

2024

HEAL of Tri-County Interpreter Screening Guide



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Introduction

HEAL of Tri-County is a collaboration between:

- Center For Family Services, Inc. (CFS) – Services Empowering Rights of Victims (SERV) program
- Center For Family Services, Inc. (CFS) – Pathways to Recovery Program (formerly The Recovery Network for Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Hearing Loss program)
- The Arc Gloucester (The Arc)

The goal of our collaboration is to pioneer the work towards creating sustainable, systemic change within each of our agencies to provide full accessibility and support for individuals who have experienced domestic and sexual violence who are d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing or have hearing loss and/or are living with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Seeking to align with a team of experts at the intersections who are passionate and motivated to improve its services, HEAL of Tri-County was formed.

While limited research exists regarding the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence within the Deaf community, some research indicates that Deaf people are 1.5 – 5 times more likely than hearing people to experience violence. Despite being at greater risk, they face significant barriers to accessing victim services. One significant barrier for d/Deaf individuals is effective language access.

HEAL of Tri-County values language justice and recognizes that language access for d/Deaf individuals goes beyond simply providing an interpreter. We understand the importance of navigating language access in a way that does not cause harm to the individuals our agencies serve. It requires creating an intentional environment that is proactive in prioritizing and valuing language and cultural needs.

During the planning and development phase of our collaborative work, we conducted a comprehensive needs assessment. This assessment uncovered several gaps in providing effective language access to d/Deaf survivors.

As a result of the knowledge we attained during our needs assessment, HEAL of Tri-County developed several tools for victim service staff to utilize in supporting the language access needs of d/Deaf survivors, including an accommodations policy and interpreter guidelines.

The accommodations policy applies best practices in providing supports to survivors we serve. This policy requires staff to inquire about any need for accommodations with every survivor who reaches out to receive services. The interpreter guidelines provide victim service staff with education and tools on how to secure interpreters. It ensures that staff have the autonomy to request interpreters when needed or requested by d/Deaf survivors. It emphasizes giving d/Deaf survivors the option to choose interpreters that they feel are the best fit for them, as they know what is best for their access needs. d/Deaf survivors may prefer to choose an interpreter that they've worked with in the past and feel comfortable with. Alternatively, they may be interested in maintaining anonymity in their small community by using an interpreter that they do not know as a way to better protect their concerns around privacy. Survivors may prefer an interpreter of the same or different gender, ethnicity or culture.

"I noticed that there's certain terms that we use in our work that the interpreter didn't know. The interpreter kept stopping and asking questions because they didn't have the basic understanding of the field. They need to have some awareness of the terms we use." – SERV Advocate

We recognize that in order for the accommodations policy and interpreter guidelines to be truly effective in a victim service setting, staff need to be able to have access to a diverse pool of qualified interpreters who are educated in trauma-informed interpreting and industry-specific terminology.

Typically, informal processes exist in building a network of interpreters. Approaches that are more successful are often driven by the experiences of d/Deaf individuals who have worked with and have received services from many interpreters throughout their lifetime. It is also influenced by interpreters who are able to recommend other interpreters that they've worked with. Reputations are established and partnerships are formed through these experiences.

Although this is a very valuable process, it is also important to screen interpreters to ensure that they will be effective, particularly in a victim services setting. Interpreting for survivors of violence is typically more intense and complex than general interpreting. We understand that the quality of interpretation impacts a d/Deaf survivor's ability to access safety and healing. Interpreters who are not educated in trauma-informed interpreting may not be aware of their own power, privilege, and biases, which can influence interpretation and cause harm. It is essential when working with survivors to utilize interpreters that understand the unique needs and considerations around trauma and its impact on communication as well as how language choice can impact healing. To improve the likelihood of ensuring an appropriate fit for the survivor and setting, we have developed the following interpreter screening guide.

Interpreter Screening Guide

We recognize that victim service providers are often challenged by limited resources, understaffing, and staff turnover, which may affect the landscape of agency skillsets. With this in mind, this guide includes recommendations when facing barriers that may affect an agency's ability to conduct ideal interpreter screenings.

