1. Acknowledge the interpreter as a professional.

2. Speak directly to the client, not to the interpreter. For example, say “What is your name” not “Please ask her what her name is”.

3. Speak more slowly rather than more loudly. And, enunciate clearly.

4. Speak at an even pace and in relatively short segments. Pause so the interpreter can interpret. If you go on for too long, the interpreter might miss important details or need to ask for clarification.

5. Remember that EVERYTHING said is interpreted.

6. The interpreter is not allowed to summarize; they must convey information as it is spoken.

7. Be aware that interpreting is not word for word; it’s meaning for meaning. Some concepts have no equivalent in another language. Be aware that an interpreter may ask you or the client for clarification or need to reference a language dictionary to ensure accuracy.

8. Avoid: Highly idiomatic speech; complicated sentence structure; sentence fragments; and asking multiple questions at one time.

9. Avoid: Asking the interpreter for an opinion. They are only there to convey information between you and the client.

10. The interpreter will alert you about potential cultural misunderstandings that may come up (medical or community settings only; this is not allowed in legal/court settings).

11. Be patient as bridging a language barrier takes time. Clear communication will avoid wasted time and dangerous misunderstandings.

12. Check for understanding. Some clients may be reluctant to say they do not understand something. It is your responsibility to check that they do understand. Let clients know that questions are welcome and reassuring, not offensive

13. Remember that language skills may diminish under stress. Those who usually speak English sufficiently may require language assistance at times of crisis.