

TRANSCULTURAL & LANGUAGE SERVICES



GUIDELINES FOR ALL GRADUATES INTERPRETERS

Objectives of the Transcultural & Language Services

- To develop and strengthen Northern Health's *cultural competence* by offering ever-improving language services for the wider ethnic community and our staff members through interpreting services of the highest standard, translation of medical material, and targeted cultural training;
- To work closely with the various ethnic groups and organisations, so that their concerns may be appropriately addressed within the health context;
- To liaise with government institutions and departments to influence and develop multicultural policy and best practice;
- To maintain a professional and effective relationship with external stakeholders such as language services providers.

Northern Health will endeavour to provide the same quality of service for all patients and their families regardless of ethnicity and the ability to speak English.

Northern Health services and programs will be provided in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner.

Northern Health will strive to continually improve its responsiveness to diversity.

The language, religious and other cultural needs of patients will be respected and upheld.



General Guidelines

At Northern Health the Interpreter Bookings Coordinator (Mrs Atira Marcus: 8405 8188) is responsible for booking interpreters for all our campuses.

Our campuses are: The Northern Hospital, Bundoora Extended Care Centre, Broadmeadows Health Services, Craigieburn Health Services, and Panch Health Services. Please refer to our on-line address for location of campuses and further information: www.nh.org.au

All interpreters are to wear a badge with their name, photograph, and NAATI Level. Clinicians/Professionals are instructed to only sign the job slip/assignment report form if the photo on the badge corresponds to the interpreter.

Interpreters are to carry their NAATI ID card at all times, as they may be asked to show it.

The slip/assignment report form, should include the following information:

- Interpreter's name
- The language
- His/Her NAATI qualification and level
- The Job Number
- The date of the assignment
- The Location of Appointment (eg. TNH, Reception A)
- Name of the Patient/s and their UR Number/s. (Allow space for more than a patient for merged bookings)
- Time started & Time Finished
- Name of Professional & Professional's signature
- Interpreter's signature

At Northern Health, an agency interpreter's first point of reference is the Bookings Coordinator's office; any interpreter booking related issue has to be discussed with a staff member there.

An interpreter can only accept jobs from the Bookings Coordinator's office through his/her agency, which is to issue a Job Number. A professional/clinician will not make a direct booking with the interpreter.

If an interpreter is more than 30 minutes late, their slip will not be signed.

An interpreter must contact the All Graduates booking officers to get approval for a booking's extension the same day of the appointment; booking extensions will not be approved the day after.

Northern Health data is strictly confidential. Interpreters are not to have access to it. The Bookings Coordinator and In-house Interpreters will not discuss Northern Health confidential information, or related data, outside the Transcultural & Language Services, in line with Northern Health's policy on Confidentiality and Privacy.

Interpreters will always respect the *Interpreters and Translators Code of Ethics*. Its general principles are listed below. Full details are available at the AUSIT website

General Principles of the Code of Ethics

1. Professional conduct

Interpreters and translators shall at all times act in accordance with the standards of conduct and decorum appropriate to the aims of AUSIT, the national professional association of interpreters and translators.

Interpreters and translators should:

- always be polite and courteous, unobtrusive, firm and dignified
- explain their role to clients, encouraging them to speak to each other directly
- allow nothing to prejudice or influence their work, and disclose any possible conflict of interest
- decline gifts and tips (except token gifts customary in some cultures), explaining to clients that accepting them could compromise their professional integrity
- ensure punctuality at all times (and if lateness is unavoidable, advise clients immediately)
- prepare appropriately for assignments and ensure they are completed
- refrain from unprofessional or dishonourable behaviour and refer any unresolved disputes to the AUSIT Executive Committee and accept its decision.

2. Confidentiality

Interpreters and translators shall not disclose information acquired during the course of their assignments.

- Interpreters and translators may only disclose information with the permission of their clients (or if the law requires disclosure).
- If other interpreters or translators are involved in the same assignment and require briefing, this should be done after obtaining the clients' permission, and all are obliged to maintain confidentiality.
- No work should be subcontracted to colleagues without clients' permission.
- Translated documents remain the client's property.

3. Competence

Interpreters and translators shall undertake only work which they are competent to perform in the language areas for which they are "accredited" or "recognised" by NAATI.

