

CONVERSATION SERIES:

INTERPRETERS ON INTERPRETING

WITH PEOPLE WHO USE ATYPICAL LANGUAGE

LEARNER HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT UPDATE: *The federal funding for CALI ended on September 30, 2026. While the educational materials developed through CALI remain available for professional development, the project is no longer active and does not offer any support services, including CEU processing. Interpreters seeking CEUs should consult the current CMP Approved Sponsors listed on the RID website.*

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Northeastern University
Center for Atypical Language Interpreting

Center for Atypical Language Interpreting
American Sign Language Program
Northeastern University, 400 ME
360 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02115

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About the Project

Northeastern University's American Sign Language Program was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration grant for \$2 million to establish the [Center for Atypical Language Interpreting \(CALI\)](#). The project addresses the growing demand for interpreters with specialized skills to serve Deaf and DeafBlind persons with atypical language.



The five-year project officially launched on January 3, 2017 and will end on December 31, 2021. One of the initial endeavors was to record samples of atypical ASL. A language analysis team then analyzed the samples and created a matrix of indicants and descriptors of atypical language. A copy of the report that resulted from the work of the language analysis team can be found on the CALI website at https://cssh.northeastern.edu/cali/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2022/09/CALI-Language-Analysis-Team-Report_PUBLIC.docx-CALI-Language-Analysis-Team-Report-UPDATED-w-2017.pdf

CALI Program of Study

CALI created a Program of Study incorporating online learning modules and face-to-face instruction, followed by practical experience placements, as well as supervised induction, and communities. In support of the Program of Study, a variety of learning resources have been developed to increase awareness of the challenges associated with interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use, and to improve decision-making by interpreters. One such learning resource is a series of seven (7) videos of master interpreters discussing their experiences, challenges and strategies for interpreting with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use.

The Conversation Series: Interpreters on interpreting for people who use atypical language videos provide an opportunity for both practitioners and students of interpreting to gain insight into the real-world experiences of master interpreters for the purpose of enhancing their awareness and insight into working with this portion of the d/Deaf and DeafBlind population.

You can learn more about the Program of Study and other learning resources developed by CALI by visiting the website at <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/cali/>.

The Video Series



The Conversation Series: Interpreters on interpreting for people who use atypical language includes seven (7) videos and is designed to engage learners and practitioners in exploring the perspectives and experiences of Deaf and hearing interpreters who work with d/Deaf and DeafBlind individuals with atypical language use. Through this exploration, interpreting students and practitioners can gain insight into the techniques and strategies that have proved effective when interpreting with this portion of the deaf population. In addition, discussion of other relevant considerations—like language assessment processes, team interpreting dynamics, how an individual’s heritage and personal identity impacts their work as an interpreter, collaborating with hearing consumers, and factors impacting ethical decision-making—provide illustration of the range of skills and abilities required of interpreters choosing to specialize in interpreting with this portion of the deaf population. The overarching goal of the *Series* is to help learners and practitioners build upon the experiences and insights of successful Deaf and hearing practitioners, to increase their discretion, and prepare them to provide the level of interpreting services required to meet the needs of individuals who exhibit atypical language use.

The first video in the *Series* is an introductory video that includes a panel discussion with five Deaf Community members discussing a range of topics focused on deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use—terminology use and the dangers of labeling ‘differences’, the skills, knowledge and attitudes interpreters need to work with this portion of the deaf population, the contributions of Deaf interpreters, among other topics. The introductory video also provides an introduction to the other videos in the *Series*.

The remaining six videos are of interpreting teams comprised of Deaf, hearing interpreter and/or BIPOC interpreters, discussing their experiences and strategies for working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language.

How to Use This Handbook

The Learner Handbook is designed to be used in conjunction with the seven (7) video recordings that comprise the series and to be used as part of a self-directed learning process. The Handbook provides an overview of the *Conversation Series: Interpreters on interpreting for people who use atypical language Series* and provides Discussion Question prompts and charts with Key Points made in each video to assist with the self-directed learning process.

The goal of *Series* is to improve the awareness of issues associated with interpreting for d/Deaf and DeafBlind individuals who exhibit atypical language use, and to enhance critical thinking and ethical reasoning of interpreting students and practitioners.

Accessing The Series Videos Online

The *Series* videos can be found on the CALI website and via links in this and other accompanying documents. In the Curriculum Guide package, links to the 7 videos can be found in the *Series Details* section of this document, the *Index*, and the *Learner Handbook*. A summary of the topics and key points for each video is also available in the *Series Details* section.

Video Index

Conversation Number, Interpreting Talent, Video Link	Recording Length
Webinar: Introduction to the Series and Deaf Community Panel Discussion – MJ Bienvenu, Narrator and Moderator Link: https://youtu.be/BSDLBOVr_ZU	1:46:31 minutes
Conversation 1: Su Kyong Isakson & Carla Shird (BIPOC Interpreters, Coda and Deaf Interpreter) Link: https://youtu.be/NciGqUV0y8M	34:38 minutes
Conversation 2: Mark Morales & Rayni Plaster Torres (Deaf Interpreters, BIPOC Interpreter) Link: https://youtu.be/81qRtYIKD7w	46:59 minutes
Conversation 3: Su Kyong Isakson & Kristina Miranda (BIPOC and Coda Interpreters) Link: https://youtu.be/HeN0ktDxIrM	40:30 minutes
Conversation 4: Monica Gallego & Rayni Plaster Torres (Deaf Interpreter, hearing Tri-lingual Interpreter) Link: https://youtu.be/IZdhk8dJrGw	1:03:57 minutes
Conversation 5: Jennifer Harvey & Trenton (Deaf and CODA Interpreters) Link: https://youtu.be/UvG0nBboPUw	35:36 minutes
Conversation 6: Samond Bishara & Michelle Draper (BIPOC and Deaf Interpreter, Hearing Interpreter) Link: https://youtu.be/hDD2ohZCZxA	29:07 minutes

Engaging with the Series

The *Series* is structured around principles of dialogical learning¹, which involves the building of knowledge between practitioners through purposeful questioning and discussion. Fostering a thinking environment for active learning includes connecting learning to the interests of the learner, asking good questions, and using learning structures and teaching strategies that prompt learner thinking. The goal is that the experience of aspiring and working interpreters contribute equally to the learning process.

