

TYPES OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE



Tool 8.4 Language and translation assistance

Overview

This tool describes the language and translation assistance which States are required to provide to victims. Such assistance is necessary for the effective provision of other forms of assistance.

Language and cultural considerations can create some practical issues for the delivery of services and the dissemination of information to victims of trafficking. Since the majority of victims of trafficking are likely to seek assistance in the destination State, where the dominant culture and language differ from their own, these issues are significant.

In providing language and translation assistance,

Support services should:

- Deliver language and translation assistance in a culturally responsible and sensitive manner.
- Deliver assistance that is ethnographically specific, language specific and culturally responsive.
- Where possible, use service providers chosen by the victims (given a choice, victims often choose a generalist service provider who speaks their own language over a specialist service provider who cannot communicate with them as easily).
- In many instances, ensure that the interpreter is of the same gender as the victim.
- Provide all information materials relevant to services being accessed by victims, in their own language. Relevant cultural and linguistic communities should be consulted in the development of such material so that translations are tailored to users.
- Be careful not to overgeneralize characteristics of ethnic communities so as not to create negative stereotypes. Service providers should identify values of an ethnic community to which a victim may belong without ascribing cultural universality to these values or assuming that the victim necessarily subscribes to them.

Health-care providers should:

- Ensure that an interpreter acceptable to the victim is present during medical examinations, screening and treatment.

Police and legal services should:

- Provide liaison staff of the same culture and language as the victims to help them understand the process in which they are becoming involved.

In providing language and translation assistance to child victims,

- Interpreters should have special training and understanding in children's developmental stages, cognitive development and emotional needs.
- A support person with whom the child victim is familiar should also be present whenever services are being accessed through an interpreter.