

SECTOR GUIDE:

Working with interpreters to communicate with LGBTIQ clients from diverse backgrounds

WHO IS THIS INFORMATION FOR?

This guide is for service providers and case workers supporting LGBTIQ (people who have identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning) clients from diverse backgrounds. It provides guidance on sensitively preparing and selecting the right interpreter for your clients.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION IMPORTANT?

Interpreters may be required in many circumstances, e.g. when a client has low English, when information is complex or sensitive, or when a client is distressed.

**Learn more about working with
working with LGBTIQ clients!**

Contact Third Queer Culture to
organise a training session:

 thirdqueerculture@gmail.com



WHAT IS INTERPRETING?

As communication is a range of verbal and non-verbal messages, interpreting is more than word for word substitution of one language for another.

A good interpreter helps create respectful and open communication between client and worker.

INTERPRETING FOR LGBTIQ CLIENTS

LGBTIQ clients and community members who have experienced transphobia or homophobia in their linguistic or cultural community may be sensitive to any micro or overt discrimination from an interpreter.

They will be looking for indications that the interpreter is trustworthy and safe, and that it is okay to receive and share personal information.

When interpreters consciously or unconsciously repeat homophobic or transphobic attitudes, judgements or stereotypes, it can seriously negatively affect the quality of the support offered by a service. It even may deter the client from returning.

Both the interpreter and the worker have a responsibility to ensure the client feels safe, comfortable and able to give and receive information. This is particularly crucial in situations where you are discussing sensitive information such as housing, legal or medical issues, and mental health or wellbeing.



Quick steps to improve the quality of your interactions with clients while using interpreters:

- Make sure you are using clear and respectful language! It is always best practice to ask your client how they prefer for you to refer to them.
- When booking the interpreter, advise that the client is LGBTIQ and that the interpreter **MUST** be comfortable with this client group.
- If the interaction is about a sensitive topic, brief the interpreter in advance (without sharing any of your client's identifying information) and check they are willing to complete the job.
- Make sure the interpreter knows the correct respectful terms for the client's preferred pronoun and identity – you can check out some language dictionaries at rainbowterminology.org.
- Let your client know that they have the right to request a new interpreter if the one being used is not respectful, knowledgeable or skilled. Never question this, just get a new interpreter. Be aware that the second interpreter might be just as bad or worse and you may need to change again.
- After the interaction, check with your client if the interpreter was satisfactory.
- If the interpreter was derogatory, disrespectful or unprofessional in their conduct, report their behaviour to the interpreter agency without disclosing your client's identity.