This tool is specifically designed to evaluate the suitability of professional interpreters to serve survivors of violence within victim service agencies. This often includes advocacy, crisis intervention, educational workshops, counseling, safe housing and case management services. Its scope does not necessarily extend to assessing appropriateness for other contexts such as working in court systems, with law enforcement and in hospitals, which often have other requirements. This tool is also not intended as an in-depth evaluation of general interpreting proficiency. Nonetheless, it is advisable to gauge general interpreting skills when contemplating using non-certified interpreters.

A Word about Language

Throughout this document, we may use the term d/Deaf. Deaf with an upper case 'D' indicates those who are culturally Deaf and tend to use sign language as their primary language. People who identify as deaf with a lowercase 'd' may not have a strong, or any, connection to the Deaf community. They may or may not use sign language and may prefer to communicate with speech.

Sign Language Interpreter Application

A robust sign language interpreter application helps screeners easily organize the information they need and assess whether or not the interpreter has the potential to be a good fit for their services and settings. Some candidates may have the foundational knowledge, fluency, necessary skills and experience to provide interpreting services for staff meetings and events, while others may also have the expertise needed to appropriately and safely serve survivors of violence.

SERV's interpreter application (see Appendix A) requests information that is useful for providing interpreter services in diverse victim service settings. Following are the key components of the interpreter application.

Personal Information



Services Empowering
Rights of Victims



INTERPRETER APPLICATION

Personal Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Phone/Cell: _____ Can we text you? Yes ☐ No ☐

Email: _____

In the personal information section, we collect the candidate's contact details and preferred method of contact. This information is beneficial for staff to determine the interpreter's proximity when requesting in-person services.

Experience & Certifications

Experience & Certifications

DDHH Screening Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

Administration of Court Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

EIPA Certification Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

RID Certification(s): _____

NAD Certification: _____

Other Certifications: _____

Please attach a copy of your certifications and/or membership cards.

Certifications help ensure that someone has the knowledge and skills necessary to perform specific tasks. It is recommended to use interpreters that have certifications in one or more of the above areas. However, relying solely on certifications does not guarantee that an interpreter is a good fit as these certifications do not address the complex nature of interpreting for survivors in a victim service setting. Additionally, some interpreters may lack certain certifications but still possess considerable skill and are highly recommended by d/Deaf and interpreter communities. This is sometimes observed with CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) interpreters who are frequently bimodal bilingual (proficient in at least one oral language and one signed language) and bicultural. It is important to also assess the proficiency of non-certified interpreters before engaging them to work with survivors of violence.

DDHH Screening

The New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) is the principal state agency established by New Jersey Law (PL 1977, C. 166) on behalf of people who are d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and Deafblind. The division provides education, advocacy and direct services to eliminate barriers and promote increased accessibility to programs, services and information routinely available to the state's general population. DDHH manages and updates a list of RID certified interpreters throughout the state of New Jersey. Visit [DDHH](#) for more information.

Administration of Court

The Court Interpreters Act (28 U.S.C. §1827) ensures that a process is established to determine and certify the qualifications of people who may serve as certified court interpreters. On the federal level, this often includes RID certified interpreters as well as interpreters certified through the Judiciary's Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination. On the state level, NJ courts require interpreters to have certain certifications, pass certain tests and complete an orientation in order to interpret in court settings. For more information, visit [NJ Courts](#).

EIPA Certification

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment is a tool that NJ uses to evaluate the voice-to-sign and sign-to-voice skills of interpreters. Passing the EIPA exams provides an endorsement to permit interpreters to work in preschool to 12th grade educational settings. For more information, visit [EIPA](#).

RID Certification

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. is a national membership organization that offers the only national-level ASL-English interpreter certification in the US. Hearing RID certified members have met the requirements and passed testing to receive their National Interpreter Certification (NIC). Members of RID are required to participate in the certification maintenance program in order to maintain their certification. For more information, visit [RID](#).

NAD Certification

National Association for the Deaf (NAD) used to certify sign language interpreters in the US. In 2005, NAD and RID combined their efforts to offer only the NIC. However, some interpreters may have received certifications through NAD prior to this change. For more information about NAD, visit [NAD](#).

Interpreting Methods/Languages

What interpreting methods are you skilled in?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASL | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PSE | <input type="checkbox"/> Protactile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEE | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish Sign Language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cued Speech | <input type="checkbox"/> Black American Sign Language (BASL) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Do you have experience working as a Trilingual Interpreter (English, Spanish, ASL)? Please list your experience.