The following questions are prompts to assist you in reflecting on your responses and/or discussion with teachers, trainers, or mentors after engaging with a video in the *Series*:

- What stood out for you?
- What thoughts do you have about what would be required to prepare to interpret for the segment of the deaf population who exhibit atypical language use?
- What has been your experience in assignments like this before?
- What about the discussions between the interpreters was familiar to you?
- What occurred that you would not have anticipated or that you have not encountered in your work before?
- What strategies did the interpreters discuss that were familiar to you? What may be generalizable to other interpreting assignments? Why?
- What strategies did the interpreters discuss that were new to you? What do you think will be required for you to learn how to apply the strategies?
- What areas for further development or exploration on your part surfaced as a result of this *Series*?
- Describe the factors most frequently identified as contributing to atypical language use by some individuals in the Deaf Community. What has been your own experience in working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language? How did this interaction go? What did you find that worked and what didn't work in establishing and maintaining communication? Provide one or two examples of both.
- In the panel of Deaf Community members, there was a lengthy discussion about labels and concerns about how labels that mark differences in individuals can result in the marginalization or stigmatizing of individuals. What are your own thoughts about what is meant by 'atypical' language use and the implications of that term for deaf individuals? What is your own experience with observing or experiencing marginalization? What is the consequence of marginalization of differences?
- In the panel of Deaf Community members, there was a discussion about the fact that most interpreters are privileged in terms of their ability to hear and that most interpreters are white. What are your thoughts about the level of privilege held by interpreters? Have interpreters—and you specifically—spent time unpacking what it means to have privilege? What are some ways in which discussions and implications of privilege can occur within the field of interpreting? What are some of the implications of interpreter privilege for deaf consumers? What are some of the ways you have observed privilege being manifested within the interpreting community and within your own practice as an interpreter? What can interpreters do in response to the privilege they possess? With respect to privilege, what things have you specifically done and/or observed other individuals/practitioners doing in recognition of their privilege that promotes greater equity/inclusion in terms of deaf individuals?

¹ Dialogical learning is based on the theory posited by Paulo Freire (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Bloomsbury Academic, NYC, NY.

In addition to these general questions that address the *Series* as a whole, there are Discussion Questions related to each video within the Video Details section of this Handbook. These Discussion Questions can assist you in processing the unique elements of each video and to consider how you can apply the information to your daily efforts as an aspiring or working interpreter.

Webinar: Overview and Introduction to the Series - 1:46:31

Link: https://youtu.be/BSDLBOVr_ZU

Description: Dr. MJ Bienvenu provides an overview and introduction to *Conversation Series: Interpreters on interpreting with people who use atypical language* which is comprised of seven (7) videos. This video is 1:46:31 in length and includes three parts—1) the initial overview to the Series and introduction to the panel discussion, 2) the Deaf Community panel discussion, and 3) reflections on the panel discussion and an overview and introduction to the remaining six (6) videos.

Discussion Prompts:

- In the panel of Deaf Community members, there was a lengthy discussion about labels and concerns about how labels that mark differences in individuals can result in the marginalization or stigmatizing of individuals. What are your own thoughts about what is meant by ‘atypical’ language use and the implications of that term for deaf individuals? What is your own experience with observing or experiencing marginalization? What is the consequence of marginalization of differences?
- In the panel of Deaf Community members, there was a discussion about the fact that most interpreters are privileged in terms of their ability to hear and that most interpreters are white. What are your thoughts about the level of privilege held by interpreters? Have interpreters—and you specifically—spent time unpacking what it means to have privilege? What are some ways in which discussions and implications of privilege can occur within the field of interpreting?
- What are some of the implications of interpreter privilege for deaf consumers? What are some of the ways you have observed privilege being manifested within the interpreting community and within your own practice as an interpreter?
- What can interpreters do in response to the privilege they possess? With respect to privilege, what things have you specifically done and/or observed other individuals/practitioners doing in recognition of their privilege that promotes greater equity/inclusion in terms of deaf individuals?

Transcript of Part 1: The Initial Overview of the Series and Introduction to the Panel

Narrator: Hello, I am Dr. MJ Bienvenu, a consultant working with Northeastern University Center for Atypical Language Interpreting (CALI). CALI is a federally funded interpreter education project with sponsorship from the Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. It is a project funded between January 2017 – December 2021 to prepare Deaf and hearing sign language interpreters to serve the needs of deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language.

The phrase ‘atypical language use’ refers to the use of sign language that does not conform to the recognized norms of a language community due to deviations in the form, content or function of the language. Atypical language use involves a variety of idiosyncratic and dysfluent characteristics, as well as gaps in application of various language features. These deviations are the result of many factors—early

life language, social and educational deprivation, physical and cognitive or intellectual disability, trauma, among other related factors.

Interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language requires superior interpreting competency. The need for more specialized knowledge and competence within the interpreting workforce is the reason the CALI Project was established. CALI has created several pathways to prepare interpreters to address these special needs within the deaf population including:

Online modules that can be completed through a structured cohort approach or as independent study.

For those individuals accepted into a cohort, in addition to the online modules, participants will engage in:

Onsite classroom interactions for those individuals who are accepted into a cohort.

Community-based practicum

Supervised field work/induction

Online resources—such as a series of 12 videos of unfolding scenarios to assist interpreters in improving their ethical decision-making, 8 sample interpreter responses to the unfolding scenarios and discussions between team interpreters, and an annotated bibliography linked to articles, books, presentations on a range of related topics.

Webinars on topics related to a range of topics available online for viewing at any time.

These resources are available on the CALI website in both ASL and English at

<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/cali/>. Resources are available for study that will earn interpreters continuing education credits (CEUS) with RID.

This video, and the 6 others that accompany it, have also been developed by CALI as an additional resource for interpreters and Deaf Community members seeking to improve their knowledge and skills for working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. Specifically, what these 7 videos offer is access to conversations between Deaf Community members and Deaf and hearing interpreters about their experiences working with this portion of the Deaf population—the challenges they face, the strategies they have found effective, the type of skills and abilities they possess that facilitate their working relationships, the importance of linguistic and cultural competence, the importance of respect for consumers, the challenges associated with decision making by interpreters and finding common ways to discuss our values and frameworks with which we approach our work.

These 7 videos will provide you with access to conversations that include diverse perspectives—Deaf perspectives, CODA perspectives, BIPOC perspectives. Several of the Deaf and/or interpreters participating in these 7 videos are immigrants, or first-generation Americans born of immigrants. And, because they are talking with one another, you have access to rich insights you might not be exposed to if these individuals were talking with you directly. It is their relationships with one another and the communities in which they live that allow them to speak openly and frankly with one another—always with mutual respect and regard.

The first of these conversations is with a group of five Deaf Community members—April Jackson, Rosemary Wanis, Thomas Horejes, Keven Poore and me, MJ Bienvenu. We represent different regions of the United States—east and west coasts, the southeast and midwest. Several of us are Deaf of Deaf, several of us teach or have taught Deaf Studies and Interpreting, several of us work as advocates within the Deaf Community, several of us come from social work or counseling backgrounds. Two of the panelists work with CALI as online facilitators for modules and/or as field-study supervisors related to interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use—Rosemary Wanis and Keven Poore.

