

## **Working effectively with an interpreter**

### **A. Preparation:**

- Use trained interpreters whenever possible
- Never use children as interpreters
- Allow time
- Use interpreters of the same gender whenever possible

### **B. Pre- Conference with interpreters**

- Establish method of interpreting
- Inform interpreter to give feedback
- Inform interpreter where to sit
- Explain the context and nature of the meeting
- Determine if interpreter has any concerns which need to be addressed before the meeting

### **C. At the meeting**

- Introduce yourself to the client and to the interpreter
- Direct questions to the client
- Write down the name of the interpreter and language used
- Review confidentiality
- Explain how the interview will be conducted
- Use short, simple phrases and avoid slang, and technical terminology
- Avoid sentence fragments changing your idea in the middle of the sentence
- Avoid asking multiple questions at one time
- Ask for clarifications
- Ask for questions
- Avoid interrupting the interpreter or client
- Inform client and interpreter what to do next
- Speak at an even pace in relatively short segments, pause after completing a thought
- Assume that everything you say and that the client says is interpreted
- If addressing the interpreter about an issue of communication or culture, let the client know first
- Ask the interpreter to point out potential cultural misunderstandings that may come up
- Do not hold the interpreter responsible for what the client says or does not say, the interpreter is a medium, not the source
- Be aware that many concepts you express may not have linguistic, or often even conceptual, equivalence in other languages
- Do not make assumptions about the client's educational level
- Respect the role of the interpreter as a professional
- Be patient