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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 #1: CONFIDENTIALITY

The Basics

- Interpreters must treat all information learned during the interpretation as confidential, divulging nothing without the full approval of the LEP and service provider.
- Interpreters maintain the professional parameters of information sharing, in keeping with policies and procedures of the facility.
- Interpreters know how to respond to questions dealing with confidential matters that may be brought up in the community or educational setting.
- Interpreters understand the exceptions to the protection of confidentiality, as well as the implications and consequences. That is, in cases where the interpreter becomes privy to information regarding suicidal/homicidal intent, child or elder abuse, or domestic violence, the interpreter acts on the obligation to transmit such information in keeping with facility policies, interpreter standards of practice, and the law. If any question regarding this obligation arises, the interpreter will call Culture Connect.

How would you respond?

Q1: The husband says "Please tell me what was discussed when I stepped out to go to the restroom a few minutes ago. My wife is crying and I want to know what happened. She's going to tell me everything anyway."

A1: You could say something like "Sir, unfortunately, my role as an interpreter limits me to only interpreting what is said between the patient and the provider. If you'd like more information on what was said, you may ask your wife or the provider and I'll interpret what the provider says." DO NOT under any circumstances divulge what was said without the explicit permission of the patient/provider. Furthermore, the request of the husband should be explained to the provider so that no side conversations are held and there is complete transparency between the provider, patient, and interpreter.

Q2: After leaving a difficult appointment, you run into another interpreter who you know and he asks you "How'd your appointment go today? I've seen that patient before and she's very challenging!"

A2: One solution might be to laugh it off with a joke "All in a day's work!" and then change the subject. Or alternatively, you could take it as a teaching opportunity and respond to your friend with "It went well, but I really can't share what happened. Remember, we're bound by our Code of Ethics."

Q3: Your patient mentions off-handedly that she doesn't want you interpreting, because she doesn't trust that you won't tell others in the community about her medical problems that she's embarrassed about.

A3: You explain to her "I am a professional interpreter. I have gone through training and abide by a Code of Ethics, which is precisely what makes me different than just any bilingual person. I take my job very seriously and would not want to jeopardize your or my reputation in the community by telling anyone about anything that is discussed here today. I guarantee you that 100% will be confidential."

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, of course).

Keep up the great work you do for the community!
--The Culture Connect Family

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Culture Connect, Inc.
P.O. Box 250
Clarkston, GA 30021

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