Identifying the interpreting techniques and signed languages that each interpreter is proficient in is essential to meet the diverse needs of the d/Deaf population.

Below is a brief overview of the interpreting methods and signed languages listed above.

ASL

American Sign Language (ASL) is the primary and often preferred language of d/Deaf people within the US. It is not a derived from, nor a simplified version of English. For more information, visit [ASL](#).

PSE

Pidgin Signed English (PSE) is a combination of ASL and manual English. It often uses ASL signs in English word order. For more information, visit [PSE](#).

SEE

Signed Exact English (SEE) follows English exactly, using English word order, grammar, suffixes and prefixes. For more information, visit [SEE](#).

Cued Speech

Cued Speech makes language visible. It's sound-based, using eight hand shapes (cues) in four locations in combination with natural mouth movements of speech to make sounds look different. For more information, visit [Cued Speech](#).

Oral

An oral interpreter is someone trained in how to silently mouth speech and use gestures for non-signing deaf individuals. The use of facial expressions and gestures are added to enhance understanding for those who lip-read. For more information, visit [Oralism](#).

Tactile

Tactile is a language that is used to communicate with people who are Deafblind. In the US, it typically uses hand-over-hand or hands-on signing and fingerspelling. Visit [Tactile Signing](#) for more information.

Protactile

Protactile is a newer method of tactile communication that allows individuals who are Deafblind to have more information about the visual elements of their environment (such as nodding, smiling). It conveys more information through various types of touch. For more information, visit [Protactile](#).

Spanish Sign Language

Spanish Sign Language is used within the US, although it's not as widespread as ASL. It is a completely different signed language than ASL. Visit [SSL](#) for more information.

Black American Sign Language (BASL)

BASL is a dialect of ASL used most commonly by Deaf African Americans in the United States. For more information, visit [BASL](#).

Trilingual Interpreter

Trilingual interpreters facilitate communication among an English speaker, a speaker of another language, and an ASL user. They must have the versatility, adaptability, and cultural understanding necessary to interpret in all three languages.

Specialized Training

Have you received training in providing trauma-informed interpreting?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, provide a brief description of the programs or workshops you attended (host organization, certifications provided, date of completion, etc.):

If No, would you be interested in attending a trauma-informed interpreting training or workshop?

Yes, in-person ☐ Yes, virtually ☐ No ☐

Have you received training in specialized signs for domestic violence and sexual violence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, provide a brief description of the programs or workshops you attended (host organization, certifications provided, date of completion, etc.):

If No, would you be interested in attending a training or workshop on specialized signs for domestic violence and sexual violence?

Yes, in-person ☐ Yes, virtually ☐ No ☐

Trauma-informed interpreting is a valued component in supporting the safety of d/Deaf survivors who use interpreters. Trauma-informed interpreter training programs often address the following:

- Victimization, victim services
- Domestic violence and sexual violence
- Primary, secondary and vicarious trauma
- Effects of trauma

- Effects that interpreting can have on trauma
- Challenges, ethical principles and protocols in working with survivors in a victim services setting
- Power dynamics and boundaries
- Impact of overprotectiveness, unconscious bias and undermining survivor autonomy
- Trauma-informed decision-making to avoid re-traumatization
- Maintaining emotional and physical safety
- Specialized interpreting skills and modes
- Cultural mediation
- Terminology in victim service settings

Some trainings and workshops may only cover portions of the above. Evaluating the information that an interpreter provides around the training they have received and the workshops they have participated in can aid in determining if they are a good fit to provide services for survivors in a victim service setting.

While some interpreters may lack formal trauma-informed interpreter training, they may have learned the specialized signs commonly utilized in victim service settings. However, this specific training alone is not sufficient for ensuring safe and effective interpreting services for survivors of violence; it remains essential knowledge when interpreting in such settings.

Actively supporting interpreters in your network who are interested in participating in specialized trainings and workshops geared towards supporting d/Deaf survivors of violence improves the quality of service that survivors receive. One way that staff can achieve this is by sharing existing training opportunities and available workshops pertaining to domestic violence, sexual violence, effects of trauma, trauma-informed interpreting and serving d/Deaf survivors of violence with the interpreters you have contracted to work with.