All of us are Deaf interpreters and have long histories working in the Deaf-World and/or academia as professionals and navigating life as Deaf individuals.

The discussion between the 5 of us is timely in that CALI is approaching its final year of funding and the impact of its resources and activities is becoming evident in the conversations happening within the Deaf and interpreting communities. In particular, conversations about how to discuss language use within the Deaf Community and its variations and deviations are increasing. Questions are arising about how we should discuss differences in language use among the deaf population—who decides the terminology that is used, what does it mean and for what purpose is it used, what is the impact of the terminology on stigmatizing or further stereotyping deaf individuals? A significant portion of the conversation between the 5 of us focuses on the role of terminology among professionals serving specific populations and the danger of terminology as a form of labeling, judging, or further marginalizing individuals.

It is hoped that our discussion will provide insight in support of the conversations happening in our broader communities and will contribute to the important conversations that are taking place by offering a range of perspectives from within the communities.

In addition to discussing terminology and labels, the panel will discuss other topics relating to communication and interpreting with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical use of sign language. The discussion is about 1.5 hours in length. After the group discussion, I will be back to offer some key points from the discussion. Thank you and enjoy.

Key Topic Addressed: Defining atypical language use, its characteristics and contributing factors.

Key Points:

[April Jackson – 13:37]

The term atypical is not used by Deaf people in general but seems to be a term that has emerged as the effort to address the need for linguistic access of some deaf individuals has become more of a priority. Linguists and Deaf professionals working with these populations have introduced the term.

[April Jackson – 14:10]

It is a term that can help agencies assign the appropriate interpreter for certain requests and help interpreters to better prepare for assignments— versus the often inaccurate indication that a consumer has “no language”.

[Rosemary Wanis – 15:01]

When the term was first introduced within the Deaf Community it was seen as offensive—a way of labeling Deaf people as not being normal. One of the reasons the term may be resisted within the Deaf Community is that its source came from outside the community via academia. It was an invented term introduced to us for categorizing a portion of our community.

[Rosemary Wanis – 15:45]

The Deaf Community itself has yet to find the terms for describing the wide range of language variation that exists within the community. The community values embracing all of its members without distinctions that create inequality.

[Rosemary Wanis – 15:56]

Those of us who have grown up Deaf recognize and are accustomed to the wide range of language variation that exists and are able to easily make adjustments in the way we communicate to accommodate one another. When labels lead to judgements about status, privilege, difference, etc., we become conflicted and uncomfortable. So, when we use the term atypical, it is important that we are clear that we are referring to language use in an effort to help interpreters better prepare for meeting the demands of interpreting assignments.

[Thomas Horejes – 16:28]

Words and labels are powerful! Who decides what words are labels are used to describe a community of people? Consider the word ‘typical’— that word already conveys a position of privilege. Who decides what is typical and therefore sets the baseline for what is then considered atypical? Most often these types of labels come from a white-centric view. So, we must be very careful about what labels we adopt, who assigns the label, and how and when such labels are used and for what purpose.

[Thomas Horejes – 17:06]

We each have two identities—a personal identity and a social identity. Do the individuals whose language is considered atypical embrace that term as part of their personal identity? If not, that in itself is telling. It also seems that a cross-section of individuals are grouped under the label of atypical language users—such as those with physical or cognitive disabilities as well as immigrants who may have a sign language other than ASL.

[Thomas Horejes – 18:10]

It's important to recognize that what is considered typical to ASL may not be typical in other signed languages. ASL may conflict with cultural and social norms of other signed language communities from other parts of the world. Bottom line—the use of terms and labels carry power and is political. We need to be careful in how terms are used and be clear about our intention. And, we need to make sure that the labels used are accepted and agreed upon by the individuals they are used to reference.

Key Topic Addressed: What labels other than atypical may be more useful or appropriate in describing sign language use that does not follow the norms of the Deaf Community?

Key Points:

[MJ Bienvenu – 18:40]

Other terms that have been suggested are 'unique' or 'dysfluent'. Are these more accurate/appropriate?

[MJ Bienvenu – 18:55]

The resistance to labeling as a way to marginalize or further marginalize people is important to consider. That is not what the CALI project is attempting to do. CALI is focused on language use within a specific portion of the Deaf Community. It is typical that most people who speak the same language (in spite of coming from a range of different backgrounds) can understand one another because of language patterns that are recognized by those who use the same language. When you encounter someone who uses the language in ways that do not follow the common or standard patterns and their use makes it difficult to understand them, their use is atypical (meaning not common or typical).

[April Jackson – 20:07]

The issue is WHO will decide and HOW? It seems that it is the Deaf Community that should conceive the label through a community-based discussion and collaboration with our members and scholars.

[Keven Poore – 21:17]

There has been discussion on social media by Deaf interpreters that the label 'atypical' is negative and inappropriate. Other labels like 'unique' have been suggested. However, as signed, 'unique' means 'special' which also can carry negative connotation—such as special education. As it is used within the CALI project, the term atypical means 'not representative' of the way

ASL is commonly used. It is not a label that is assigned to people, but rather a way of identifying language use. When interpreters receive requests for interpreting services, agencies often indicate consumer language use with terms like ASL, oral, English signing, etc. These types of labels assist interpreters in preparing for assignments and making sure assignments are staffed by interpreters with appropriate skills and abilities. However, the issues involved in interpreting for a range of individuals who may use sign language in an atypical manner are complex. As a result, interpreters may need more information to appropriately prepare for assignments.

[Thomas Horejes – 23:23]

Perhaps focusing on the ways of describing variation of language use that already exists in ASL (the use of the ‘range’ sign) is sufficient, if we can identify a term that represents that sign. Similarly to registers—there are different labels for different types of register. Perhaps something similar can be conceived for different type of ASL use.

[MJ Bienvenu – 24:15]

It is important to clarify that when we are discussing atypical use of sign language, we are not talking about established variations—such as Black ASL, Academic ASL, or regional dialects. We are speaking of the use of signing in a manner that is incomplete, incoherent and/or difficult to understand. It is not a variation of ASL. It is a way of using language that is impacted by a broad range of factors—such as language/social/educational deprivation, physical, mental and cognitive disabilities, etc. In some instances, it is a term used to refer to deaf individuals who have no formal language at all but use gestural- spatial behaviors to attempt to communicate.

[Rosemary Wanis – 26:02]

CALI’s focus is on the way language is being used and not on labeling individuals as atypical. The project works hard to distinguish between individuals and language use by individuals. And the reason there is a focus on this in training interpreters is because the traditional strategies used by interpreters are insufficient to meet the needs of deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. Interpreters need to acquire new skills, new techniques and strategies to meet the information access needs of these individuals.

