

Developing Translated Health Material

The Translation Service of the Western Sydney Local Health District (WS LHD) provides a full range of health translation services and cultural consultancy, and is available to assist in the development and production of multilingual health materials.

The provision of appropriate multilingual resources can assist health services and programs to build communication bridges with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, facilitating better health outcomes.

Successful translation of health information is a complex process, and it is recommended to seek the advice of the Translation Service at the earliest stages of any projects requiring the production of translated materials to ensure the most cost effective and efficient outcome.

Tips for writing documents for translation:

Documents requiring translations should be written in a clear and direct style. Complex, ambiguous and highly technical language in the original text complicates the translation process, can cause delays, and add to the cost of production as terms may require clarification and amendments.

The following are some strategies for effective writing for translations:

- Avoid lengthy titles.
- Avoid long sentences. It is better to use a sequence of short sentences instead of single, long, complex ones.
- Use nouns repeatedly instead of using a pronoun such as 'it', 'they', 'this', or 'these'. Pronouns can be ambiguous when translated.
- Spell out any acronyms in full when they are first used, for example, Western Sydney Local Health District (WS LHD).
- Use punctuation correctly.
- Avoid passive voice. The use of active voice reduces ambiguity. Example, '*The procedure will be performed by the surgeon on-call.*' should be written as: '*The surgeon on-call will perform the procedure.*'
- Avoid puns, metaphors and slang as they are often culture-specific and lose their meaning in translation. For example, use terms such as 'depression' rather than 'feeling blue'.
- Where technical terminology is required, such as the names of diseases or treatments, provide sufficient context and clear explanations for concepts immediately after the technical term.

Translation Service

Tips for preparing documents for the Translation Service:

The translation process is more efficient if the Translation Service is provided with all appropriate information and file formats. Please consider the following points:

- Provide electronic copies of documents to be translated. Word documents are preferable.
- Provide any background and other relevant materials that will assist the translators in understanding specific concepts.
- Provide a template of any required artwork, charts or other illustrations.
- Provide details of a contact person, preferably the author of the original document.
- Obtain written permission for translation of documents under copyright.
- Ensure documents to be published are approved by Public Affairs.

Other tips:

Remember that the length of a single word or document may vary when translated. It may be longer or shorter. The variation in text length has implications for using design elements such as columns and space required in the final resource for text.

The translation process involves:

- Translation: accurate written rendition from a source language into a target language. Translated text should read as if it is written in that language.
- Translation checking: improving the quality of translation by correcting grammatical, syntactical, punctuation, spelling mistakes, missing text, bad line breaks and layout.
- Typesetting: formatting the text as requested by client.
- Focus testing: assessing the linguistic and cultural appropriateness of the translated resource. Focus testing is recommended if the resource is for publication and wide circulation.

Choosing the Target Audience

Identifying the required languages to maximise the effective use of a resource can be made easier by seeking the cultural expert advice of the Translation Service. Demographic data such as country of birth and language spoken at home provide some information about target communities. However, the Translation Service can provide further information about languages used within CALD communities, and can advise on the most appropriate format to communicate with specific communities or age groups (for example, print or audio resources).

Developing the Resource in Partnership

You may consider developing the resource in partnership with other facilities. By doing this, you accomplish mutual benefit, share the cost and achieve savings.

WS LHD Translation Service

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