



**YOU ENCOUNTER LANGUAGE BARRIERS WHICH ARE HINDERING YOUR WORK.**

Language barriers are one of the main problems in daily practice. Language barriers can lead to insufficient understanding between professionals and their patients/clients. Frustration can occur on both sides – the user and the service provider. Poor communication can lead to a lack of understanding of the services and thus, to poor adherence to therapy and poor outcomes for the individual. As a rule, cooperation with an interpreter or cultural mediator is essential in these situations since an interpreter facilitates communication between the patient/client and the professional. However, you do not always have access to interpreting services. In addition, even if you have interpreters, there is often, lack of knowledge and training on how to work effectively with them, in your interaction with the patient/client. There are also, other means of communication e.g. online that you may find useful, but these have to be used with caution.

**OPTION 01**

Speak slowly and understandably. Use simple language and avoid technical terms.

**OPTION 02**

Use an interpreter or cultural mediator, if necessary. Remember to speak directly to your patient/client and not to the interpreter, in order to build a good relationship. Ask the interpreter for feedback later, to see if you need to change anything in your future communication.

**OPTION 03**

If no interpreter is available, check other options. Be creative, e.g. you could use pictures and check the level of understanding, ask them: e.g. "How would you describe the instructions to your parents?". Remember that the language problem is on both sides, it is not only your clients' problem.

**OPTION 04**

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### PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

A 40-year-old woman from Iran speaks only Persian. She participates in a workshop for disabled people. Communication between her and the staff is difficult because she suffers from a personality disorder and cognitive impairment. She only knows about 5-6 German sentences and has stereotyped them. This means that she uses, for example, "Good morning, how are you?" whenever she meets someone.

### SOLUTION

The employees speak German with her and describe what they say with hands or symbols. Google translator is also used when needed. The displayed Persian word is shown to the patient and explained in German by the staff to expand her German vocabulary. Another option is PECCS - index cards with pictograms or pictures with the respective word on them. Communication from the staff member to the woman is easier than in the opposite direction. As a last option, when the patient does not feel understood and a dangerous situation arises, e.g. the patient's self-injury, the family is called to help with the translation for the staff and the clarification of the situation.

### Project Partners



For more information, visit  
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