



## WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH INTERPRETERS

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (trading as NAATI) is the national standards and accreditation body for translators and interpreters in Australia. It is the only agency to issue accreditations for practitioners who wish to work in this profession in Australia.

NAATI's primary purpose is to strengthen inclusion and participation in Australian society by assisting in meeting its diverse and changing communication needs and expectations, through:

- setting, maintaining and promoting high national standards in translating and interpreting, and
- implementing a national quality-assurance system for credentialing practitioners who meet those standards.
- NAATI credentialing provides quality assurance to the clients of translators and interpreters and gives credibility to agencies that employ practitioners who are credentialed appropriately.

### Verification of NAATI Credentials

An individual's NAATI credential may be verified by going to <https://www.naati.com.au/online>, click on 'Verify Practitioner Credentials' and enter the practitioners NAATI number.

If a NAATI credentialed interpreter or translator does not behave ethically a complaint can be lodged for investigation by NAATI – see <http://www.naati.com.au/complaints.html>. In cases of proven serious unethical conduct NAATI can suspend or remove a practitioner's credentials.

### Why you should use NAATI credentialed interpreter:

- to ensure accurate communication while taking into account cultural sensitivities in times of crisis, traumatic or emotionally-charged situations, second-language competency may decrease dramatically,
- as effective professional practice is dependent upon the worker's ability to understand the client
- because qualified interpreters are bound to practice impartiality, confidentiality and accuracy when interpreting

### Issues when using a non-credentialed interpreter:

- they may not have the above mentioned skills and knowledge,
- they may have no or very limited training,
- they are not bound by the AUSIT Code of Ethics - [http://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code\\_Of\\_Ethics\\_Full.pdf](http://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code_Of_Ethics_Full.pdf)

### Issues when using friends, relatives or children as interpreters:

- the language skills of friends, relatives and children are unknown, untested and possibly unreliable as they may become too emotionally involved,
- there is no guarantee that the relatives or friends will not have vested interests and will not seek to exploit the situation.
- a child should not be put in a position of having to take responsibility for the outcome if a mistake is made
- the use of the child as an interpreter can seriously distort the power and authority relationships within the family,
- the parent may not reveal all the necessary information if it has to be transmitted through a child.

### Issues when using bilingual staff as an interpreter:

- professional interpreting requires more than fluency in the two languages,
- bilingual staff are not bound by the Code of Ethics. They may not keep information confidential or they may take over the interview.

### Role and limitations of the interpreter:

- the role of the interpreter is to bridge a communication gap,
- professional interpreting requires more than fluency in the two languages, although fluency is essential,
- apart from lack of semantic equivalence from one language to another there is often a lack of conceptual and/or cultural equivalence for some concepts as well,
- interpreters do not explain or ensure understanding,
- interpreters treat all interpreting matters as confidential,
- interpreters remain impartial, since professionally they do not take sides and do not advocate for either party.

### Role of users of interpreters:

- conduct and manage the interview,
- brief the interpreter, if appropriate, before the interview,
- arrange appropriate seating to allow for better communication, for example face the client.

### Interview techniques:

- speak in 1st person directly and clearly to the Non English Speaking client,
- pause frequently to allow the interpretation,
- use simple language, rather than jargon, or if jargon cannot be avoided, explain it,
- be aware of possible cultural differences in body language.

### Possible issues with interpreters:

- not interpreting what was said accurately and in its entirety (this can be detected through an answer off the track),
- interpreter's English is hard to follow because of word choice/grammar/excessive hesitations,
- having conversations with either side which are not interpreted and/or taking over the interview,
- expressing opinions or giving their own advice.

### Possible actions:

- approach the interpreter about his/her shortcoming(s)
- report the interpreter to the agency / NAATI / AUSIT
- if the interpreter does not do a satisfactory job, search for another interpreter
- if the interpreter does a satisfactory job, re-use this interpreter

#### How to access interpreters

TIS uses NAATI accredited interpreters in languages where accreditation is available.

<https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

NAATI accredited interpreters for Deaf clients:

<https://www.nabs.org.au>

#### Private agencies in Tasmania

<http://www.allaboutlanguages.com.au>

<http://www.allworldlanguages.com.au>

<http://www.amigostr.com>