- Acceptance of an assignment is a declaration of one's competence and constitutes a contract. If, during an assignment, it becomes clear that the work is beyond the interpreter's or translator's competence, they should inform clients immediately and withdraw.
- Interpreters/translators must clearly specify their NAATI accreditation, level and language direction, if necessary explaining its significance to clients.
- It is the interpreter's responsibility to ensure that working conditions facilitate communication.

- If an interpreter or translator is asked to provide a second opinion or to review alterations to the work of another practitioner, there should be final agreement between all interpreters and translators concerned.

4. Impartiality

Interpreters and translators shall observe impartiality in all professional contracts.

- Professional detachment must be maintained at all times. If interpreters or translators feel their objectivity is threatened, they should withdraw from the assignment.
- Practitioners should not recommend to clients anyone or anything in which they have personal or financial interest. If for some reason they have to do so they must fully disclose such interest - including assignments for relatives or friends, or which affect their employers.
- They should not accept, or should withdraw from, assignments in which impartiality may be risked because of personal beliefs or circumstances.
- Interpreters and translators are not responsible for what clients say or write. They should not voice or write an opinion on anything or anyone concerned with an assignment.
- If approached for service by all parties to a legal dispute, an interpreter or translator shall offer to work for the first party making the request and notify all parties concerned.

5. Accuracy

Interpreters and translators shall take all reasonable care to be accurate.

They must:

- relay accurately and completely all that is said by all parties in a meeting - including derogatory or vulgar remarks, non-verbal clues, and anything they know to be untrue
- not alter, add to or omit anything from the assigned work
- acknowledge and promptly rectify any interpreting or translation mistakes. If anything is unclear, interpreters must ask for repetition, rephrasing or explanation. If interpreters have lapses of memory which lead to inadequate interpreting, they should inform the client, ask for a pause and signal when they are ready to continue.
- ensure speech is clearly heard and understood by all present. Where possible (and if agreed to by all parties), interpreters may arrange a short general conversation with clients beforehand to ensure clear understanding by all
- provide full evidence of NAATI accreditation or recognition if requested

6. Employment

Interpreters and translators shall be responsible for the quality of their work, whether employed as freelance practitioners or by interpreting and translation agencies or other employers.

- AUSIT members may set their own rates and conditions in freelance assignments. They may not accept for personal gain any fees, favours or commissions from anyone when making any recommendations to clients.
- Interpreters and translators are responsible for services to clients performed by assistants or subcontracted employees. I&T practitioners employed by colleagues must exercise the same diligence in performing their duties.

7. Professional development

Interpreters and translators shall continue to develop their professional knowledge and skills.

- They should constantly review and re-evaluate their work performance.
- They should maintain and enhance their skills by study and experience, and keep up to date with relevant languages and cultures.

8. Professional solidarity

Interpreters and translators shall respect and support their fellow professionals.
They should:

- assist and further the interests of colleagues, refraining from comments injurious to the reputation of a colleague
- promote and enhance the integrity of the profession through trust and mutual respect. Differences of opinion should be expressed with candour and respect - not by denigration -refraining from behaviour considered unprofessional by their peers.

Interpreters will not accompany patients to the X-ray department, unless in case of emergency, in which case s/he needs to notify the Bookings Coordinator's Office.

If a patient fails to attend (FTA), the interpreter is to return to the Bookings Coordinator's office or main desk to see if within the same standard booking s/he can see other patients.

A patient is considered to have failed to attend after 30 minutes from the time of the appointment. The interpreter could be asked to call the patient to reschedule an appointment.

If an interpreter is dissatisfied with the conduct of a professional/clinician/staff member or of a patient, s/he should discuss the matter with the **TALS Coordinator** as soon as possible.

In case of refusal to accept interpreter assistance:

A patient has the right to refuse the use of a professional interpreter. If a patient/client refuses to accept a professional language service the health professional must:

- Try to convince the patient/client about the benefits of using an interpreter.
- Suggest the use of a telephone interpreter to reduce the risk of the patient/client and the interpreter knowing each other.
- If the patient/client still refuses to use an interpreter and the health professional assesses that it is safe to proceed with care then they may proceed.

Written and updated January 2009 by **TALS Coordinator: Emiliano Zucchi**

