

POCKET CARD for BILINGUAL STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

STRENGTHS: What you contribute to improve outcomes for those you are serving

Language proficiency – a bridge for monolingual Spanish-speaking Asylum Seekers and monolingual English-speaking Staff

Cross-cultural communication – beyond language, you provide a strong cultural awareness to communication both verbal and non-verbal

Cultural knowledge – Without biases and assumptions you are able to be a natural helper when it comes to cross-cultural communication

Bicultural abilities – navigating cultural environments both for the culture the Asylum Seekers are coming from and the one they are entering

STRESSORS and OPPORTUNITIES: Normalizing what you are experiencing and taking a moment for self-care

Increased Burden

- **Stressor:** Sometimes it can be hard to say ‘no’ because we might be the only or one of the few bilingual staff/volunteers. Creating a sense of guilt if we do not help.
- **Opportunity:** Ask for frequent breaks, discuss workload with supervisors, suggest recruitment of additional bilingual assistance, prioritize work activities.

Vicarious Trauma

- **Stressor:** You are hearing these stories in your native language and having to interpret for providers. You might even have lived through something similar or have loved ones who have sought asylum. Some of you are parents, seeing other children in this situation can be triggering.
- **Opportunity:** While keeping confidentiality, reach out to someone you can talk to, such as a supervisor/coworker, spiritual support. Pray, do breathing exercises, walk or do mindfulness exercises during breaks. SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline Toll Free: 1-800-985-5990 Text in English: “TalkWithUs” at 66746 (TTY): 1-800-846-8517.

Increased Responsibility

- **Stressor:** Chances are you have your own responsibilities at work, adding on the responsibility of interpreting for others is heavy and can feel unsustainable and overwhelming
- **Opportunity:** Take inventory of and give yourself credit for all the good you do on a daily basis in this role. Allow yourself to experience self-care during and outside of work (take your breaks, enjoy your coffee, etc.)



ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Increased Self-Imposed Responsibility

- *Stressor:* As a natural helper you might be inclined to want to step in and take care of the Asylum Seekers yourself, or you want to be their advocate.
- *Opportunity:* Acknowledge you can only do so much. If you do your best to stay in the role of a conduit for language and culture you will not only follow interpreter roles and codes of ethics, but you will also create a set of healthy boundaries.

More Resources

<https://techtransfercenters.org/southern-border-resources>