Familiarity, Comfort & Confidence

Check the areas/settings that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing interpreting services:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals | <input type="checkbox"/> Victim services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police departments | <input type="checkbox"/> Court systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability services |

Check the areas/settings that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing interpreting services:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural settings | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban settings | <input type="checkbox"/> In-person meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban settings | <input type="checkbox"/> In-person events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual meetings | |

Check the communities/populations that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing culturally responsive interpreting services:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQIA+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf Plus / Deaf Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communities of color | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of domestic violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of sexual violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of human trafficking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DeafBlind | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low Vision | |

The above sections provide screeners with additional information on the areas, settings and populations that the interpreter has experience working in/with, are comfortable with and are confident in their skills. This offers valuable additional insights to assist in the selection process when a survivor does not specify a preferred interpreter.

General Availability

General Availability

Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Mornings	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night

Please share any additional information about your general availability:

Please also provide an up-to-date W9 and recent photo for our internal interpreter database.

Securing a qualified interpreter can be challenging. Their availability may be limited to specific days, after standard working hours, or weekends. d/Deaf individuals often experience frustration in having to wait longer than others to receive services due to not having timely access to an interpreter. Having a general understanding of the availability of your contracted interpreters improves the likelihood of being able to secure an interpreter more promptly.

Integrating the information obtained from the above application into an interpreter database assists staff and survivors in making intentional decisions regarding who might be suitable for a survivor's interpreting needs.

Evaluation Team

An ideal evaluation team consists of at least:

- one Deaf individual whose primary language is ASL
- one ASL/Spoken English interpreter
- Screener/Interviewer

Having a team allows for multiple perspectives in the evaluation process. A Deaf evaluator is able to assess the knowledge, skills and professionalism of the interpreter. This often includes paying attention to signing skills, facial expressions, use of classifiers, pace and more. An ASL/Spoken English interpreter is able to assess accuracy of interpretation from voice-to-sign and sign-to-voice, including sign choice, conveying of tone and emotion while remaining objective. They are also able to determine if the candidate's responses align with the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct and ethical practices. The screener/interviewer facilitates the interview process. The evaluation team may also need to utilize an independent interpreter to provide effective communication for those involved in the screening process. The team should also determine in advance how they want the candidate to communicate during each part of the screening. There are several ways to assemble an effective evaluation team. Some ways include:

- Designating existing agency resources, including existing Deaf staff, Deaf advocates, staff interpreters. Incorporating this responsibility in job descriptions will support sustainability.
- Establishing MOUs with local Deaf-focused agencies to offer resources to support the interpreter screening process.

When it is not feasible to have an effective evaluation team in place, we recommend relying on the certifications and trainings of the candidate to determine if an interpreter has the general skills necessary as a professional interpreter **and** screening the interpreter for key elements in determining their fit for serving survivors of violence. One or more victim service staff who have basic knowledge of trauma-informed interpreting and utilize the survivor services assessment can perform this screening.

Survivor Services Interpreter Assessment Tools

A minimally qualified hearing interpreter to serve survivors of violence is an individual who has proven:

- language skills proficiency in ASL and English;
- interpreting skills proficiency (able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially);
- understanding of and adherence to the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (see appendix C) and standards of practice;
- understanding of necessary specialized vocabulary and terminology;
- experience in receiving specialized training in providing trauma-informed interpreting.

To help with the evaluation process, the following tools are included:

Interpreter Interview Guide and Form

The interpreter interview consists of nine questions designed to collect information about the candidate's experience, knowledge, and skills. The guide is meant to aid the evaluation team in identifying aspects to consider when assessing for quality. Evaluators can utilize the interpreter interview form to make notes about the candidate's responses.

Interpreting Exercises and Forms

The purpose of incorporating interpreting exercises is to assess language skills (expressive and receptive fluency in ASL and English), knowledge of DV/SV terminology, subject/industry knowledge and elements of trauma-informed interpreting.

To accomplish this, we have included:

- ASL to Spoken English scripts
- Spoken English to ASL scripts
- Interpreting Exercises Assessment Tools

Accommodations Assessment Form

It is valuable to give survivors an opportunity to provide feedback on the interpreters that agencies use. This enables ongoing assessment of the effectiveness and quality of the interpreters you utilize.

