



Tips for working with an Interpreter

The interpreter is a trained professional whose role it is to facilitate communication between people who do not share the same language. Part of the interpreter's role is to ensure that they are as unobtrusive as possible within an assignment. In a situation where two interpreters are required for OH&S reasons and are working in tandem, they will attempt to swap during a natural pause to minimise interference with the presenter.

Below are some helpful hints for making your experience of working with an interpreter a pleasant one.

- Assignments over 1 hour duration (or shorter assignments involving group or team meetings) will generally require two interpreters to work in tandem for occupational health and safety reasons and to reduce the risk of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) or Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) your specific needs can be discussed with Echo Interpreting at your time of booking.
- Look directly at the Deaf client and direct all your communication towards them and not the interpreter. For instance, it is unnecessary to say, "Ask him" or "Tell her".
- Speak at your normal pace, slowing down or producing unnatural parts of sentences will inhibit the communication from occurring naturally. The interpreter is a trained professional and will ask for clarification if needed.
- Ensure that the interpreter is positioned in close proximity to the main speaker/presenter/teacher. The Deaf person will position themselves opposite the interpreter allowing eye contact to be made with both parties.
- Be aware of any visual distractions, such as glare from a window, large table decorations or inappropriate lighting. As the Deaf client is receiving a visual language it is important to ensure there is an uninhibited view of the interpreter at all times.
- When using a PowerPoint presentation, overhead projector or referring to written material please allow a few moments for the Deaf person to read this information before proceeding. It is impossible for the Deaf person to read and watch the interpreter simultaneously.
- When working in a group situation please instruct all participants to raise their hands when sharing questions or comments. This allows the Deaf person to know who is speaking and also allows equal access for everyone. It is important to remember that the interpreter will be experiencing a short time lag as they work and because of this the Deaf person will always be slightly behind.
- In the instance of presentations, lectures, and training, wherever possible please provide any written material, lecture notes, agendas etc to Echo Interpreting prior to the assignment to enable us to pass this information on to the interpreters to assist with their preparation.
- Please be aware that the interpreter's role is to interpret everything that is said. If there is a comment that you do not want to be interpreted please remove yourself from the room as the interpreter must interpret everything they hear. This includes outside noises, mobile phones ringing and any other side conversations or utterances.
- The Code of Ethics for interpreters states that interpreters shall not engage in discussions with other participants during an assignment. If you have any specific questions in relation to Auslan or working with an interpreter please check with the interpreter before starting or at the completion of the assignment.