[Thomas Horejes – 27:27]

It’s important to challenge our thinking about the use of the label atypical. We have not yet had enough research or discussion within the Deaf Community about what label is appropriate for describing this type of language use. We need more research and community dialogue before deciding and assigning a term. We should view what CALI is doing as a starting point versus the deciding point.

[April Jackson – 28:35]

CALI has identified a term that allows them to move their work forward. It is a term that is now being evaluated within the Deaf Community. Through this community discourse, the term can become clarified/adjusted/adopted. It will just take time and education/information dissemination.

[Thomas Horejes – 30:19]

Oral deaf individuals who acquire signing ability may be considered atypical in their use of sign language by members of the Deaf Community. In some instances, it creates stigma. That should be avoided, and the focus should be on providing communication access in the most effective way possible. In terms of strategies that have worked, an iPad is a resource for showing pictures and other graphics (such as colors) that can be useful.

[April Jackson – 32:44]

One key strategy is to make the process interactive—engage the deaf individual in negotiating the information in small chunks and through a back-and-forth interaction. This often involves a lot of depiction—the interpreter taking on the role of the consumer and/or others and acting out what is being discussed or what is being asked. It almost becomes like building a story with the deaf consumer through acting out information. The challenges faced in working with this portion of the Deaf Community depends on the variations in their life experiences and the complexity of the questions being asked or the information that the professionals are trying to elicit. Other strategies include using or drawing pictures, objects that can be manipulated, and other materials that can assist with conveying the desired information.

[Keven Poore – 34:53]

Sometimes the interpreter is not prepared with props because the information they received about the assignment was not accurate. In such cases, you have to use whatever is available in the actual space—pictures, calendars, furniture, space for moving about and enacting events. Also, in some instances the deaf individual’s ability to communicate clear and accurate information is limited. Relying on others in the environment—such as family members, advocates, case managers, or those who work with the deaf individual on a daily basis—is a helpful strategy. They can often provide clarification of some of the pieces of information the deaf individual communicates and/or suggest ways of getting information across. Being creative, flexible, and patient enough to take the time required are important attributes for interpreters.

[Rosemary Wanis – 36:06]

Keven’s comments are a beautiful example of dialogic interpreting—the process of using interaction and elicitation strategies to negotiate information and meaning. It also illustrates an open process of communication, where everyone engaged in the interaction assists and contributes to the process of negotiating information and meaning. Additionally, he discussed the willingness of Deaf interpreters to use props, drawing, acting and other creative strategies to achieve communication. It involves a willingness, patience and ability to try different techniques to achieve success.

Key Topic Addressed: Limitations of the NAD-RID CPC and how interpreters can gain the guidance and insight needed when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language.

Key Points:

[MJ Bienvenu – 37:14]

CPC is written from the lens of white deaf people who are often in professional positions and

know how to self-advocate. It does not address the experiences of the broader range of deaf individuals and their lived experiences. As the panelists talk about making linguistic and role adaptations when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language, the potential for functioning in a way that is in conflict with the NAD-RID CPC exists. If interpreters are committed to doing no harm, they may make adaptations that are not discussed in the current tenets and guidelines and then be accused of acting unethically or crossing role boundaries.

[Rosemary Wanis – 39:32]

The RID Standard Practice Papers (SPP) are out of date—particularly the one involving Deaf Interpreters. It was written in 1997. This paper needs updating as it can offer guidance on some of these issues. Currently, the only mention of dealing with language variation is in the Deaf Interpreter SPP.

[April Jackson – 40:18]

The CPC definitely needs to be updated to reflect the current state of interpreting, changing demographics within the Deaf and interpreting communities, and the actual experiences of working practitioners. It needs to reflect the diverse ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic factors that impact the decision-making of interpreters.

[Keven Poore – 41:11]

The critical principal in the CPC is DO NO HARM. The understanding of what this principle means in the practice of interpreting needs to be instilled in the decision-making process of practitioners. When the CPC doesn't make explicit statements regarding certain interpreting settings and language variation, interpreters must rely on the requirement to DO NO HARM and their discretion. Discretion comes from experience, competence, and reflective practice.

[Thomas Horejes – 41:50]

Also, interpreters need to recognize that sometimes taking on an assignment for which they are not appropriate due to skill or other factors can do more harm than not having an interpreter at all. Admitting they are not right for a job seems to be difficult for some interpreters. The consequence of moving forward when they should withdraw can be devastating—particularly when the situation involves decision-making about healthcare, finances, liberties, and other life-altering decisions.

[April Jackson – 42:48]

Two important internal guides are an interpreter's discretion and their ability to be honest about their abilities and qualifications. Ideally, when hearing interpreters work with Deaf interpreters, the collaborative process can lead to a greater level of insight, honesty and integrity.

Key Topic Addressed: The greatest challenges facing interpreters within the CALI program and the greatest challenges facing interpreter education programs in terms of preparing qualified graduates.

Key Points:

[Keven Poore – 44:27]

The greatest challenge of practitioners continues to be the length of time it takes to truly master ASL. The ability of hearing individuals who learn ASL as a second language as adults to gain a level of mastery of ASL that is comparable to most Deaf interpreters is limited. As a result, hearing interpreters must be humble and admit that their limitations have consequences that impact working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. Accordingly, they should ask for help, working with Deaf interpreters, and seeking to serve the interests of Deaf people.

[Rosemary Wanis – 45:58]

One of the greatest challenges in preparing interpreters is that much of the training materials are of white Deaf individuals with competent use of ASL in studio settings. This is not the real world and doesn't sufficiently expose students to the breath of diversity that exists in the Deaf Community. As a result, their skills and abilities for working with a diverse community of Deaf people are limited. These practitioners need strong self-awareness and monitoring skills to be able to acknowledge when they do and do not have the capacity to adapt their way of interpreting to meet the specific needs of diverse consumers. In these situations, it is the interpreter that is atypical because they are not capable of interacting with the diverse Deaf Community in the way that it needs and expects. Interpreter education programs need to improve in what materials they use when teaching, the diversity of consumers to which they expose students, and the amount of real-world exposure interpreting students receive before entering practice. The CALI program is filling a significant gap in providing program participants exposure to a more diverse and complex population of Deaf individuals who rely on interpreting services.

