



INforMHAA: Interpreter-mediated Mental Health Act Assessments

Best practices for Approved Mental Health Professionals and Interpreters working together

Part 11. Debriefing

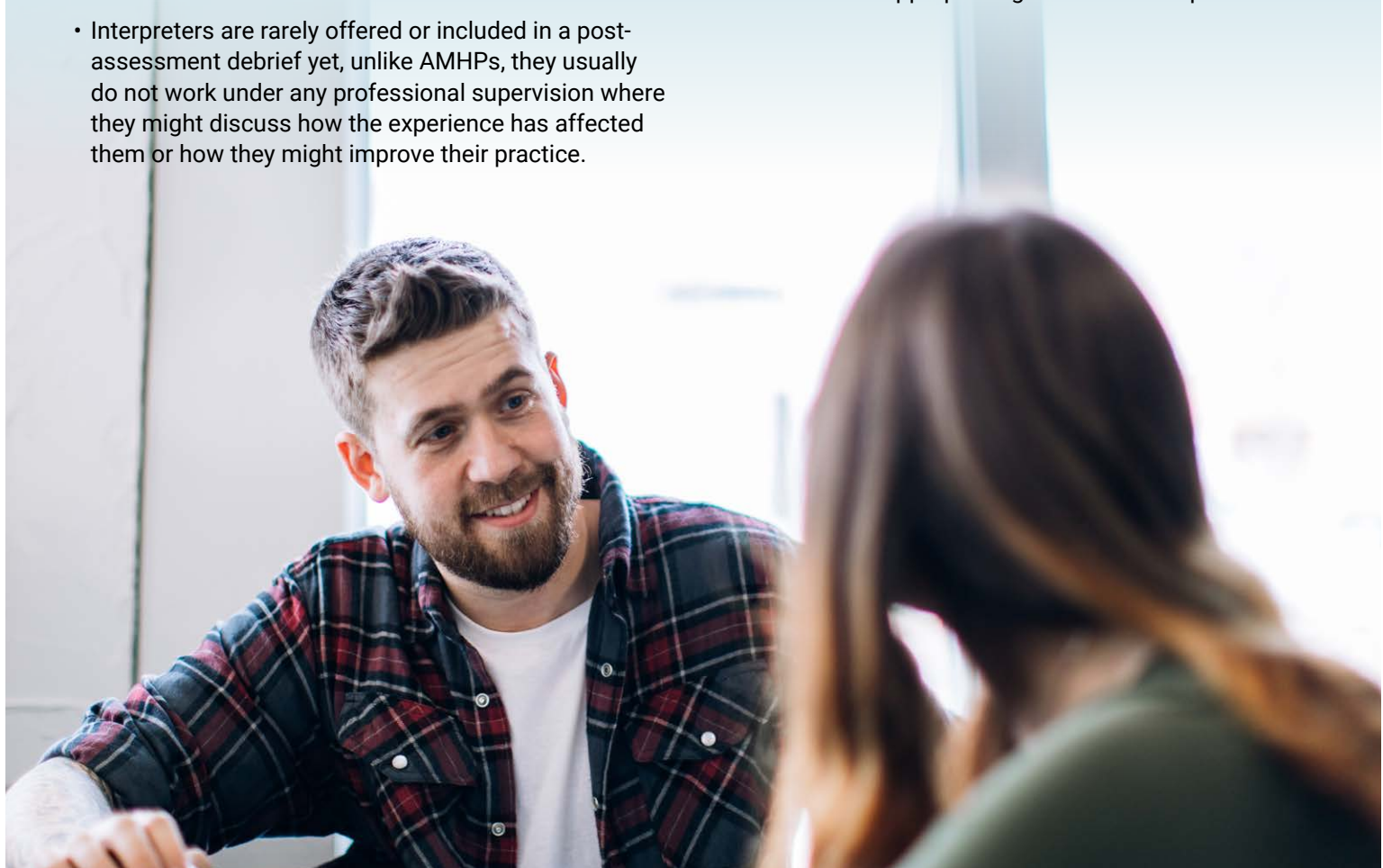
Introduction

Debriefing is a short, informal conversation between professionals and occurs after a MHAA has taken place and the outcome has been communicated to the assessed person. The purpose of a debrief is to create a space for reflection on the overall MHAA process, the effectiveness of interprofessional working, the specific language and cultural challenges presented by the encounter, and any issues impacting on the well-being of the professionals involved.

Debriefings are important because:

- Interpreters are rarely offered or included in a post-assessment debrief yet, unlike AMHPs, they usually do not work under any professional supervision where they might discuss how the experience has affected them or how they might improve their practice.

- AMHPs' overall co-ordinating role during MHAAs should involve checking the well-being of interpreters.
- Information from the debrief can inform AMHP report writing and improve future joint working practice.
- Debriefing allows interpreters to share insights they might not have had the chance to convey during the assessment, such as observations about disordered language. This enriches the overall understanding of the individual's linguistic output.
- Even in a short debriefing AMHPs can provide support, validation and appropriate guidance to interpreters.



What is good practice in debriefing?

Time

Debriefing does not have to take long and should be viewed as an integral part of the interpreter-mediated assessment process from the outset. AMHPs can make this clear at the start of working together with an interpreter at the start of a MHAA.

Interpreter adjustments

Most interpreter codes of ethics instruct interpreters not to comment on any aspect of interpreter-mediated encounters. The statutory nature of MHAAs, however, may require an adjustment to interpreter practice in this regard (see Part 9 Cultural sensitivities and cultural brokering). The debrief is an opportunity for interpreters to describe critical points in the MHAA in which decision making about meaning, tone, etc. was a particular challenge and why for the record.

Interpreter well-being

Interpreters do not have routine access to supervision (although it is becoming increasingly popular among British Sign Language interpreters), which means that it is important that AMHPs check in with them, particularly after a challenging MHAA. Evidence from our research suggests that this seldom happens. Even in a short debrief, AMHPs can create a safe space for interpreters to express their needs, offer them coping strategies, and address any outstanding needs to help with closure ('containment').

AMHP reporting

Our research shows it is helpful in completing the AMHP report form if any challenges associated with the any aspect of the interpreting process are noted. These can be discussed in the debrief. This is helpful for future practice too.

Interprofessional working effectiveness

Being honest about what went well, areas of improvement and potential adjustments to enhance collaboration in the future ensures that the debrief is a point of shared learning.

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Document Description

This document is an **extracted section** from **INforMHAA Project Guidance & Resources** for use as a handy reference.

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