THE KEEPING BRISTOL SAFE PARTNERSHIP

RAPID REVIEW - LEARNING BRIEF

Learning brief following Rapid Review 20

This learning brief covers guidance, good practice and learning regarding the **use of interpreters**, **Cultural Competence** and what **Community** means when working with people.

The rapid review was written by Becky Lewis.

Where to find us:

KBSP@bristol.gov.uk

www.bristolsafeguarding.org

Contents

Introduction pg 1
Use of interpreters pg 2
Cultural Competence pg 4
Community pg 5

Points for practice

Your communication style, and speed as well as semantic choices all impact **connection with others.**

Interpreters should be considered **even if one has not been requested.** Be mindful of dialect and cultural differences.

Consider use of techniques such as 'teach back' method to ensure concepts have been understood. There is a difference between **communication and comprehension.**

Community can mean many different things to people and our **perceptions of community** may not be what others are experiencing.

USE OF INTERPRETERS

RAPID REVIEW - LEARNING BRIEF

Professionals should consider the need for an interpreter **even when one is not requested**. The professional may not see a need if there has been communication beforehand, however communication and comprehension are different. Depending on how specialised the subject is an interpreter may be required even when one had not been used before.

Where relevant, check the person's preferred **language dialect or variety** (for example Mandarin and Cantonese). There may also be **cultural differences** for consideration such as Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Factor in sufficient **time**. This includes discussing seating arrangements, asking the interpreter to translate word-for-word, rather than paraphrasing, and allowing time for clarification from any party.

Use **short, clear questions and instructions**. Try to speak just one or two sentences at any time and ask the client to do the same. If the client is left to speak for long periods, the interpreter inevitably has to summarise what is disclosed without reflecting the emphasis within the narrative so be prepared to pause them if necessary.

USE OF INTERPRETERS

RAPID REVIEW - LEARNING BRIEF

The **teach back method** is a useful way to confirm that the information you provide is being understood by getting people to 'teach back' what has been discussed and what instruction has been given. This is more than saying 'do you understand?' and is more a check of how you have explained things than the individual's understanding.

Conceptual matters, such as **linguistic relativity** mean that the translatability of some concepts and their expression in a given language can be problematic. A briefing with an interpreter prior to the meeting may be able to support this by familiarising them with the concepts and gives space for discussion around how to approach these areas.

Practitioners should also be prepared to **terminate a session** if they are concerned that everything said is not being interpreted, the interpreter is significantly changing the emphasis or if the client appears anxious or distressed by the interpreter's presence.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

RAPID REVIEW - LEARNING BRIEF

What is Cultural Competence?

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, appreciate, and effectively work with individuals from diverse cultures and populations.

By recognising the **unique needs and challenges** faced by different communities, practitioners can help ensure that services are accessible to everyone.

Remember the service user is the expert of their experience, adopt a position of 'not knowing' and **be ready to learn**. Try not to make assumptions about service users because you perceive that they come from a similar background to another service user or someone you know. You can conduct your own research before the meeting or ask questions along the way.

Reflect on yourself, try to be self-aware and remember you have your personal cultural values and beliefs. Try not to take things personally, people can become tired of being seen from a deficit model approach and this may lead to mistrust, suspicion or exhaustion of professionals.

Consider the power of language. Words such as community, resource, or poverty (and many others) have multiple meanings to different groups. Be mindful of the power imbalance from your professional status, considering that in certain cultures it may be offensive to disagree with you for example. Keep your language **simple and clear**, avoid slang or jargon to minimise miscommunication. Be thoughtful around the use of proverbs, metaphors, and myths as they may be culturally specific, and their meaning may be lost.

COMMUNITY

RAPID REVIEW - LEARNING BRIEF

Community can mean different things to different people. It can be a group of people living together or in proximity, or people having a particular socially significant characteristic in common, or people practising common ownership, or people who consider themselves as one due to a common thread throughout the group.

Communities themselves can be a variety of things depending on **individuals' experiences**. They can be many things such as supportive, collaborative, protective, safe, essential, but they also could be isolating, strict, oppressive, and feared.

Intersectionality and the role it plays in people's lives can shape our connection and views on what community is and what it means. Throughout our lives these connections and views can change depending on our experiences. With so many variables at play, we need to be mindful of how vast the scope is and not to label 'community' with our own biases.

As professionals we can make assumptions as to what these communal structures mean to the people we work with, these assumptions can lead to missing key information and increasing risk for some people. It is important to remember that community means something **different to everyone** also how and why they interact with these communities is of equal significance.

With all these factors in mind it can be difficult to know where to start. Essentially, it is fundamental that the views of the individual are ascertained first without professional preconceptions. This can be achieved by approaching the conversations with an **open mind,** an awareness of **community nuances** and the individual being spoken to on their own or with the support of an **appropriate translator**. This gives the best chance of an honest report of their situation and connection with communities, their safety can be most appropriately discussed or managed, and appropriate support options can be encouraged or facilitated.