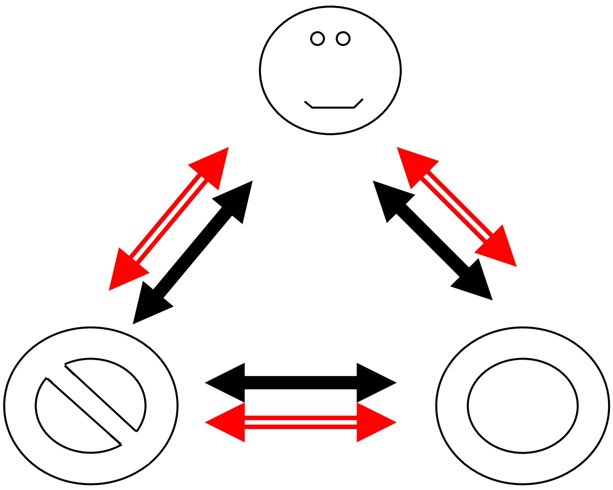
Useful tips on how to conduct the interpreting session

Interpreter

Preparation

- Before the client arrives:
  - allow extra time to brief the interpreter so they are aware of the nature and aim of the session
  - conduct a pre-session discussion with the interpreter (if possible) about any cultural factors that might affect the session, being mindful that interpreters are not cultural experts. Cultural explanations are more appropriately sought from clients themselves during the session
  - arrange a place where the session can be conducted in private
  - arrange seating to allow for easy communication: in a circle or triangle or place the interpreter to the side and just behind you (see the diagram below). Ideal seating arrangements is where all three parties are at an equal distance apart e.g. a triangle for spoken languages. For Auslan, the interpreter should sit next to the service provider, opposite the client

- If you are using a telephone interpreter service:
  - check that the equipment is available to support the session (e.g. speaker phone).



Brief the interpreter

- Identify any existing relationships between the client and the interpreter. Knowing family and/or community relationships may provide insight into power and communication dynamics. Even if they are not relatives, the interpreter may know the client because many culturally and linguistically diverse communities are small, with everyone knowing all of the members. As a result, the client may fear that exchanges will be shared within the ethnic community. Also, the individual's social and political status in their homeland may present barriers to honest, open communication.
- Ensure the interpreter is aware of the confidential nature of the appointment.
- Review the content of the session, especially sensitive topics (e.g. mental health status, sexual conduct). This allows the interpreter time to ask questions, clarify terminology, or express discomfort about certain topics.
- Explain the need for precise interpreting and to repeat questions and responses to maintain the same meaning and tone as the original message. Nothing should be omitted, and nothing should be added unless it is to explain a word or phrase the client does not understand. This approach will most accurately portray the client's understanding and emotional state.
- Explain that the interpreter can ask for clarification of information at any time, and can encourage the client to ask questions.

When the client arrives

- Introduce yourself and the client to the interpreter.
- Clarify the role of the interpreter.
- Explain the interpreter will be the client's voice repeating questions and responses (in English and the client's language) without omitting or giving additional information, paraphrasing, or adding professional terminology.
- Clarify the interpreter is not expected to be a "cultural broker" for the Australian system, nor the client's culture. If the interpreter feels a question should be rephrased to make it culturally acceptable, or a situation needs clarification, they will interrupt the session to allow for clarification. The interpreter will convey this to the client, so they are kept aware of the discussion.

During the session

- Make sure that the client knows you are conducting the interview.
- Stress that you are both bound by a strict Code of Ethics to maintain confidentiality.
- Explain the purpose of the session, how it will proceed and allow them to raise any concerns they may have.
- Look at the client and speak directly to the client in the first person. For example, say "How can I help you today?" instead of "Ask him/her how I can help".
- Speak normally to the client and pause after two or three sentences to allow the interpreter to relay the message.

- If the client does not understand, it is your responsibility (not the interpreter's) to explain more simply.
- Maintain your role in managing the session. The interpreter will 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, the interpreter should also explain the nature of the conversation to the client.
- Clearly identify the end of the session.

Do:	**Don't:**
• 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 or that you have understood the person.	• 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 person are familiar with the equivalent term.