

Crisis Communication: Understanding and Communicating with an Evolving Audience

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

Breaking the Language Barrier

National CLAS Standards

- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in health care**
 - Recognizing the impact of language and cultural values on access to health care, the Office of Minority Health was mandated by Congress to design and develop initiatives to eliminate barriers and to promote access to health care for Limited English Proficient persons

CLAS

1. Culturally competent care
2. Staff diversity
3. Staff education and training
4. Qualified language assistance services
5. Notices to patients of the right to language assistance services

CLAS

6. Qualifications for bilingual and interpreter services
7. Translated materials
8. Organizational framework for cultural competence
9. Organizational self-assessment
10. Collection of data on individual patients

CLAS

11. Collection of data on communities
12. Community partnerships for CLAS
13. Complaint and grievance resolution
14. Information for the public

Why Is Language Important in the Event of a Crisis?

- Convey a message
- Understanding of messages
- Direct individuals affected by the event
- Reflects the culture of individuals
- Decreases errors

Ways of Communicating When There Are Language Barriers

- Non-verbal communication
 - Facial expressions
 - Voice intonation
 - Emotional responses
 - Eye contact
 - Touching
 - Smile

Tips for Working with People Who Speak Another Language

- Do not think that people who are struggling with English are stupid
- Learn greetings, titles of respect, and attitude toward touching
- Write numbers down when giving instructions

Tips for Working with People Who Speak Another Language

- Ask questions in several different ways
- Be friendly, accepting and approaching
 - “Everybody relates to a smile”

Working Effectively with Interpreters

- Speak directly to the patient
- Consider interpreter positioning
- Be attentive to the pace of your interpreter
- Avoid medical jargon
- Check for understanding

Speak Directly to the Patient

- Due to language barrier, it is easy to feel like you are carrying on a conversation with the interpreter
- Look at the patient/parent when you speak and when they speak
- Address the patient/parent directly as “You,” not “Tell her that...”

Modes of Interpretation

- **Simultaneous**
 - Real time interpreting
 - Speaker talks and interpreter listens and reproduces in another language
 - All this occurs at the same time

Modes of Interpretation

- **Consecutive**
 - Involves a pause between language conversations
 - Interpreter listens to the entire original phrase or passage, then the interpreter says it in another language

Use of Body Language

- Your care for the patient and their family transcends language barriers
 - Eye contact
 - Pat on the shoulder
 - Smile
 - Show of concern
- If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask

How Should a Provider Offer Oral Interpretation Services?

- Various options for language assistance
 - Use of bilingual staff
 - Staff interpreters
 - Contracting for interpreters
 - Telephone interpreter lines
 - Community volunteers

Risks of Not Using Language Services

- No way of knowing quality of interpretation provided by children, family members, friends, Internet translators

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