[Thomas Horejes – 48:18]

Also, two-year programs are not long enough to support students gaining mastery of ASL, Deaf Culture, and interpreting. Cultural competence is definitely lacking in many novice interpreters. Language and culture are intertwined. As well, teachers in programs tend to be white and focus on an academic approach to learning ASL versus community-based approach. The Deaf Community needs to be more involved in the preparation of interpreters. It's true that there are fewer Deaf Clubs and Deaf-centric gatherings than in the past, but programs need to do a better job of collaborating with Deaf Communities to provide greater opportunities for use of the language in authentic, real-world interactions versus the classroom. There are state associations of the deaf and their meetings and conferences, among other settings.

[April Jackson – 50:06]

The lack of cultural competence is also evident in the resistance of many interpreters to accept feedback from Deaf consumers. When Deaf consumers are willing to correct interpreters and offer direct feedback, it should be embraced and integrated. Instead, what often happens, is that interpreters will tout the fact that they have been trained or graduated from a college program—implying that they know better than the Deaf consumer. This reflects poorly on the interpreter and the program they completed. Typically, these programs are filled with white, hearing teachers with limited to no Deaf teachers. Programs need to incorporate many more full time Deaf teachers—including Deaf BIPOC teachers. Many interpreter education programs are not welcoming to BIPOC students. Changing the demographics of the teaching staff could improve

this and create greater diversity in the interpreters available to the Deaf Community. This would be a win for Deaf people.

[MJ Bienvenu – 52:10]

Based on the comments of the panelists, it seems the greatest challenge before interpreter education programs is who they hire and who they recruit into their programs. More diverse Deaf people need to be hired and more BIPOC students need to be actively recruited and supported.

[Rosemary Wanis – 53:33]

Another way in which IEPs are lacking is helping interpreting students to become aware of their own biases. If interpreters enter with limited exposure to diversity, they likely have many hidden biases and need to spend time unpacking those biases and the assumptions associated with them. This is one of the first things that the CALI program attempts to do with program participants—explore with them their personal biases and the associated implications.

[MJ Bienvenu – 54:23]

The more qualified you are, the better able you are to identify what you are able to do and what you can't.

Key Topic Addressed: Suggestions for interpreters who have interpreting experience but may lack the specific expertise to interpret for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language. What are strategies they can use to improve? What approaches are most effective?

Key Points:

[April Jackson – 54:40]

Certainly, working with a Deaf interpreter as a team is an important starting place.

[Thomas Horejes – 55:27]

Prioritize information. Utilizing a model like Gish, or something similar, and focusing on the goal of the interaction, determine what is the essential information to convey. Engage others in the process to help determine what is essential to communicate. Often, interpreters are not aware of the end result that is being sought by the participants within the interpreted event. Also, the interpreter needs to have strategies for trying to keep the information conveyed by the deaf consumer on track—navigating through extraneous information that is being expressed to get to the essential response. In my own experience, I might work for up to 20 or 30 minutes negotiating information before I am ready to convey to others what has been communicated by the deaf consumer.

[April Jackson – 56:46]

There is also merit in conveying ALL the information that is expressed by the deaf consumer, rather trying to decide what is essential and what is not. The other participants in the interpreted event often have knowledge and insight I am not aware of and so by conveying everything that

is communicated, they can decide what is important and what is not.

[MJ Bienvenu -- 58:08]

So, it seems one of the strategies that could be employed is going back and clarifying information, relying on information that is gained during a pre-assignment discussion, etc. This can include offering correction to something you interpreted earlier during the assignment, once additional information is offered by the consumer that makes their previous comment clear.

[Rosemary Wanis – 58:25]

Learning that accurate interpreting for deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language requires TIME to process for meaning, is one of the most impactful outcomes of the CALI program. Interpreters learn that they must take the time that is needed to achieve effective communication. Strategies, such as making implicit information explicit, utilizing props to convey some ideas, acting out events, etc., take time. The process cannot be rushed if the goal is effective communication. This means managing turn-taking and asking participants to wait until the interpreting process has been completed.

Key Topic Addressed: The use of labels to categorize individuals is common within the American system of government funded services/systems. For example, the funds for CALI come from the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Often both interpreters and deaf consumers do not feel the labels are appropriate. How can the general public be educated about the range of variables that exist and can impact the way in which Deaf people function and use language (without minimizing deaf individuals or feeding stereotypes or biases that may exist within the general public)?

Key Points:

[April Jackson – 1:00:33]

How do deaf individuals view themselves versus how they are viewed by others. Who gets to decide? Sometimes, deaf individuals agree to the labels. Sometimes they are just unsure or unaware. The problem with labels is they can be divisive and marginalizing—even when the labels are used by individuals who know their stuff. I think we need to pay attention to how they talk about themselves and their experiences. What I have found most effective is to interact with deaf consumers in a way that leaves them feeling respected, understood, engaged. I want deaf consumers to feel that I am here WITH them and FOR them.

[Thomas Horejles – 1:02:18]

I don't think individuals who exhibit atypical language use perceive themselves as odd or off the mark. They express themselves in the way that is natural to them and the perception of difference comes external from others. So again, as we use the term atypical, we are potentially perpetuating the idea that the person is atypical. As I previously mentioned, this has implications for both our political and personal identity. For example, in terms of the law and political system, for me as a deaf person to access certain legal rights (ADA for example), I must concede to the label of being "disabled", even though on a personal level I do not view myself as a disabled individual. So, as we are talking about this portion of the deaf population, we need to recognize that at least on a personal level, we are asking them to concede to a label

with which they do not identify. It is my hope that CALI will use this label during the interim to arrive at a place where discussion of deaf individuals with atypical language use doesn't carry such a negative connotation. My main point is for us to recognize that in spite of labels that may be assigned by the government in order to access services, I can define my personal identity in a manner that is of my determination.

[MJ Bienvenu -- 1:05:17]

I find it interesting that within the Deaf Community we already have many ways of defining communication as it occurs by Deaf people. We discuss those who use oral, cued speech, those who use SEE, those who use ASL (and the degree to which they use it effectively or not), etc., and these terms inform interpreters how to prepare for and perform while interpreting...but, we see the use of the term atypical as inappropriate. The terms like oral, SEE, etc., can carry a negative connotation too, but they are deeply embedded in the Deaf and interpreting communities. And they are used to promote the selection of the most appropriate interpreter for specific deaf consumers. The entire goal of the term atypical is to support the process of securing the most competent interpreters possible.

Key Topic Addressed: The number of atypical language users within the Deaf Community is increasing. Services for this particular audience are not increasing at the same speed. In some communities, there are advocates, case workers and other professionals available who work with deaf individuals with limited or atypical use of language. But not in all communities. How can the availability of these sorts of service providers be increased?

