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# Solace Code of Practice for Interpreters

## Introduction

Solace is a therapeutic service for refugees and asylum seekers, and much of our service depends upon effective working with interpreters. This code provides an ethical framework and principles of good practice for the task of interpreting at Solace.

As Solace adheres to the Code of Ethics and Practice of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), we would like our interpreters to work within this framework as well.

Solace is a registered charity (number 1104507).



## 1.0 CODE OF ETHICS

### 1.1 Professional Competence

Interpreters should be fluent in both the client's language and English.

### 1.2 Confidentiality

Interpreters must observe the principle of confidentiality and not discuss or disclose information about Solace clients to anyone else outside of Solace.

Interpreters must not initiate contact with clients outside of Solace. All telephone contact between the interpreter and the client should only be on behalf of and at the request of Solace, and facilitated by a member of the Solace staff and volunteer team.

Interpreters should not have contact details of Solace clients, and must never store identifiable information on personal devices such as phones or laptops.

If interpreters and clients meet incidentally outside of Solace, the interpreter must maintain professional boundaries and not discuss therapeutic issues.

### 1.3 Impartiality

Interpreters must be impartial and therefore not interpret for someone who is a relative or someone they know well or where there may be conflicting cultural or political issues.



Interpreters must inform the therapist as soon as they become aware that they recognise the client (by name or face). This may happen at booking or at the first meeting. The interpreter must describe the context of how they know the client to enable the therapist to make a decision on how to proceed.

It is our policy not to work with an interpreter who is currently working with the Home Office because of the potential for conflict of interest and potential for confusion for the client. Interpreters must make Solace aware if they start working for the Home Office.

### **1.4 Respect**

All Solace staff and volunteers will be respectful towards all our clients regardless of age, race, gender, religion, ethnicity or membership of a social or political group. Although not employed by Solace Interpreters are expected to conduct themselves in an equally respectful way that is sensitive to the client's gender, as well as his or her social, cultural, religious background and beliefs.

## **2.0 Practice guidelines - Interpreting and Therapy**

### **2.1 Before the session**

Before a first session together, you should spend at least 15 minutes with the therapist to discuss your preferred ways of working. The therapist will describe their way of working and how they would like to work with you as an interpreter. How you will communicate and seek clarity from each other needs to be mutually agreed. Time boundaries and any particular terminology should be explained. Before a session with a new client, the purpose of the session and any relevant background should be discussed.



## 2.2 During the session

- Sessions are time limited, therefore interpreters must be punctual and ready to begin at the designated time and remain for the duration of the scheduled time.
- The interpreter must interpret all that is said in the interview and avoid summarising on behalf of the client or therapist. This includes anything that the client says to the interpreter directly. The therapist will explain this to the client at the beginning of therapy in order to avoid embarrassment.
- The interpreter must strive to be as accurate as possible in their translation to reflect the full meaning of the words, thus it is important to be aware of the cultural meaning of words including the emotional overtones, strength and force of words as well as possible double meaning of words. When in doubt about the meaning of words or sentences, the interpreter should always seek clarification, while letting the other parties know what they are doing.
- In order to enhance the flow of dialogue between the therapist and client, interpreters should speak in the first person e.g. saying “I think or feel...” rather than “he said or she said...”
- If the interpreter finds it difficult to remember all that is said, they should inform the therapist so that therapist can make sure that they and the client are aware to speak in smaller chunks.
- The interpreter’s role is not to offer advice or counselling, so in normal circumstances they should not intervene. If the interpreter believes it is important to advise the client on a particular issue, the interpreter should discuss it with the therapist prior to doing so.
- The interpreter’s role is not that of a ‘cultural expert’ however if the therapist shows surprise or curiosity about a particular issue, they may offer a clarification. Clients should always be kept informed of what is happening in the session.

- An interpreter who is feeling distressed because of the nature of the session should ask for a break.

### **2.3 After the session - Debriefing and Support**

- With the wellbeing of the client in mind, the working relationship between interpreter and therapist is very important. Solace welcomes sharing feedback between both individuals in order to work collaboratively.
- A debrief is available after any session – this can be arranged following the session by request of the interpreter or therapist.
- An interpreter who has any particular concerns should discuss them with the practitioner or the Clinical Director.

**Please sign to indicate your agreement to the details outlined here.**

Interpreter Name:

Interpreter Signature:

Date:

Solace Name:

Solace Signature:

Date:

