



Monterey County Behavioral Health Policies and Procedures

Policy Number	451
Policy Title	Cultural and Linguistic Services
References	None
Effective	JULY 1, 1998 REVISED: March 2002 REVISED: October 1, 2008 REVISED: December 8, 2021

Policy

To the extent possible, services will be made available to all eligible consumers in a culture language that is preferred by the consumer.

To the extent possible, and clinically appropriate, consumers whose preference is a language other than English can request staff assigned to him/her be of similar ethnic background. Monterey County Behavioral Health will assign staff who speak the language, if available, preferred by the consumer and are of similar ethnic background or who can best understand the consumer's culture. Similar efforts will be offered in regard to offering contractual providers. Written material will be provided to the consumer in font size 14 (or larger upon request). If needed, an audio tape of the material will be provided. Staff may also be available to read material to the consumer

BHD staff is prohibited from expecting family members and friends to provide translation. Only in unplanned situations will clinical staff utilize clerical staff for interpretation and translation services unless the consumer prefers a family member or friend to do the translation. Minor children are not to be used as interpreters.

1. Interpretation facilitates clear understandable communication between the staff and consumer including subtle meanings, idiomatic expressions, saying, implied meanings, affect tone of voice, facial expressions and other non-verbal cues. Interpreters are the link between persons of different cultures. Interpretation may include assessment of whether words, attitudes and behaviors are considered normal and acceptable in the consumer's culture.
2. Translation facilitates communication of basic information such as appointment schedules, medication information, information requests, rights and responsibilities, resource availability. Translation does not include clinical interpretation of the clinical interpretation of the consumer's response.

Procedure

1. Consumers will be asked for language preference for services and their response will be documented on the assessment form that will be kept in their chart record.
2. Consumers requesting services in a language other than English will be assigned, to the extent possible, to bilingual staff.
3. Consumers, who cannot be assigned to bilingual staff, will be provided services through use of an interpreter. The staff of the program will make arrangements for availability of interpretation services.
4. Only staff authorized by the Department shall be used as interpreters and to the extent possible, the same interpreter will be scheduled for ongoing sessions.
5. The role of the interpreter is to provide the link between the staff and the consumer. The interpreter will be as unobtrusive as possible, facilitating clear and understandable communication back and forth.
6. Beneficiaries who have limited English proficiency are informed of their right of having free language assistance. BHD staff will document that advice.
7. 24-hour service access (crisis services/inpatient psychiatric) to a 24-hour toll free line [(888) 258-6029 to assist staff and consumers for translation services. Access services on outpatient accesses the County's or other local agencies (e.g. Defense Language Institute and translation services for deaf and blind) to assist the translation.
8. Chart documentation will clearly indicate use of an interpreter and the consumer's agreement to use of an interpreter.
9. Translation services will be utilized to provide or gather basic information regarding a consumer's situation or request.
10. Staff will be encouraged to develop bilingual skills and understanding of cultural issues of the consumer population through staff training and professional development efforts.
11. BHD staff and contracted providers will be provided with mandated cultural competency training regularly.