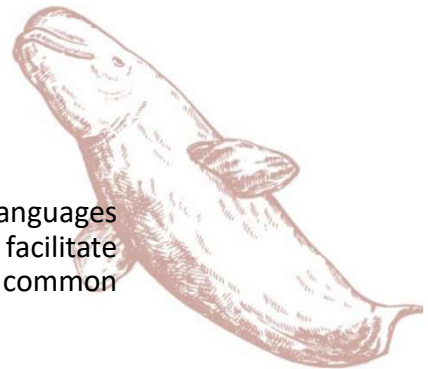


1

Introduction

- An interpreter is an individual fluent in two or more languages capable of providing a verbal and non verbal link to facilitate communication between two parties without a common language.
- An interpreter is a crucial element to effective communication when dealing with people having different language and culture backgrounds.



2

Introduction

- Human communications are full of misunderstandings. When people are from different cultures and using different languages, misinterpretations are even more likely to occur;
- Language barriers can compromise the quality of health care and social services provided by hindering the clinician's understanding of the problem and the accuracy of a clinical diagnosis or intervention;
- Language barriers can also limit the ability of youth and families to understand and consent to proposed treatments or interventions;
- Therefore, the work of interpreters directly influences the quality of care and interventions.

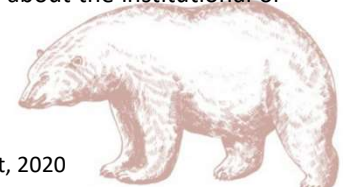
In order to ensure the quality of health care services, service providers must create an alliance with the person who consults, as well as with the interpreter. The interpreter becomes an integral part of the relational dynamic. The trust developed between the three parties will influence whether the interpreter has the ability and willingness to address any potential misunderstandings, frustration and mistrust that can rupture care. The interpreter needs to feel that they have a safe place to address these issues.

Butow, 2015; Hordyk & al., 2017

3

3 roles of the interpreter

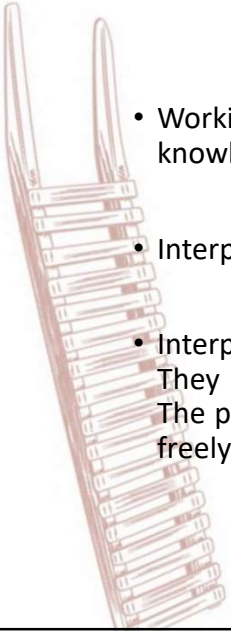
- **Linguistic translator:** The translator seeks to communicate messages as literally as possible
- **Mediator and advocate:** The interpreter communicates messages as an advocate and may adjust aspects of the message accordingly. The interpreter may advise the family or clinician to ask questions and clarify any potential misunderstandings. As a mediator, the interpreter seeks to create common ground for the family and the service provider by identifying the intentions behind statements or questions that may be perceived as threatening or negative by either person.
- **Cultural broker (consultant):** The interpreter may provide input to the non-Inuk worker to explain the culture, values and customs of the clients or families and to provide precious insight about the current context of the community. The interpreter also informs the client about the institutional or personal culture of the non-Inuk worker.



Pitutsimajut, 2020

4

Benefits to work with interpreters

- 
- Working with Inuit interpreters is a great opportunity to share and exchange knowledge;
 - Interpreters can be seen as facilitators to foster collaboration with families;
 - Interpreters are allies in clear communication with community members. They can make sure that the client really understands what you are saying. The presence of an interpreter can improve the client's ability to speak more freely without being blocked by language barriers.

Butow, 2015; Pitutsimajut, 2020

5

How to work with interpreters: Trust

- Trust is intertwined within power dynamics: interpreters need to feel that they work with a trustworthy worker. Although we may not always realize it, titles, professions, and roles can give a certain power. These titles and roles also come with a history of colonization that still influences society and the structure of our institutions. It is important to first acknowledge this privilege and power that we have, and then work to foster humility, respect, and recognizing the strengths of those we work with.
- It is important to create spaces of shared decision-making. Interpreters can play an important role in allowing the patient to be active in the decision-making.

6

How to work with interpreters

- It is important to develop a personal bond of trust;
- Trust is built over time and through positive experiences. Whenever possible, working with the same interpreter allows you to get to know each other. Take some time to introduce yourself and eventually to share a few things about yourself with the interpreters, and to ask them about themselves and their families;
- To develop trust, it helps to know what the other person expects of you, to plan the intervention together;
- You might feel like your words or actions are benevolent, but for the interpreter, collaboration might be stressful if they don't know what is going to happen next;
 - Communicate with interpreters in order to develop a plan together before direct interactions with families. Be transparent about your expectations and be open to theirs in order to create a common ground for working together.