Key Points:

[Rosemary Wanis – 1:07:11]

The term atypical gives us a baseline frame of reference that can be used to explore the broader context of the deaf individual and their needs for support and assistance. When we can support our use of the label 'atypical language use' by offering specific examples of language deficiencies that exist or where gaps in language use exist, it paves the way for broader discussion of the consequences associated with language limitations and what support and assistance that may be required for the deaf individual as a result. Service providers working with deaf individuals who exhibit language limitations can explore what is available and what is not (but needed) and work collaboratively in their communities to seek such services. This then places the responsibility on the community-at-large to respond to the needs of all of its members. Increasing the number of Deaf interpreters is an important starting place.

[Thomas Horejes – 1:08:29]

Our conversation is shifting to a discussion of human rights and civil rights for all individuals. The issue is not about how an individual uses language, but rather how to protect the right to access and inclusion for a particular group of individuals. It's about how to strengthen the system so it can accommodate the needs of all individuals. Robert E. Johnson, a linguist, wrote an article about a community in Mexico that was predominately comprised of individuals who can hear, but also there were deaf residents. Within that community a large portion of the residents who can hear are able to sign because they believed it was an imperative to the equity of all the members of the community in which they lived. They realized it was their responsibility to learn to accommodate the needs of those residents who relied on sign language,

rather than expecting deaf residents to be able to speak and lipread. That was their frame and it how the issue of supporting the needs of deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language should be framed. If this frame can be achieved, then it can shift the current status of support services offered in our communities to be more inclusive.

[Keven Poore – 1:09:39]

I see the issue a bit differently. Interpreters are being assigned to work with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language more frequently. It may be because this portion of the deaf population is increasing, OR perhaps because they are being less sheltered and over-protected by families and/or institutions. Regardless, interpreters need the skills, techniques and resources necessary to appropriately serve these individuals and ensure they have an appropriate level of access—that they can participate in the decision-making that impacts their life. Theories of interpreting have changed! As allies of the Deaf Community, interpreters are now concerned with empowering the deaf consumer. That is the focus of the CALI training and resource development. It is hoped that eventually, the training and resources will be available to the vast majority of practitioners nationwide.

Key Topic Addressed: Can any interpreter who enters practice interpret for those deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language use? Is it just a matter of training? Or are there other considerations?

Key Points:

[Keven Poore – 1:11:49]

It takes a combination of abilities—a unique set of interpreting skills, a strong foundation of discretion, the ability to negotiate meaning and develop rapport with consumers, etc. There is that “IT” quality.

[April Jackson – 1:12:07]

I often equate it to doctors. Not every doctor can do everything. There are doctors who specialize and/or who are more skilled and adept at specific areas of medicine than others. Similarly, with interpreters. Working with an audience of deaf consumers who exhibit requires specialist interpreters. So, it is not reasonable to expect that all interpreters have “IT”.

Key Topic Addressed: Often, interpreters work with hearing consumers with misconceptions, misinformation or biases about deaf people. What recommendations do you have about what interpreters should/can do in response?

Key Points:

[April Jackson – 1:13:15]

Educate! Take the time to replace their incorrect assumptions with correct information.

[Rosemary Wanis – 1:13:37]

I strongly believe in shifts in the role space of interpreters and how it broadens or narrows

depending on the context and circumstances of an interpreting assignment. So, if the timing and place are right, interpreters can offer information and resources to consumers. Another option is to ask the agency that sent the interpreter to follow-up by providing resources and information to the hearing consumer. I recall a time I was interpreting and was engaged in consultation with an attorney in a case involving a deaf person. The attorney was frustrated by the difficulties in communicating with a deaf person. As the hearing interpreter team and I were trying to provide information to him about what was impacting the communication challenges, he kept insisting that if the person had ‘a brain’ then they should be able to communicate! It was if he was assuming the deaf person was “using their deafness” to evade responding to his questions. It was very oppressive. We ultimately had to get the judge involved to resolve the situation by reprimanding the attorney for his insensitivity and erroneous perceptions. So there are consequences to hearing consumers having misconceptions and inaccurate assumptions. Ultimately, the judge indicated that if the attorney could not accept the deaf client as they were and make adaptations in his counsel/approach, he may need to be replaced with a different attorney. So, as interpreters we can always try our best to educate, but we may not always be successful in correcting someone’s thinking.

[Thomas Horejcs – 1:15:21]

It’s important for interpreters to remember that many deaf people have trauma based on lived experiences. As a result, it is sometimes hard for them to speak-up and self-advocate when confronted with hearing individuals who don’t understand our experience—including interpreters. So, when deaf individuals do express their concerns or offer criticism, interpreters are encouraged not to take it personally. Use it as an opportunity to improve communication access for the deaf consumer. Interpreters can benefit from having training about trauma and its implications on human interactions. The training can help interpreters to learn how to build trust and create a safe place. This seems even more important when working with deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language skills. I can’t even imagine how difficult it must be for them to express their perspective and feelings. Creating a safe place for them to work through their communication challenges is essential.

[Thomas Horejcs – 1:16:30]

For example, I notice how in the CALI videos of deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language, the filming is taking place in what look like sterile spaces...which may not be the safe or comfortable space for the deaf individuals being filmed. I look forward to the time when there is a panel of deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language who can express their perspectives on these topics.

[April Jackson – 1:18:51]

Going back to MJ’s specific example of the narrative that doesn’t respond to the question asked. In my experience, when this happens, I have to shift to a format of asking restricted questions with YES/NO responses rather than open ended questions (like, “What happened yesterday?”). Knowing the goal of the interaction, structure the restricted response questions to narrow down to the response being sought.

[MJ Bienvenu -- 1:19:27]

April makes a good point. Getting to the answer may take time—it’s a process. It may be that

the deaf consumer is extremely isolated and when in the company of people who can sign, becomes excited at being able to express themselves and it results in an extended narration. Some of what is in that narration may be things that have happened to them or that they have observed but have had no one with whom to communicate about it until now. But, in the immediate, the individual is within some system that is looking for answers to specific questions. It's very challenging and interpreters are there and attempting to manage these variables.

[Rosemary Wanis – 1:20:26]

It is a process that also requires cultural mediation. The deaf consumer may not know the expectations of the system and how it works. This can be explored during the language assessment phase of the assignment, before the interpreting process begins. Likewise, the hearing consumer may not know or understand the experiences of the deaf individual. So, the interpreter will have to engage in a mediation of both expectations and process, as well as language. And, how that is done may depend on the context—is this a mental health assessment, is this a meeting in an attorney's office, are we at a doctor's appointment, etc. Strategies may vary depending on the context in which the interpretation is occurring. Ultimately, it is typically the hearing consumer/professional service provider who guides the interaction process, and the interpreter is there to support the goal of the interaction and facilitate the interactional process. And in the midst of that process, where there are gaps in understanding on the part of either participant, the interpreter may have to contribute information.

