



# Interpreting in Domestic Violence Situations

**Are you a professional interpreter? Have you interpreted for someone in a domestic violence situation?**

Experiencing domestic violence is distressing and traumatic. It can be difficult to find appropriate support and services. For someone with limited English, it may be even more difficult to access legal, social and support services.

**Interpreters facilitate communication between the service provider and an individual.**

The Department of Social Services recommends using professional interpreters who are accredited by the **National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)**, wherever possible. It is particularly critical that NAATI accredited interpreters are used for sensitive and complex matters, such as domestic violence or sexual assault situations.

**Interpreters play a key role in ensuring that domestic violence victims are assisted and that perpetrators are held to account.**

Interpreting in domestic violence situations can be a challenging experience.

The **Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)** sets the standards for ethical conduct of interpreters in Australia.

Under the AUSIT Code of Ethics interpreters must:

- maintain professional detachment, impartiality, objectivity and confidentiality;
- strive for excellence through continuous regular professional development;
- decline work beyond their competence;
- promote working conditions, relationships and an understanding of roles that facilitate collaboration and quality service delivery; and
- adhere to dispute resolution procedures.

An interpreter should never provide advice, counselling or offer opinions to an individual or service provider.

**What happens if the Code of Ethics is breached?**

Clients or other parties who work with interpreters can bring any breach of the Code of Ethics to AUSIT's attention. AUSIT has processes for investigating such complaints, as do many of the agencies or institutions that purchase interpreting and translating services and require their practitioners to adhere to the AUSIT Code.

Complaints can also be raised with NAATI at [www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au).

## Training and professional development

Professional development programmes for interpreters are regularly conducted around Australia.

- **AUSIT** develops and delivers a wide range of training and professional development courses.
- The **NSW Education Centre Against Violence** runs specific courses about interpreting for people who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault.
- **Monash University** offers a Professional Development Program for Translators and Interpreters, which is a series of short courses in areas such as Legal Interpreting, Health Interpreting, Stress Management for Interpreters and many others.
- A number of universities and TAFEs around the country offer diploma and degree courses as well as single subjects on interpreting and translation.

## Family Safety Pack

The Australian Government has developed a family safety pack with information on Australia's laws regarding domestic and family violence, sexual assault and forced marriage. The **Family Safety Pack** is available online in a range of community languages at [www.dss.gov.au/family-safety-pack](http://www.dss.gov.au/family-safety-pack).

## Do you need support?

Interpreting in domestic violence situations can be stressful and traumatic for the interpreter as well as for the clients. It's important that you take the time to debrief and get any support you need in a confidential and professional environment. Contact your employer to see what support they offer for interpreters. For example, TIS National interpreters have access to the Departmental Employee Assistance Program.

For free, confidential counselling and information, you can contact **1800RESPECT**, Australia's National Sexual Assault, Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Service. **1800RESPECT** provides both telephone and online counselling to people affected by family violence, including professionals that are working in this area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au).

Information about the **Translating and Interpreting Service** (TIS National) provided by the Department of Home Affairs for people who do not speak English and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients is on the TIS National website at [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au).