Interpreter Interview - Guide

This guide aids screeners and evaluators in gaining an understanding of the questions included in the interpreter interview from a survivor-centered, trauma-informed interpreting perspective.

When did you decide to become an interpreter and why?

This inquiry establishes rapport with the interpreter. Learning the timing and motivations behind their decision to become an interpreter offers insight into their experience duration, values, and dedication to the services they offer.

How do you maintain your language skills and stay up-to-date with changes in vocabulary and usage?

Language is constantly evolving. We want to know that interpreters are committed to staying current with language trends and are able to adapt their skills. Demonstrating their desire to improve language skills shows dedication to their profession and willingness to continue to evolve. Interpreters commonly achieve this by participating in workshops, conferences, and community gatherings, in addition to leveraging social media and news sources to expand their knowledge base.

Do you have experience interpreting for survivors of violence? If yes, can you share a little bit about your experience?

Gaining insight into an interpreter's background working in victim services settings or other environments that serve survivors of violence offers valuable understanding of their expertise and experience level.

Can you provide an example of a challenging interpreting situation you have encountered and how you handled it?

Interpreters need to be prepared to face a number of challenges, including navigating complex subjects and highly emotional situations. This inquiry assists us in gauging the candidate's resilience and aptitude for problem-solving when confronted with tough situations, while facilitating effective communication.

Have you ever had to interpret for someone who was emotional or upset? How did you handle this situation?

For interpreters working in victim services settings, managing emotionally charged and high-stress situations is essential. They must uphold composure, professionalism, and accuracy in interpretation amidst such emotions. It is crucial for interpreters to exhibit clear boundaries, refraining from assuming the roles of social worker, advocate, or friend, while still conveying warmth and empathy. Interpreters must abstain from offering assistance, consolation, or physical contact to survivors, as their duty is to facilitate communication rather than engage in it.

What steps do you take to ensure confidentiality when working with d/Deaf individuals?

Maintaining confidentiality is of critical importance when interpreting for survivors of violence, as it impacts their safety. This is particularly significant within a small Deaf community where interpreters frequently have established connections. Interpreters must adhere to the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct, which prioritizes confidentiality and regard for privacy. Interpreters must abstain from discussing details with third parties or retaining documentation that includes any identifying information. It is also beneficial for interpreters to introduce themselves to survivors they are serving, emphasize the requirement of confidentiality and affirm their commitment to maintaining it.

A lot of trauma is about power and control. This is especially true with domestic violence or sexual violence. How do you navigate your power and privilege as an interpreter to ensure that a survivor retains their autonomy and that you avoid re-traumatizing survivors you serve?

Interpreters inherently have power and privilege as they often hold control over communication in interpreting situations. They possess the authority to shape and influence message delivery. Utilizing an interpreter can evoke feelings of control-related issues in survivors. Hence, it is crucial for interpreters to recognize power dynamics and its impact on decision-making and service provision. Given the experiences of loss of control among survivors of violence, interpreters must be sensitive to the significance of survivor autonomy, ensuring that survivors retain control over their choices and messages. Interpreters must confine their role to facilitating communication exclusively, refraining from overstepping role boundaries. They must maintain respect, neutrality, and impartiality, while conveying messages fully and accurately without additions or omissions. Interpreters should abstain from interjecting personal opinions, thoughts, feelings, or offering advice.

Interpreting in a victim services setting often includes navigating discussions around difficult subject matter such as rape and other forms of violence. Survivors may also use profanity or derogatory terms. How do you handle those situations?

When interpreting for survivors of violence, it is essential for interpreters to convey all information impartially and without bias. They must be ready to interpret sensitive topics such as intimate body parts, acts of violence/abuse, and explicit language. Interpreters should be at ease with the survivor's chosen language and accurately relay it without altering or sanitizing their words to make them less "offensive."

Repeat exposure to traumatic information can affect interpreters emotionally and physically. What strategies do you use to take care of yourself?