[Keven Poore – 1:21:23]

Other contextual considerations are whether this is a reoccurring assignment, have the consumer and I worked together before or is this the first time. Strategies you will employ if you already have a trusted relationship with the deaf consumer may differ if you are still in the process of building that trust. Also, who else is involved in the communication event? Are there others who can assist and offer support? In other words, how the interpreter responds likely depends on a myriad of factors. Interpreters have to be adept at monitoring the pulse of the situation and work to respond accordingly. It is also important to keep the hearing consumer apprised of what is happening in the negotiations with the deaf consumer. They may be able to offer assistance when it is needed as well.

Key Topic Addressed: What advice would you give to working or aspiring interpreters regarding working with deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language use?

Key Points:

[April Jackson – 1:23:42]

Be patient. It takes a lot of work. There is a lot involved in the process. The ultimate goal is to do our very best to convey an accurate message. If you are not a patient person, or someone willing to invest the time required, this is not an appropriate area of specialization for you.

[Rosemary Wanis – 1:24:08]

In addition to being patient, be flexible. Have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Recognize that interpreting is not a process that is limited to your hands. Use other strategies—

like props, visual aids, acting out things, relying on others in the room who can assist with communication and/or may know the deaf consumer better, etc. Be open/transparent, use open processing so everyone is collaborating to achieve the desired goal. Be willing to stretch yourself and explore more deeply the concept of role and what application of the interpreter's role looks like in different situations. Don't be locked into simultaneous interpreting as 'the way' interpreting has to happen. Use consecutive interpreting, as well as other interpreting strategies. Adapt what you are doing over the unfolding of the assignment, as needs change or new needs arise. Invest in the process.

[Keven Poore – 1:25:20]

For new, novice interpreters, I suggest allowing yourself to work with challenging videos that require you to work through comprehension. Embrace struggle as a natural part of learning. Don't just stay within your comfort level—challenge yourself to stretch. Take risks, be curious, ask questions! Look beyond what is familiar to you. When you try new things, it will also enhance what is your norm/familiar. And, be honest! When you don't understand, or you don't know, say so. And then use your knowledge of resources and individuals to get the help you need. Take risks while in school/training and surrounded by teachers, mentors and colleagues who can support and assist you. Don't take risks in actual assignments where you might be practicing on deaf consumers.

[Thomas Horejes – 1:26:58]

Be humble! This type of work is humbling/sacred. Recognize the power dynamics that are involved. Interpreters are often in a privileged position—recognize the implication of that and the responsibility associated with mediating the interactions of others. Focus on empowering the deaf consumer to function with the highest degree of autonomy as possible. Be attentive, patient, intent on doing your best to convey an accurate message for all involved in the interaction. For interpreters who come from a position of privilege, get bias training so you understand the implications of implicit bias—learn to recognize what you may be overlooking or denying. If as an interpreter you find yourself resistant to feedback or comments from consumers, unpack the reasons why. Is it about trying to maintain your position of privilege/power? If so, stop, examine, unpack, and grow. This will enable you to engage with deaf consumers from a position of respect and humility. Also, recognize that labels of any kind can become stigmas that are used to marginalize people. Labels relating to language use can become identity stigmas because language use is often tied to our identity. Be sensitive to the fact that language, culture and identity are deeply intertwined. Recognize that although now we are using the term atypical, this is the result of our current level of information and it is not necessarily the right term for addressing the type of language use being discussed. It is the term currently being used but will likely continue to evolve.

NARRATOR: What a rich discussion! So many important points were made. There are a few key points I want to reinforce. First, a bit more about the term ATYPICAL. When the interpreter training grants were announced in 2016 by the Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services, the term used in the federal register was language DYSFLUENCY (disfluency). This term is commonly used to refer to difficulties of a language user in the production or articulation of a language. Stuttering is an example. The production of signs by a Deaf individual with cerebral palsy is an example. Although this term can apply to some instances of deviation in language use among the deaf population, it isn't a broad enough term to encompass all of the examples of deviations observed by interpreters and other service providers within the Deaf Community. Prior to applying for the grant, the administrative team of Northeastern University's American Sign Language Program conducted an informal survey within the Deaf and Interpreter communities to determine what might be a more appropriate and inclusive term than DYSFLUENT, allowing the grant to prepare interpreters to work with a broader portion of the Deaf Community representing some of the changing demographics within the Deaf Community. There was greatest agreement around the term ATYPICAL, and thus it became the term adopted in the grant application.

The term ATYPICAL means that the language use being observed is not representative of native use of ASL. That it is not representative could be for a variety of reasons—including, but not limited to, dysfluency. However, what is essential to its meaning is that atypical use of sign language is NOT about a variation of sign language used by deaf people—such as a dialect, regional variations, Black Sign Language, etc. Atypical language use is not referring to a new or unique form of sign language. It refers to the expression of various types of linguistic dysfunction that may impact both the understanding and production of sign language. This is an important distinction in that atypical use of sign language requires significant accommodation to meet the individual's need for communication access and inclusion. Accommodations are not only related to use of a broad and innovate range of communication strategies, but also the amount of time required to achieve understanding, the number of interpreters that may be needed to staff an assignment, the level of success that can be achieved, the other support services that may be needed to support the success of the deaf individual, among others.

Preparation for interpreting assignments that involve deaf individuals who use atypical language requires more planning time and consideration. Interpreters being notified in advance of the fact that the consumer they are being asked to interpret for is someone who exhibits atypical language use can help ensure that interpreters who are not qualified to take on such assignments decline them (rather than arriving to an assignment and learning of the reality after the fact). Knowing in advance also allows interpreters to advocate for the use of Deaf interpreters and additional time for language assessment and establishing effective strategies for communication. Knowing in advance allows interpreters to bring resources—such as props, pictures, and other materials—that can be

relied upon during the interpreting process. Knowing in advance allows the participants of the communication event to discuss goals, expectations, and outcomes, and to form a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of the deaf consumer. Knowing in advance helps to ensure that the deaf consumer receives the greatest degree of access and inclusion possible.

Another important point that was discussed by the Deaf panelists was the importance of interpreters being self-aware and honest about their abilities and their limitations. The belief that “any interpreter is better than no interpreter” is potentially dangerous and harmful when attempting to provide access and inclusion to deaf people who exhibit atypical language use. Interpreters may feel vulnerable to the pressure to fill assignments for which they are not qualified or do not feel comfortable and need to develop the boundaries necessary to decline when it is appropriate and ethical to do so.

