



**National Accreditation Authority
for Translators and Interpreters LTD**

**National Accreditation Authority for Translators
and Interpreters (NAATI)**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
for the
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY
TEST**

EXAMPLE MATERIAL



The Intercultural Competency (IC) Test

Sample Questions and Answers

Your assignment is to interpret for a doctor and LOTE speaking parents of a child who may have a mental illness. The doctor wants to refer the child on for further psychiatric treatment but the parents refuse to accept the offer of psychiatric treatment. What might be the intercultural issues involved in this scenario and what might the interpreter say to the doctor if asked for background information that might help the doctor understand the issues?*

Mental illness is not spoken of in the Arabic speaking culture. It is a taboo topic. Generally speaking a parent might challenge any doctor who makes a suggestion or diagnosis of mental illness for their child. Some people would assume that the person is possessed by some demonic force or by the devil. They would take the child to a shaman for an exorcism to get rid of the cause of the mental illness. They sometimes rely on religion to heal the child's plight.

The parents are probably not aware that in Australia, we are more open about discussing the issue of mental illness and there is more information about mental health problems. There are programs that help children deal with these issues. It is believed with treatment either medication or therapy many children will recover. The government's health care system covers some of the cost of treatment although if parents needed to see a psychiatrist for their child this may only be partially covered. There are helplines for children and mental health issues may be taught about in schools even primary schools.

(176 words)



The Australian government provides various kinds of support to people experiencing domestic violence, such as free telephone counselling, legal advice and referral to case workers. Describe briefly what kinds of government and other support victims of domestic violence can get in a LOTE speaking country or region and how they might compare to services available in Australia.*

In our culture like many other cultures in the world domestic violence is not acceptable and people can take legal action against the person. In our country there are not a lot of government services to help victims so many people stay silent and the abuse can continue for years. For example in families where the woman is not financially independent and where the woman doesn't have family support they usually stay silent and can't complain or take their partner to court. If the person was from a small village there would be family support to help the person. A sister or mother-in-law might step in. They can help her financially and emotionally. Sometimes this can be the only support.

In Australia if people are here without family support or are not aware of the support that is available, domestic violence can be a serious problem. The consequences of being homeless and alone are too great, especially if she has children to take care of. She may be reluctant to report to the police or ask for assistance.

(178 words)

* Language Other Than English



You have been asked to translate a health promotion brochure from English into your LOTE. The topic of the brochure is contraceptive options for women. The words used are very clinical and refer to private body parts. What are the cultural issues present in this situation and how would you deal with this as a translator?*

There are particular terms used by the medical profession that can cause offense when translating them literally, particularly body parts associated with genitalia like vagina or penis. Even graphic descriptions of how to insert contraceptive devices in the female anatomy would be considered inappropriate in my culture. The use of highly clinical words in Arabic is likely to cause misunderstanding to clients who are from a lower socio-economic background or from rural areas where they may not have been educated in these terms. Many females have strict adherence to religious values may reject the idea of contraception altogether and see it as interfering with God's ordains. Arabic tends to use euphemisms and implicitness when it comes to describing female body parts or practices related to female anatomy and this is what I would do if I were writing for a health brochure. It is less likely to offend anyone and people would be more likely to read the material. I would advise the agency of this matter and suggest more culturally appropriate terms.

(160 words)

* Language Other Than English



You are interpreting between a young male victim of domestic violence and a female counsellor. The young male was providing short answers and there was a lot of long silences. You sensed from his body language that he was not comfortable and feeling very anxious. After the interview the counsellor asks you for some background information. What might you say?

Note: This private conversation takes place AFTER the session has ended; it is between the counsellor and the interpreter.

I really can't generalise. I'm not a cultural expert but I can tell you that I had some serious concerns about his risk of suicide due to the cultural stigma/shame that is associated with this type of assault. There was a lot of nonverbal cues I was getting, for example he was avoiding looking at you and there were long silences which might suggest that he really didn't want to talk about this topic. Sometimes young men from our culture prefer to talk with a male not a female. So you could explore it and find out if he wanted a male counsellor. But I can't say I know for sure what was going on culturally because every survivor is unique. But I'm sure you know about the Men's Support Program on Smith Street and they do specialize in survivors and domestic violence and sexual assault in his ethnic group, so it might be helpful to speak with them about these issues.

(162 words)