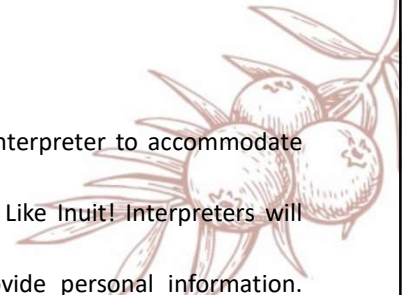
Andrulis & Brach, 2007; Hordyk & al., 2017; Pitutsimajut, 2020

7

What interpreters do

Help you navigate through some common cultural differences.

- **Personal space:** This varies from cultures. Understanding it helps the interpreter to accommodate both parties and create a comfortable environment.
- **Non verbal signs:** Some cultures speak with their bodies, their faces... Like Inuit! Interpreters will notice it, while it may be more difficult for non-Inuit.
- **Disclosing personal information:** Some cultures are reluctant to provide personal information. Understanding this allows the interpreter to phrase questions appropriately to stress the importance of the required information.
- **Handshakes and other welcoming actions:** Handshakes may last much longer in some cultures. In others, they are omitted or replaced by a different form of greeting. Understanding this allows the interpreter to ensure that the comfort levels of everyone involved are satisfied.
- **Ways to express feelings and emotions:** Varies according to the culture. Some cultures will be more open about crying, being angry, etc. Without an interpreter, we can easily misinterpret some behaviors/émotions (e.g. thinking someone is stoic or not interested).



Do you have example of how these concepts are experienced within the Inuit culture?

Miletich, 2014

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Tips to work with interpreters

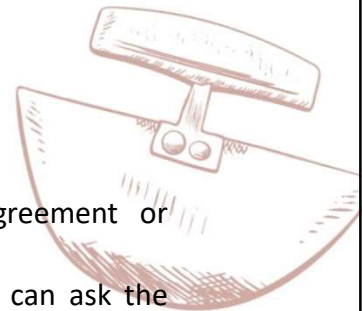
- Always face and speak directly to the client in a normal tone.
 - Do not direct questions or statements to the interpreter.
- Remember to speak slowly and in a normal voice, pausing after each complete sentence and/or when the interpreter signals.
 - This will allow the interpreter to repeat your message within its stated context.
- Speak in short, clear sentences.
 - Try to avoid slang or professional jargon;
 - Avoid acronyms. At times an interpreter may need to clarify a term.
- Ask only one question at a time. Wait until the interpreter has finished answering before asking the next question.
- Confirm your understanding by asking for important information to be repeated.



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Tips to work with interpreters

- Be aware that a smile or nod may not indicate full agreement or understanding;
- Try to avoid using bilingual family members, friends... Or you can ask the interpreter or community worker how they feel about it;
- They are personally invested in the outcome of the interpretation, it puts them in a difficult position and they may not convey the message as clearly as possible;
 - For legal and ethical reasons, we should avoid as much as possible to use children as interpreters.



Flores, 2005; Flores & al., 2003

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Tips to work with interpreters Some challenges you may face

- Being an Inuk interpreter working in the health and social services sectors in Nunavik can be extremely challenging;
 - The interpreter is often translating alongside other professional duties and may not have received any training on how to deal with the emotions related to their job, how to learn the necessary vocabulary, or how to make difficult ethical decisions when caught between the different cultures, traditions, and expectations of the community and health care institutions.
- Everyone needs to talk about what they experience at work. However, due to confidentiality rules, interpreters are not allowed to go home and talk about what affects them. They may end up carrying a lot of weight on their shoulders. This can be incredibly complex when interpreters see the families they work with on a daily basis on the street, in stores and in their homes. Interpreters also have access to private information about most families, making it extremely difficult to determine what can and cannot be shared.
- Interpreting for mental health issues is also another challenge. This often means hearing and discussing about traumatic issues. We all need to cope with these stories, the interpreters too.

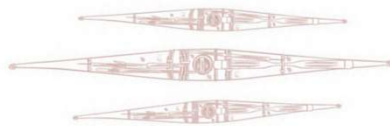
Flores & al., 2003; Hordyk & al., 2017; Pitutsimajut, 2020

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Tips to work with interpreters Some challenges you may face

- Cultural differences can sometimes hinder communication with clients. You may want to talk about something that the interpreter does not feel comfortable discussing because of cultural value;
 - Also, some concepts may exist in a culture but not in another one, translation may be only partially equivalent. It is important to be open to different paradigms, concepts, ways to explain a problem, in order to respect the culture.
- Interpreters often have to communicate difficult news in emotionally charged situations to people they know very well. Therefore, the dialogue that they are translating might affect them emotionally.

It is very important to make sure they are comfortable interpreting and to take time with them at the end of every meeting to let them vent.



Hordyk & al., 2017; Pitutsimajut, 2020

12

Do you have examples of concepts or words that are different or unique to the Inuk culture/language?

13

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