**The Do's and Don’ts of Partnering with an Interpreter in Palliative Care**

**Do:**

**Pre-encounter:**
- do your roles with an interpreter before the encounter.
- do discuss the possible need for cultural mediation beforehand.
- do brief an interpreter on the patient's relevant history and condition.
- do share your goals for the interview with the interpreter.
- do share your concerns about the patient/interview/family with the interpreter.
- do ask the interpreter if s/he has any concerns.

**Encounter:**
- do speak directly to your patient and not to the interpreter.
- do speak in simple English pausing for the interpreter to interpret.
- do expect first person interpretation unless the interpreter finds it too emotionally difficult and changes to 3rd person for professional distancing.

**Post-encounter:**
- do offer to debrief with the interpreter after the encounter.
- do believe that interpreters experience vicarious trauma.
- do offer emotional support to a medical interpreter after a difficult encounter.
- do take a minute to de-brief about any questions, any concerns.

**Don’t**

- don’t fail to brief and de-brief with a telephone or video interpreter whenever possible.
- don’t assume the interpreter knows the patient or family; do ask.
- don’t assume the interpreter and patient are from the same country, culture or class.
- don’t speak to the interpreter but face and speak to the patient/family.
- don’t use slang and medical-ese.
- don’t expect an interpreter to simplify your terms; do work together do express the intended meaning.
- don’t leave the patient out of the conversation by conversing in English with the bilingual family member; but do address the patient and the entire family and pause for interpretation.
- don’t assume the health care proxy/agent is the decision-maker in the family.
- don’t assume that patients and families understand the role of a social worker in the US or in palliative care.
- don’t assume patients and family members are literate in their own language- ask them or the interpreter.
- don’t your second language expecting the interpreter to correct you or help out.