Service Providers Guide
for Communicating with Newcomers

Service providers play a very significant and important role in welcoming newcomers. Here are some guidelines and resources for your consideration. You can make a difference.

Guidelines:

- Communicate the best you can. Keep it simple and clear. Be friendly. Smiles are an international language.

- Allow more time for interactions.

- Don't be afraid to use hand gestures, point at things or use pictures. Speak at an even pace.

- Address the newcomer directly, not the interpreter. Avoid using children as interpreters; never for adult related concerns.

- Avoid asking "Do you understand?" Instead, ask the newcomer to repeat instructions or information back to you to assess their level of understanding.

- Know using the telephone is the most difficult form of communication for the newcomer - texting or writing information down is the easiest.

- Utilize plain language principles whenever possible.

- Use Language Line or interpretation services when available.

Toolkit:

- Mini whiteboards for drawing pictures or writing words.

- Picture dictionary or Google Images.

- Apps such as "Text Now" and "WhatsApp" allow you to text a newcomer in their first language and translate their response to English.

- Actions such as learning a few words in their language, or having signage translated in other languages can go a long way to help inter- cultural communication.

- Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment.

- Be patient with yourself and the newcomer. Remember, it can take between 5 and 12 years to become fully fluent in a language!

Interpretation and Translation Resources (Fee for Service)

Boostlingo - www.boostlingo.com

Language Line - www.languageline.com

CanTalk - www.cantalk.com

Access Alliance - www.accessalliance.ca

Plain language

What is it?
"Plain language makes critical information more accessible and easy to read. It doesn't oversimplify or strip meaning from content. Instead, plain language content is clear, concise, and designed to save the intended audience time and effort."
Source: *Canada Style Guide*

Who should use it?
Anyone that provides information to the general public.

When should it be used?
- Forms
- Signs
- Policies
- Advertisements
- Instructions and directions

Resources:
- https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/inclusive-writing-guidelines-resources
- https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/index-eng
- design.canada.ca/style-guide

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