Similar to staff in victim services, interpreters often encounter symptoms of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout, or heightened stress due to repeated exposure to traumatic content. Interpreters face an additional challenge as they must both experience and convey the stories and emotions shared. This exposure can trigger their own past experiences and emotions. Balancing their physiological and emotional reactions while maintaining focus, impartiality, composure, and delivering accurate interpretation can be extremely challenging. Regular self-care practices are essential for managing potential emotional fatigue and burnout. This may include debriefing with an advocate or counselor, other interpreters or other support people while being careful not to disclose identifying or confidential information. Demonstrating knowledge of self-care and employing personal strategies to manage stress and fatigue can help screeners assess their resilience and suitability for working with survivors of violence.

Survivor Services Interpreter Interview

This form is designed specifically for screeners to record their observations and assessments during interpreter evaluations.

Date: _____

Candidate: _____

Evaluator: _____

When did you decide to become an interpreter and why?

How do you maintain your language skills and stay up-to-date with changes in vocabulary and usage?

Do you have experience interpreting for survivors of violence? If yes, can you share a little bit about your experience?

Can you provide an example of a challenging interpreting situation you have encountered and how you handled it?

Have you ever had to interpret for someone who was emotional or upset?
How did you handle this situation?

What steps do you take to ensure confidentiality when working with Deaf individuals?

A lot of trauma is about power and control. This is especially true with domestic violence or sexual violence. How do you navigate your power and privilege as an interpreter to ensure that the survivor retains their autonomy and that you avoid re-traumatizing survivors you serve?

Interpreting in a victim services setting often includes navigating discussions around difficult subject matter such as rape and other forms of violence. Survivors may also use profanity or derogatory terms. How do you handle those situations?

Repeat exposure to traumatic information can affect interpreters emotionally and physically. What strategies do you use to take care of yourself?

Interpreting Exercises - Scripts

ASL to Spoken English

With an ideal evaluation team in place, the Deaf evaluation team member communicates the script in ASL while the candidate voices. The other members of the evaluation team can assess the skills and knowledge of the candidate. Inform the interpreter that the Deaf evaluation team member will be signing as a survivor of violence and ask that they interpret what is signed in spoken English.

Role: Survivor using ASL

He always out out, friends, bar, Friday night. Arrive home, most 2am late. Drunk, always. That night bad happen, me kitchen pay bills. He in, saw dishes dirty, blow up. Punch my head. Grab, slam head wall. Insult me, lazy whore, bitch. Insult, insult. Spit my face.

(becomes increasingly upset)

He hurt me. But not drunk, fine. Nice, sweet. Good man. Problem what? Alcohol. Alcohol bad for him. Not good fit. Make him different.

Both have three kids! Me here, he know? Me trouble.

Court worthless, shit, do nothing. He make himself look perfect court. Get away. Then mean kids because mad. This bullshit!

Interpreting Exercises - Scripts

Spoken English to ASL

With an ideal evaluation team in place, the screener can communicate the script in spoken English while the candidate signs. The other members of the evaluation team can assess the skills and knowledge of the candidate. Inform the candidate that you will be speaking as an advocate sharing information about the medical forensic exam and ask that they interpret what is spoken in ASL.

Role: Advocate using Spoken English

You asked about the medical forensic exam process. I know this is a difficult time for you. Please know that what happened is not your fault.

Before you have the exam, a doctor or nurse will meet with you to check to see if you are hurt or have any medical issues that need to be taken care of first. The exam can take a few hours and you can choose to have a confidential sexual assault advocate there with you to support you throughout the process. The advocate can answer questions, offer resources and follow what you want. You know what is best for you. A Forensic Nurse is a specially trained nurse that performs the medical forensic exam. The forensic nurse will ask you to answer questions about how you are feeling and what happened. You decide what to tell the forensic nurse. The nurse will open a box in front of you with items to collect specimens. Specimens are samples of what may have been left after what happened. These specimens may identify the person and help explain what happened. The nurse may ask to take blood and urine samples. The nurse will ask to swab your mouth and other areas of your body and scrape under your fingernails. The nurse will use a camera to take pictures of injuries such as bruises or cuts. Then, there's a vaginal exam, it's like an OB-GYN exam. The nurse will check inside you and also do some swabs there to collect specimens. After that, the nurse will be finished and will offer you some medications that might be best for you given the assault that occurred. I know this is a lot to think about. An advocate can be with you every step of the way if you want.

