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Ad-Hoc Interpreter Training

2025

Learning Objectives

Understand what it means to be an interpreter for your community

Understand why public health organizations may do research in your community

Be able to act as a cultural bridge

Understand the work you're being asked to do and negotiate pay

Know how to how to ask for support

Discussion



- What are your experiences with interpreting between two languages?

Interpretation

What is an interpreter?



An interpreter converts information from one language to another through speaking or signing.

Interpretation

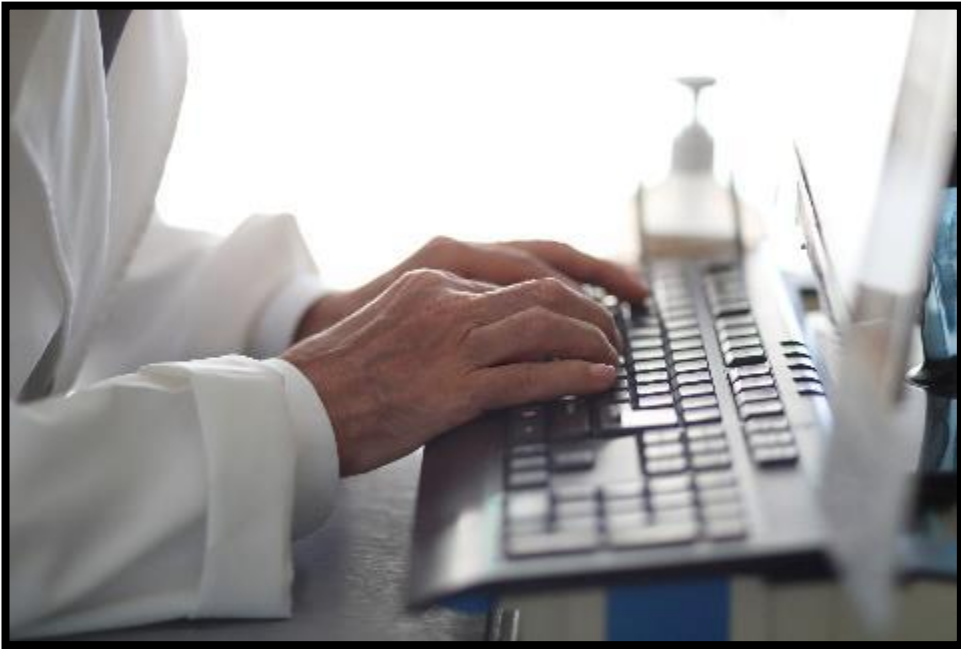
This training DOES NOT certify you but does give you experience in interpretation. This training should only support interpretation DURING data collection.

What is a certified interpreter?

- Interpreters who have prior training hours can ensure reliable communication.
- Their training tend to be a minimum of 40 hours.
- They can consider the reflective effort and the indigenous worldview that each native language speaker has with them.
- They have taken on a code of professional ethics to offer clear, quality care, without falling into value judgments or other types of interventions.

Translation

What is a translator?



A translator converts information from one language to another through writing or typing.

Ad-Hoc Interpretation

What is ad-hoc interpretation?



- An ad-hoc interpreter is someone who can speak multiple languages and is asked to interpret for two people or a group of people.
- Ad-hoc interpreters haven't done formal or professional training to learn how to interpret and are usually not certified.

Ad-Hoc Interpretation

Ad-hoc interpreters can:

- Interpret between one person and a group of listeners
- Interpret between two people in the community
- Interpret for a researcher and a research participant



Interpretation Settings

This training will enable you to be an interpreter for:

- Some types of research projects in your community
- Common places in your community, like at grocery stores
- News or basic instructions in your workplace, like helping coworkers fill out an emergency contact form



Interpretation Settings

This training **DOES NOT** train you to interpret for:

- Doctors, nurses, or medical staff
- Police, lawyers, immigration, or other legal system staff
- School staff

In medical and workplace situations, people have a right to a professional interpreter who are familiar with special terms used by doctors, lawyers, etc. You can help people in these situations by asking for a professional interpreter.





Research & Data Collection

Research & Data Collection

- This training will help you interpret for researchers who are doing surveys in your community.
- What does research mean to you?



Data Collection

Researchers do surveys or interviews with community members to:

- Better understand an issue in the community
- Gather information to help lawmakers make better policies
- Respond to emergencies, like pandemics or natural disasters, and understand how to help people in those emergencies



Data Collection

Conducting surveys or interviews with community members can:

- Help create better laws, policies, and services for the community
- Understand experience:
- What's working and what's not working?
- What resources are people using?
- What resources do people need?
- What types of inequalities or injustices are present in a community?



Obtain informed consent

- Both you and the person participating in the research need to understand what the study is about and any risks it may have. Survey/script provided should talk about consent to be surveyed before the survey starts and after introducing yourselves.

