How to book and work with an interpreter using video conference

Video remote interpreting can be a cost-effective alternative to onsite or telephone interpreting.

**Common reasons for using video remote interpreting**
- When an onsite interpreter is requested but is not available
- When a telephone interpreter is not a suitable option:
  - for mental health appointments
  - for appointments with deaf clients who communicate using Auslan (Australian sign language) or other sign languages
  - for hard of hearing clients that require visual cues to assist with communication
  - for appointments requiring a deaf relay interpreter
  - when an onsite interpreter is requested but is not available locally, which results in the payment of travel time for interpreters.

**How to book a video remote interpreting session**
- Request an interpreter using the Interpreter Service Information System (ISIS) or by contacting your interpreter service coordinator (if you do not have access to ISIS)
- In ISIS, at the *add request* screen, select *video conference* from the *service type* drop down list
- Book the video conference unit at your site for the appointment. Refer to the Telehealth home page if you need assistance with locating a video conference unit.

**Preparation**
- If necessary, you may wish to have a pre-session discussion with the interpreter on how to deal with cultural and other issues that may arise during the session
- If there are complex forms to be completed or complex issues to be discussed, you should arrange for blank copies of the forms to be sent to the interpreter (e.g. an aged care assessment) wherever possible.

**Session arrangements**
- It is advisable to make a test call prior to the appointment to make sure that there are no technical problems with the equipment
- It is your responsibility to dial-in to the interpreter’s video conference unit when you are ready to start.
- Make sure you have the location of the video conference unit the interpreter will be using (check your interpreter confirmation or look up your request/booking confirmation in ISIS)
- The Oncall Interpreters and Translators video conference sites are listed in the address book of your video conference unit under: Interpreter Oncall Brisbane, Interpreter Oncall Sydney, Interpreter Oncall Perth, or Interpreter Oncall Melbourne.
- Select the required interpreter location using the arrow keys on the remote, or the nominated shortcut key if you are using a Tandberg videophone.
- If you experience technical problems, call the Telehealth Help Desk on 1800 066 888 during business hours (8.00am – 5.00pm)
- If your clinic is running behind schedule, move the client requiring the interpreter forward in the queue to ensure the session commences as close as possible to the scheduled time. You may only have access to the interpreter and the video conference equipment for the specific time that was originally booked
- The ideal seating arrangement is where the client can clearly see both the video conference screen and the person conducting the session. For Auslan/sign language interviews the clinician and interpreter (on the screen) should sit side by side. However, this may not always be possible.

**The session**
- Dial the videoconference location for the interpreter using the remote control address book or Tandberg videophone shortcut key
- Introduce yourself and the client to the interpreter
- Work through the video remote interpreting checklist to ensure that the camera positioning, lighting and volume are suitable for all parties involved (this may take 1-2 minutes while adjustments are made)
- Clarify that both you and the interpreter are bound to maintain confidentiality by a strict code of ethics
- Explain the purpose of the session and how it will proceed, and allow the client to raise any concerns they may have
- Look at the client and speak directly to them in the first person. For example, say, “How can I help you today?” instead of, “Ask him/her how I can help”.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services
Speak normally to the client and pause after two or three sentences to allow the interpreter to relay the message.

Auslan interpreting is usually conducted simultaneously, speak normally and keep a moderate pace. If there are complex concepts to be discussed you may need to work out the best way to communicate these together with the interpreter.

If the person does not understand, it is your responsibility (not the interpreter's) to explain in simpler terms.

Maintain your role in managing the session. The interpreter does not conduct the session.

Seek the client’s permission if you need to obtain cultural information from the interpreter. If you need to talk to the interpreter directly then the interpreter should explain the nature of the conversation to the person.

**Finishing the session**

- Check that the client has understood the key messages in your session. Ask them if they have any questions.
- If the client requires another appointment, make these arrangements while the interpreter is still in attendance.
- Thank the client and formally say goodbye.
- You may need to have a post-appointment discussion with the interpreter. For example, you may require clarification on a language or cultural issue. It is suggested that you make a separate call to the interpreter after the client has left the room so as not to cause confusion or raise suspicion that they are being talked about.
- Debrief the interpreter if the session was emotionally taxing and clarify any questions you have from the session.
- Complete an assignment completion sheet and return it to your interpreter service coordinator.

**Deaf relay interpreting**

- Deaf relay interpreters are sometimes used in addition to a sign language interpreter to facilitate communication between the hearing interpreter and the deaf client.
- A deaf relay interpreter may be required if your deaf client is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, has minimal Auslan skills or uses a sign language from another country in which the interpreter is not accredited.
- A deaf relay interpreter works closely with the Auslan interpreter and clinician to facilitate effective communication. They are bound by the same code of ethics and confidentiality requirements as all interpreters.
- Be aware that working with two interpreters will take more time than working with one. However, it will make it easier for messages to be clearly interpreted.

**Tips for working with interpreters**

**Do:**

- Repeat and summarise the major points.
- Be specific (e.g. *daily* rather than *frequent*).
- Use diagrams, pictures and translated written materials to increase understanding.
- Clarify that you have been understood and that you have understood the client.
- Complete an assignment completion sheet and return it to your interpreter service coordinator.

**Do not:**

- Use metaphors (e.g. *like a maze*), colloquialisms (e.g. *pull yourself up by your bootstraps*), and idioms (e.g. *kick the bucket*) because such phrases are unlikely to have a direct translation.
- Use medical terminology unless the interpreter and client are familiar with the equivalent term.
- Block the client’s view of the screen by moving in front of the camera or screen.

**Check list**

**Call the interpreter at the appointment/booked time**

- The clinician calls the interpreter. Use the address book button on the remote control or the shortcut key on the Tandberg videophone to select the interpreter location.
- Interpreter Oncall – Brisbane
- Interpreter Oncall – Melbourne
- Interpreter Oncall – Sydney
- Interpreter Oncall – Perth
- Interpreter Oncall – Adelaide
- Other location as provided by Coordinator

**Camera/picture positioning**

- Camera angle and position of interpreter/client on the screen is satisfactory with all participants.

**Position of the video conference unit**

- All participants are comfortable with the positioning of the clinician, client and interpreter in relation to each other.

**Sound/volume**

- Clinician and client can clearly hear the interpreter and interpreter can clearly hear the clinician and client.

---

**HHS Interpreter Service Coordinator:**

For more information: refer to the *Queensland Health Working with Interpreters Guidelines* on QHEPS


**Telehealth Help Desk - 1800 066 888**

If you experience technical difficulties call the Telehealth Help Desk 8am–5pm week days.

**Queensland Health External Interpreter Service Provider:**

Oncall Interpreters and Translators

Tel: 07 3115 6999