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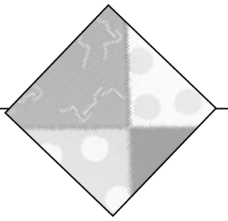

Guidelines for Working with the Interpreter (*continued*)

- Give information in a clear, logical sequence, emphasize key words or points, and repeat important information; clarify and rephrase information when necessary.
- Avoid technical jargon, colloquiallisms, idioms, slang, and abstractions. Keep words and phrases as simple as possible but avoid oversimplification and condensing important explanations.
- Periodically check the family members' understanding and the accuracy of the translation by asking them to repeat instructions or what has been communicated in their own words; however, avoid literally asking, "Do you understand?" Among many cultural groups, a "no" response would make all parties lose face and, thus, is unlikely to be stated.
- Offer explanations for specific recommendations, and summarize the agreements of the meeting, session, or visit and the steps that will follow.
- Reinforce verbal information, when possible, with materials written in the family members' language and with visual aids or behavioral modeling if appropriate. Before introducing written materials, tactfully determine the family members' literacy level through the interpreter.
- Be patient and prepared for the additional time that will inevitably be required for careful interpretations.

Reflection

- Review the content and process issues with the interpreter that are relevant to the interaction with the family members:
  a. Were words, phrases, and comments clear and easy to understand and interpret?
  b. How well did the family members seem to understand the information shared?
  c. Were there any significant underlying concerns, issues, or dynamics that were not directly addressed in the interaction? (This would include the interpreter's perceptions of selected family members and issues that may have been either difficult, uncomfortable, or inappropriate to openly discuss at the time of the interaction.)
  d. What seemed to work well during the interaction?
  e. What was problematic for the service provider, the family members, or the interpreter?
- Offer constructive feedback to the interpreter as well as acknowledgment of and thanks for his or her services.
- Check on the interpreter's availability to schedule subsequent sessions with the family members if you plan to work with the same interpreter again.

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