

Procedures for Team Interpreting

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Pre-conference the team - agree what the goals of the interpreting team are, how feedback and corrections to the message will take place, how signals for assistance and replacement will be given, general time intervals for each interpreter to be the “A” interpreter.

Pre-conference the consumers - team members discuss the communication goals and the procedures that are required for accurate and efficient interpreting with the primary consumers of each language. In one-on-one settings, one team member may pre-conference with one language consumer or language consumer group while the other team member works with the other language consumer group. If this takes place then the team members will also need time to debrief.

Prepare the environment - team members ensure that the physical set-up of the room meets the needs of both language consumer groups and the needs of the interpreters to perform their services. Whether the interpreters move chairs and other furniture or some other person rearranges the environment depends on the services available in the environment. It is the interpreting team’s responsibility to ensure that the environment satisfies the interpreting needs of the people within it (to the best extent possible).

Prepare the team - team members take their places as the communication event begins. Ensure that there are no problems that remain to be solved. If there is a problem, agree how the problem will be solved and take appropriate action.

Perform the interpretation - team members work together to ensure that the message is accurate as possible and meets the communication needs of the language consumer groups in the environment. Replacement of team members between the “A” and “B” roles should be smooth and organized with minimal distraction to either language consumer group.

Complete the interpretation - team members continue interpreting until it is clear that interpreting services are no longer required.

Re-establish the environment - undo the environmental changes that were made to accommodate the interpreting process if necessary and reasonable.

De-brief the consumers - team members discuss the communication event and the interpretation with the primary consumers of each language, seeking feedback regarding what worked well and what seemed not to work. Team members should listen to the entire comments of the language consumers and take notes, offering explanations only after the entire question, comment, or complaint has been expressed and noted. Questions from consumers should be answered as completely as possible while remaining within the boundaries of the Code of Ethics.

De-brief the team - team members review their notes and memories of the interpreting event. Problems should be explored with the intention to find solutions. Feedback on performances should be constructive and increase the trust team members have for each other.