How to work with an interpreter

1. Brief the interpreter before the interpreting session. Debrief them afterwards.

2. Allow extra time for the interpreting session, especially for Auslan interpreting, telephone interpreting, video conferences and calls.

3. Introduce yourself and the interpreter to your client. Explain the role of the interpreter.

4. For onsite interpreting, ensure the seating/standing/lighting arrangements allow for clear communication.

5. Speak directly to the client, e.g. “How are you?” instead of saying to the interpreter “Ask him/her how he/she is.”

6. Use plain English—avoid industry-specific jargon where possible, e.g. medical jargon, acronyms, slang and colloquialisms.

7. Use short sentences. Speak a few sentences at a time, but talking at your normal pace so the interpreter can remember and interpret accurately.

8. Don’t ask the interpreter to undertake duties other than interpreting (e.g. fill in forms). Don’t engage in direct conversation with the interpreter to the exclusion of your client. The interpreter will interpret everything you say.

9. Maintain control over the interpreting session at all times.