary, grammatical structure and content of speech. The provision of high quality interpreting services is therefore an integral part of the assessment process.

A number of suggestions from clinic staff have been made as to maximising the utility of interpreting services within the clinical interview. These include:

- Maintenance of a professional relationship between client and interviewer. This can be facilitated by:
 - Not engaging in conversation with the client prior to or during the interview
 - Sitting beside the client during the interview to ensure the client addresses the clinician, not the interpreter
- Use of the first person at all times
- Verbatim interpretation of client's language and clinician's questions / comments, using short sentences
 - Frequent interpretation of clinician's instructions and of a client's comments is preferable to summarising their comments after they have finished
- Do not repeat questions to clients
 - If a client asks for a question to be repeated, state this request verbatim to the clinician rather than repeating the question to the client. The clinician will then decide if it is appropriate to repeat the instruction
- Provide only those instructions to clients which are explicitly provided by the clinician.
 - For example, if a client clearly does not understand and appears to need a question repeated wait for the clinician to repeat it first
- Do not paraphrase or elaborate on questions to make them easier to understand



- Do not provide cues, prompts or examples to clients.
 - Avoid using nonverbal cues such as hand gestures
- Do not provide nonverbal or verbal feedback to patient as to their performance
 - Do not praise a patient if they do well, and do not indicate to a patient they have failed
- During feedback sessions interpret the comments of all clinicians along with the comments of the client's family members.

This information is provided by:
Interpreter Services
St George's Hospital - CDAMS
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