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In an effort to provide continuing education to Culture Connect's interpreters, we're kicking off a bimonthly newsletter called "The Code Interpreted" that will break down the Code of Ethics each month and focus on one per issue. We hope that you find these refreshers interesting and informative--a good way to reconnect with our guiding principles. If you have any suggestions or questions, please feel free to contact Alexis Dalmat at alexis.dalmat@cultureconnectinc.org.

Thank you for all of your excellent work in the community!
The Culture Connect Family

Code #2: ACCURACY & COMPLETENESS

The Basics

- Interpreters are committed to accurately and completely transmit the content and spirit of the original message into the other language without omitting, modifying, condensing, or adding.
- Interpreters will make every effort to assure that the client/patient has understood questions, instructions, and other information transmitted by the teacher/provider.
- If the content to be interpreted might be perceived as offensive, insensitive, or otherwise harmful to the dignity and well-being of the client/patient, the interpreter should advise the provider of this before interpreting.

How would you respond?

Q1: The LEP just discussed her symptoms with you and a nurse practitioner. Then the nurse leaves and the physician enters the room and says "can you summarize for me what the patient's issues are since I know you've just gone over that with the nurse?"

A1: Sir, as an interpreter I am bound by a Code of Ethics which requires that I interpret everything that is said by someone else accurately and completely. If I were to summarize what was said in a previous conversation that wouldn't be interpreting at all, rather I'd be making up the content myself."

Q2: As you, the LEP, and the LEP's spouse are leaving a parent-teacher conference, you overhear the LEP whisper to her husband that she's not sure she really understands what just happened and that she's confused about what options their child has.

A2: You respectfully interrupt and say "Ma'am, do you have more questions for the teacher? I am more than happy to call the teacher back and spend more time interpreting any questions you have. Perhaps she can give you some insight and suggestions into how to handle this situation with your child."

Q3: A provider for whom you are interpreting uses a term you don't understand.

A3: One solution would be to carry a dictionary and ask for a moment to look up the term. Another solution would be to inform the provider that you are unfamiliar with that term and ask her to explain it; at which point you will interpret the doctor's explanation. (In either solution, be sure to also inform the LEP so that all communication is transparent and it does not appear that you are having a side conversation.)

Q4: A hospital provider says to a Vietnamese LEP family "a chaplain will be in shortly to help you in this time of need."

A4: Knowing that it may be deemed offensive or insensitive to have a Christian clergy visit a Buddhist family as the family may feel that he is proselytizing, you may say to the provider "Sir, in Vietnam most people are Buddhist, so it is likely that this family is also Buddhist. Before bringing in the chaplain, I might advise that you ask if they would be interested in seeing one."

Do you have other scenarios, responses, questions, or suggestions for The Code Interpreted that you'd like to share with the Culture Connect Family? If so, please reply to this email and we'll be happy to answer you back directly and we may even post it on the next The Code Interpreted edition (with your permission, or course).

We appreciate all the great work you do for the community!
--The Culture Connect Family

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