Consent and introduction should include:

- 1) the purpose of the study
- 2) the time and compensation
- 3) whether the information is confidential
- 4) explain that participation is voluntary and that questions may be skipped

Obtain informed consent

- The person participating must give their verbal consent, which also should be recorded or written.
- It's very important that you help the participant understand this information, and make sure they don't feel pressured to participate. It is not your job to convince them to participate, only to interpret for the interviewer/surveyor.

Tips for research in the field

Doing surveys can be hard sometimes! Here are some tips:

- If they are confused about a question or don't understand the question, ask the researcher about how you can say it in a different way
- The participant can choose to skip any question that they don't want to answer. Just let the researcher know.



Placeholder slide

For introducing the data collector's specific project and goals



Questions and Discussion





Interpreter Ethics

Interpreter Ethics

1. Accuracy. Listen closely to what is being said and try to convey the whole message accurately. While interpreting, use converting by explaining the meaning of words that do not have direct translation.
2. Confidentiality. Keep what's discussed to yourself – don't talk to other people about conversations you interpreted.
3. Impartiality. Leave your own opinions and judgements about what someone is saying out of your interpretation.

Interpreter Ethics

4. Respect. Be respectful to everyone. This includes respecting a different culture and beliefs such as an Indigenous worldview.
5. Cultural Awareness. If the participant and the interviewer are from different cultures, it's okay to help people understand sayings or behaviors that the other person may not understand or misunderstand. This is being a cultural bridge for the other person. Can you think of an example of when that may happen?



Interpreter Ethics

6. Role boundaries. An interpreter's role is to support and facilitate communication and understanding between the surveyor and the participant.
7. Professionalism. Use the appropriate titles when communicating. Maintain these code of ethics.

Questions and Discussion





Tips on How to Interpret

Tips on How to Interpret

1. Introduce yourself and tell the participant that you are the interpreter.
2. Do not use, "He said, she said..." when interpreting what the participant or interviewer has said. Use "I", just like the person speaking
3. Stand between the two people, but don't block them. Use your body language and eye contact to help the two people you're interpreting for look at each and communicate with each other directly

Tips on How to Interpret

4. If a survey is already translated into the participant's language, try to use that instead of your own translations.

5. Avoid unnecessary conversations with the researcher or participant during the survey. Let the researcher know if the participant asks you a question directly.





Contracts & Getting Paid

Asking About Pay

- If you are interpreting for a research project, you should be paid!
- Professional interpreters generally charge between \$80-\$200 per hour.
- You can decide what pay you think is fair. \$40-\$80 per hour is a good estimate. Even if the session is less than an hour, you should get paid that minimum rate.
- You can also ask to be paid for any training time, and you can ask what the minimum number of hours you'll be paid for.

Contracts & How to Get Paid

- It is common that you will be asked to sign a contract. Ask for the contract in a language you can read and understand.
- Review the details of the contract and ask questions if you have any.
- Most contractors will also need to submit the tax form W-9. You can use either a social security number or an ITIN number to complete this form.
- You will probably be paid with a check, but you can ask about direct deposit, VISA gift cards, or wire transfers. Most researchers will not be able to pay contractors with cash.



Questions and Discussion



Practice Exercise

Break up into groups of 3 and practice the survey.

One person will be the researcher,
one the ad-hoc interpreter,
and one the participant.





Trauma informed care basics

Processing Difficult Conversations

When you interpret, you may:

- Hear very hard stories about people's lives
- Feel anxious, sad, or angry
- Feel numb
- Need to help people from different cultures understand each other
- Work to help a person who is having challenges

Compassion fatigue can happen when caring for others makes one feel weak or tired.



Processing Difficult Conversations

- It is possible to become traumatized when listening to other people's trauma. This is called **vicarious trauma**.

Discussion

- Have you ever heard of vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue before?
- Have you experienced either?
- If yes, can you speak about it?
- If no, What do you normally do to manage stress after a hard experience?

Practical tips for managing vicarious trauma

- Become aware of and recognize how you feel.
- Take breaks during interpreting when you need to.
- After difficult conversations, make sure you speak to the researcher about taking time to discuss what you heard and ask for time to process it, if you need to.
- Be sure to take time after interpreting to do things that help you feel calm – like cooking, spending time with family, listening to music, or taking a walk outside.

Practical tips for managing vicarious trauma

- Ask the researchers or interviewers for other support if you feel sad, depressed, or angry after interpreting.
- Don't take on responsibility for your other peoples' wellbeing – focus on supplying them with tools to look after themselves.
- Take opportunities to debrief.



Discussion

If you feel negative emotions after interpreting or have heard hard stories:

- What are some ways you can process that?
- How can you get support?



Sources

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Questions and Discussion





Thank You!

iGracias!