



Eight skills for working with an interpreter	
Use a skilled interpreter whenever possible.	A trained interpreter is a skilled professional. When understanding in communication is critical, and when you and the patient speak different languages, the interpreter is key to providing quality care.
Conduct pre-sessions.	Do a pre-session with the interpreter and let the interpreter do a pre-session with the patient.
Speak directly to the patient.	After the initial pre-session, address the patient directly, not the interpreter.
Pause after complete thoughts.	Pause after a full thought to let the interpreter interpret. If you see that the interpreter can handle longer segments of speech, you can pause less often.
Use plain English vocabulary.	Try to avoid very formal (high register) speech, slang, idioms, and where possible, highly technical terminology.
Let the patient know when you need to speak with the interpreter.	If you have to speak with the interpreter directly, let the patient know what you are going to say. Expect the same from the interpreter.
Consider the interpreter's cultural insights.	Take into account any cultural insights that the interpreter may offer. Remember to check those insights with the patient to ensure that they apply, as people who share a cultural background can vary greatly as individuals.
Limit requests to the interpreter's role of facilitating communication.	The interpreter's role is to facilitate understanding in communication between you and the patient. Any task that falls outside helping healthcare staff, patients, and their families understand one another across linguistic and cultural barriers is outside the scope of an interpreter's work. The only exceptions are actions taken when a patient's health or dignity is at risk.