



Cultural Brokering

Ethical Framework

NCIHC Interpreter Code of Ethics:

- Accuracy : Interpreters strive to render the message accurately, conveying the content and spirit of the original message, taking into consideration the cultural context.
- Cultural Awareness: Interpreters strive to develop an awareness of the cultures encountered in the performance of interpreting duties.

NCIHC Standards of Practice: Cultural Awareness

OBJECTIVE: To facilitate communication across cultural differences.

- The interpreter strives to understand the cultures associated with the languages he or she interprets, including biomedical culture.
- The interpreter alerts all parties to any significant cultural misunderstanding that arises.



Why do we Broker Cultures?

1. Cultural Broker as a liaison

1. the health values, beliefs, and practices within their cultural group or community
2. the health care system that they have learned to navigate effectively for themselves and their families

2. Cultural Broker as a cultural guide – guide health care settings that are in the process of incorporating culturally and linguistically competent principles, values, and practices. They not only understand the strengths and needs of the community, but also are cognizant of the structures and functions of the health care setting.

3. Cultural Broker as a mediator - help to ease the historical and inherent distrust that many racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse communities have toward health care organizations.

4. Cultural Broker as a catalyst for change - initiate the transformation of a health care setting by advocating for an inclusive and collaborative environment for providers and patients/consumers alike. They model and mentor behavioral change, which can break down bias, prejudice, and other institutional barriers that exist in health care settings.

Clinical Reasons for Cultural Brokering

- Does this clarify communication?
- Does this help to build trust?
- Does this work to improve medical outcomes?



How to do cultural brokering

(source: CHIA)

1. Interrupt the communication process with a word, comment, or a gesture, as appropriate.
2. Alert both parties to potential miscommunication or misunderstanding (Interpreters may say, for example, “As an interpreter, I think that there may be potential danger for miscommunication/ misunderstanding...”).
3. Suggest cultural concerns that could be impeding mutual understanding.
4. Assist the patient in explaining the cultural concept to the provider, or the provider in explaining the biomedical concept.
5. When requested, interpreters also need to explain the cultural custom, health belief or practice of the patient to the provider, or educate the patient on the biomedical concept

Best approach when doing cultural brokering

- Follow the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics
- Don't make assumptions about patients, even if they are from the same country you are from.
- Empower the patient and/or provider to explain their own culture
- Don't make blank statements about a culture
- Handle cultural/communication issues in a very mindful and respectful manner

