Deaf awareness checklist for primary care providers

Is your practice

Documenting communication needs and preferences for all patients

Evaluating the physical and technological practice environment

Adopting strategies to ensure timely and effective engagement with interpreters

Facilitating staff knowledge and awareness of how to work with Deaf patients

aware?

This checklist is designed to help primary care providers consider whether their policies, processes, and environment meet the needs of Deaf patients, and where there is room to improve.

Documenting communication needs and preferences for all patients

☐ We ask all new patients about their communication needs and preferences and record these in their file, including:
- preferred language
- whether an interpreter is required (and alternative communication strategies if an interpreter cannot be arranged)
- preferred mode of communication from the practice (e.g. for confirming appointments or advising of test results), such as telephone, SMS or email.

☐ We ask all patients requiring an Auslan interpreter whether they would like to arrange this themselves or prefer us to do so, and record this in their file.

☐ For all patients who want us to arrange their Auslan interpreter, we record:
- their preferred interpreting service, interpreter(s), and/or interpreter characteristics (e.g. gender, age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)
- whether they require an Auslan interpreter alone, or both an Auslan and a Deaf interpreter
- whether they use modified Auslan (e.g. visual frame or tactile signing)
- whether they prefer in-person or video interpreting (and whether there are exceptions to this)
- their NDIS number, if relevant (e.g. number and plan type).

☐ We have identified an NDIS-registered Auslan interpreting service to use if patients do not have a preference. (If needed, search deafnav.com.au/access/services/find-a-service-provider-near-me.)

☐ Information on booking an Auslan interpreter through our preferred service (including log in details for online booking system, if relevant) is documented in relevant practice materials.

☐ We regularly confirm all patients' communication needs and preferences, and update their file as required.

Evaluating the physical and technological practice environment

☐ The practice layout is designed to support visibility, privacy, security, and accessibility for all patients.

☐ All TVs are enabled with closed captioning, and have it turned on.

☐ Large, portable screens and high-speed internet are available to support video interpreting when necessary.

☐ Patients are offered a range of options to contact the practice, including to make or change appointments (e.g. telephone, online booking system, SMS or email).

Adopting strategies to ensure timely and effective engagement with interpreters

☐ We offer a longer appointment to patients requiring an interpreter.

☐ We confirm with patients that we have booked an interpreter (or that we understand the patient will be booking their own interpreter).

☐ We conduct interpreter-mediated consultations in a room with sufficient space and lighting (and technology, if required) to enable the patient to see both the health professional and interpreter.

☐ We use visual or tactile alerts to advise Deaf patients that it is their turn to be seen.

☐ We ensure that patients with interpreters are seen as close to their scheduled appointment time as possible.

☐ We book future appointments with the same interpreter where possible, to facilitate rapport and effective communication.

☐ Flags in the practice system prompt all of the above.

Facilitating staff knowledge and awareness

☐ All staff have access to and are supported to complete Deaf Awareness Training (Search the resource directory [Attachment 3 of the *Review of Auslan interpreting service use in primary care: Final report*] or ask your preferred Auslan interpreting service about training options, if unsure.)

   Note: In future, this checklist should be updated with a link to a comprehensive, fit-for-purpose resource directory (as per recommendation 1 of the *Review of Auslan interpreting service use in primary care: Final report*).

☐ Clinical staff have access to information or training on how to work effectively with an interpreter.

☐ All staff understand their obligation to meet patients' communication needs, including through the use of an interpreter where necessary, as set out in professional codes of conduct and, if relevant, practice standards.

☐ All staff receive practical training at induction on practice policies and procedures for booking and working with interpreters.

Additional considerations

☐ We have explored options to reduce the financial burden associated with longer consultations for patients requiring an interpreter (e.g. bulk-billing these patients and using time-tiered Medicare items, where possible and applicable).

☐ Health professionals consider meeting with the Auslan interpreter before the consultation to facilitate effective communication, especially when the consultation is likely to cover difficult or sensitive topics.

☐ Health professionals consider meeting with the Auslan interpreter after the consultation to discuss any issues or concerns, especially where the consultation covered difficult or sensitive topics.

☐ Staff have access to resources to support effective communication with Deaf patients (e.g. Auslan videos on key health concepts or communication cards with key signs)

☐ Practice incident management systems have the ability to flag when language or communication barriers have been contributing factors to an incident.