

Jane & Nepali Family

Jane, arrived in the home knowing that Nar Maya needed interpretation, and was hoping that the process reviewed by her supervisor would work. Jane knew that if the in-person interpreter was unable to attend, she would need to use the phone and dial in for phone interpretation. Nar Maya arrived with her husband and two sons from Bhutan to Pittsburgh and the family spoke Nepali only.

When Jane arrived, both Nar Maya and her young son were at home. Nar Maya was waiting to speak to Jane, but didn't understand what Jane would be helping her and her son on 'developing'. Unfortunately, the interpreter was running late. Jane used Google Translate to have the words 'interpreter late' translated on the screen of her phone. Unfortunately, Jane did not know that Nar Maya was unable to attend formal education and was unable to read in Nepali so she did not understand Google Translate.

A bit nervous, Nar Maya began to make Chai and a tray of snacks for Jane to be polite and provide her guest with refreshment. Nar Maya guessed they were waiting for the in-person interpretation and was grateful because she much preferred an in-person interpreter versus the phone. The phone was harder to hear and provided no non-verbal cues.

Getting frustrated, Jane tried to text the interpreter to see how much longer the wait should be before trying to use the phone interpreter. It was more expensive to use the phone and she was worried it would be a negative reflection on her because the interpreter was on his way according to his text. Jane was also nervous to try the phone service because she had never used it before.

She wanted to reschedule but wasn't able to without an interpreter. When Nar Maya came in with food and tea, Jane took a long breath and shook her head. She was not permitted to eat food in a client's home. She couldn't communicate this, but she also knew she wasn't allowed to eat the food. Now what?

Nar Maya was concerned that she did something very wrong with the expression on Jane's face. Obviously, she was upset with the food. She looked down at the tray with tea, apples, grapes and cookies and wondered if Americans didn't like to eat this kind of food in the afternoon? Living in the US was so hard.

Discussion Questions

1. What went wrong?
2. How can you help Jane to become culturally humble?