Interpreting Exercises Assessment Tool

ASL to Spoken English

Candidate: _____ Evaluator: _____

ASL to Spoken English	Y	N	Notes
Does the candidate demonstrate knowledge of the role of the interpreter during exercises (eye contact, composure, pleasant demeanor)			
Can you understand the candidate?			
Does the candidate deliver the message using grammatically correct spoken English?			
Does the candidate make appropriate word choices equivalent to the exercise script?			
Does the candidate correctly incorporate facial grammar into correct spoken English?			
Does the candidate avoid using fillers (umm, uh, ya know, like)?			
Does the candidate convey adequate information without additions and/or deletions of phrases or concepts?			
Does the candidate use appropriate volume and enunciation?			
Does the candidate accurately convey the emotion of the signer?			
Does the candidate appear to be in control of the interpreting process and maintain concentration?			

Interpreting Exercises Assessment Tool

Spoken English to ASL

Candidate: _____ Evaluator: _____

Spoken English to ASL	Y	N	Notes
Can you understand the candidate?			
Does the candidate use ASL, moving comfortably from one sign to the next at an appropriate pace?			
Does the candidate convey a message that is equivalent to the exercise script?			
Does the candidate show grammar on the mouth and face?			
Does the candidate correctly use palm orientation, handshape, location and movement?			
Does the candidate have adequate ASL vocabulary without excessive use of fingerspelling?			
Does the candidate use appropriate facial expressions to accurately convey the emotion of the speaker?			
Does the candidate seem to be in control of the interpreting process and maintain concentration?			

Accommodations Feedback Form

To be completed by agency staff:

Today's Date:

Program Location:

Services Provided:

(For example, advocacy, intake, counseling, workshop)

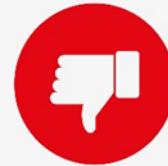
Interpreter or Accommodation Provided:

To be completed by participant:

I am satisfied with the interpreter
or accommodation provided:



☐ Yes

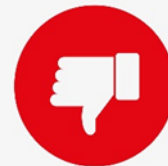


☐ No

I would like a different interpreter
or accommodation at my next
appointment:



☐ Yes



☐ No

More information:

INTERPRETER APPLICATION

Personal Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Phone/Cell: _____ Can we text you? Yes ☐ No ☐

Email: _____

Experience & Certifications

DDHH Screening Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

Administration of Court Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

EIPA Certification Passed: Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, when: _____

RID Certification(s): _____

NAD Certification: _____

Other Certifications: _____

Please attach a copy of your certifications and/or membership cards.

What interpreting methods are you skilled in?

☐ ASL

☐ Tactile

☐ PSE

☐ Protactile

☐ SEE

☐ Spanish Sign Language

☐ Cued Speech

☐ Black American Sign Language (BASL)

☐ Oral

☐ Other: _____

Do you have experience working as a Trilingual Interpreter (English, Spanish, ASL)?
Please list your experience.

Have you received training in providing trauma-informed interpreting?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, provide a brief description of the programs or workshops you attended (host organization, certifications provided, date of completion, etc.):

If No, would you be interested in attending a trauma-informed interpreting training or workshop?

Yes, in-person ☐ Yes, virtually ☐ No ☐

Have you received training in specialized signs for domestic violence and sexual violence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, provide a brief description of the programs or workshops you attended (host organization, certifications provided, date of completion, etc.):

If No, would you be interested in attending a training or workshop on specialized signs for domestic violence and sexual violence?

Yes, in-person ☐ Yes, virtually ☐ No ☐

Check the areas/settings that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing interpreting services:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals | <input type="checkbox"/> Victim services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police departments | <input type="checkbox"/> Court systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability services |

Check the areas/settings that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing interpreting services:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural settings | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban settings | <input type="checkbox"/> In-person meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban settings | <input type="checkbox"/> In-person events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual meetings | |

Check the communities/populations that you are familiar with, comfortable with and confident in providing culturally responsive interpreting services:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQIA+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf Plus / Deaf Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communities of color | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of domestic violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of sexual violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivors of human trafficking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DeafBlind | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low Vision | |

General Availability

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Monday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Tuesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Wednesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Thursday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Friday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |
| Saturday | <input type="checkbox"/> Mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies/Late Night |

Please share any additional information about your general availability:

Please also provide an up-to-date W9 and recent photo for our internal interpreter database.