Note taking for healthcare interpreters

When, what, why, and how to take notes during the interpreted healthcare session

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Paving the Way to Health Care Access Conference 2019
TOOK NOTES DURING AN ASSIGNMENT

RENDERED AN ACCURATE INTERPRETATION
Learning objectives

- Define note taking as a tool to support short term memory in consecutive interpreting
- Identify strategies, symbols, and abbreviations for note taking
- Practice note taking techniques for consecutive interpreting
When do we take notes?

- Consecutive dialogue interpreting
- When patient or provider speaks at length (avoid interrupting the speaker)
- On-site and remote interpreting

Note taking is a tool to support short term memory and **accuracy** in healthcare interpreting.

When might it be better to interrupt rather than allowing the speaker to go on at length?
NUMBERS, NAMES, PLACES

AAAAAAAND IT'S GONE
What do we note down and why?

- Numbers
- Names of providers, medications, places
- Symbols and abbreviations to support memory

Noting down too much will distract us from the task of listening and processing the original message, and have a negative impact on accuracy.

Note taking involves multitasking, much like simultaneous interpreting.
Rozan’s note taking principles

- Note the idea, not the word
- Use abbreviations (symbols, arrows, first letter of words)
- Use links (and, then, also, but, however, therefor)
- Use of negation and emphasis (cross out, underline)


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How do we get started?

- Note taking involves multitasking
- Begin to use a few symbols or abbreviations at a time

- Remote interpreters may experience speakers going on without pause, as the interpreter may find it more difficult to intervene to interpret
- On-site interpreters may find it more comfortable to mention to patient and provider that they’ll be taking notes, before the session begins
- On-site interpreters may find it more comfortable to use a small notepad. Remember multiple, easily-accessible pens!
- In what language do we take notes?
Practice note taking

- Demonstration: Observe use of links, abbreviations, symbols, numbers
- What worked? What objective will you establish for the practice?

- Helpful objective: “I want to use one symbol and one abbreviation.”

- Unhelpful objective: “I want to be an awesome note taker.”
Practice note taking

- You will hear a monologue read in English. Everybody will take notes. Then in pairs, you will repeat what you heard, also in English.

- How well did you and your partner meet your objectives? Can you spot the difficulties in your notes? What were a couple of symbols or abbreviations that worked?

- Take note of difficulties and successes you had with note taking. Did your partner experience the same difficulties and successes? What can you learn from each other?
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Thank You!

Let’s keep in touch!

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