Part of ethical practice is relying on your discretion as an interpreter. As was discussed by the panel, discretion is the ability to make reliable, sound and ethical decisions while interpreting. Discretion is something that evolves and matures over time through reflective practice. Reflective practice is a process of analyzing your work on a consistent basis for the purpose of growth and improvement. It can be done on your own, but is most effective when done with colleagues and/or mentors who can assist in helping you to identify aspects of your work you may overlook or of which you are unaware. Reflective practice offers a form of peer review and accountability that interpreters often lack but need. The great thing about engaging in peer review is that even if you live in a rural area, technology affords the opportunity to connect with other colleagues. The maturing of your discretion through reflective practice is a critical part of becoming a respected and reliable practitioner. Deaf consumers deserve your very best!

One final point from the Deaf panel discussion relates to the importance of Deaf Community involvement in the training and vetting of interpreters. The panel members emphasized that more interpreter education programs need Deaf faculty members—including BIPOC Deaf individuals! The inclusion of more BIPOC Deaf individuals in running and/or teaching will help to ensure a greater number of BIPOC interpreters entering and completing training programs. The gaps that many IEP graduates experience in terms of language and culture could be reduced by earlier and more frequent exposure to a broad range of Deaf individuals.

This applies to training materials as well. The diversity evident within the Deaf Community needs to be represented in the training materials. As well, those materials need to more accurately reflect the real-world experiences of Deaf individuals and the range of language variation that exists. Deaf individuals of greater diversity in more diverse settings is needed in the training materials to better prepare interpreters for real- world interpreting.

Not only is there a need for more Deaf engagement in training, but also in the vetting of interpreters. Deaf people understand their needs much better than anyone else and should be more involved in deciding who interprets for them and

in what settings. This is particularly true for BIPOC Deaf individuals. How do we achieve more engagement of Deaf people in the training and decision-making about interpreters? It needs to be intentional. The interpreting industry and interpreting practitioners need to make a deliberate and intentional commitment to seeking the engagement of Deaf individuals in decision-making that impacts their daily lives. If each interpreter practitioner or educator, interpreter referral center or agency owner or staff person, committed to using their scope of influence to ensure the involvement of more Deaf people in the decision-making processes associated with interpreter education and the provision of interpreting services, greater engagement could be achieved. And as a result, the provision of interpreting services to Deaf consumers would be greatly advanced!

Before wrapping up this video, I want to take time to introduce you to the other 6 videos that are a part of the series of 7 new videos being released by CALI. The remaining 6 videos are focused on teams of interpreters discussing their experiences working with Deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. Five (5) of the 6 tapes involve BIPOC interpreters—an important source of knowledge and experience that has too often been left out of conversations about interpreting. Several of the BIPOC interpreters are also CODAs or have deaf family members. In some instances, their Deaf parents are immigrants, and these interpreters have unique life experiences to offer. Four of the six tapes include a Deaf and hearing interpreter discussing their experiences working with individuals with atypical language use. The fifth tape involves two Deaf interpreters discussing their experiences. The sixth tape involves two BIPOC Coda interpreters sharing their experience.

Topics addressed in the six videos vary, but includes discussion of cultural and linguistic identity and the role it plays in the interpreting process and decision making, team interpreting considerations and challenges, strategies used during the interpreting process, ethics, values and frameworks that support decision-making, gaps that exist in the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct, reflective practice, interpreter training, mentoring and professionalism, among others.

The videos are organized in a logical sequence, with this introductory video being the first in the series. However, each video can stand alone and the six subsequent videos in the series can be watched in whatever order best suits your purposes. The six teams of interpreters are Carla Shird & Su Kyong Isakson, Su Kyong Isakson & Kristina Miranda, Rayni Plaster Torres & Mark Morales, Rayni Plaster Torres & Monica Gallego, Trenton Marsh & Jennifer Harvey, and Samond Bishara and Michelle Draper.

There are several take-aways from the six videos of conversations between interpreting colleagues. First, interpreting is a complex and challenging process that requires a superior level of linguistic and cultural competence, self-awareness, and professional maturity. The complexities of interpreting increase as the linguistic limitations of the deaf consumer increase. The solution is even greater degrees of cultural and linguistic competence and collaboration with other interpreters—typically one of which is Deaf and/or a native signer.

Second, consistent and reliable ethical decision-making is not based on the ability to follow a set of rules or guidelines. It is based on the ability to think critically and responsibly, to have a clear sense of purpose and intention, have a highly developed discretion to rely on, and being grounded in the values and beliefs of the profession of interpreting.

Discretion is developed from several sources—the theories and ethical frameworks upon which the profession is built and relies, the engagement in reflective practice with colleagues, mentors and supervisors, experience over time, a commitment to moral and ethical development, and self-awareness and monitoring.

Third, while the foundation of successful interpreting is linguistic and cultural competence, its cornerstone is relationships. The ability of interpreters to develop trust and rapport with consumers of interpreting services is essential to establishing and sustaining relationships. This requires that interpreters have well-developed interpersonal skills. Intrapersonal skills are also necessary, knowing yourself, your abilities and your limitations. Interpreters need to have the ability to monitor your behavior and reactions. Interpreters need to have the ability to ask for help when needed and to admit/own mistakes when they occur. Reflect professionalism and maturity in your work and your commitment to a successful outcome. Interpreters need to be humble and transparent about their process, and what is transpiring during the interpreting process. When these qualities are balanced with demonstrated respect for consumers, our colleagues and ourselves, it sets the tone for collaboration with all those involved in the interpreted event.

And finally, continued professional development is essential. The communities we serve are always changing, so no matter our years of experience and overall competence, there is always the need to learn more and to grow as the field and consumers advance.

There will likely be many other take-aways you gain from viewing and thinking about the 6 videos of conversations between interpreting colleagues. It is the hope of CALI that these materials contribute to your own decision-making skills and processes. To further assist with that process, there are curricular materials that are available. A Curriculum Guide for Teachers, Mentors and Supervisors and a Handbook for Interpreters are available to be downloaded. These two documents include strategies and activities for using the 7 videos discussed for improving ethical decision-making in general and specifically when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. The documents are located on the CALI website under the tab for the videos. We wish you all continued success in your work as interpreters!

Conversation 1: Su Kyong Isakson & Carla Shird – 34:46 minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/NciGqUV0y8M>

Description:

This is a discussion between a Deaf and Coda interpreter that is focused on the unique experiences of BIPOC² interpreters who provide interpreting services to deaf individuals who are immigrants to the United States. Carla Shird, CDI, discusses her experiences and strategies interpreting for Deaf immigrants, and provides insight into the importance of both linguistic and cultural competence. She identifies specific examples of cases where cultural knowledge of the deaf individual's home country was instrumental in establishing and sustaining communication. Another unique aspect is a discussion by Su Kyong Isakson, NIC, of Yosso's³ Model of Community Wealth as a framework for clarifying the values that contribute to the ethical decision-making of BIPOC interpreters.



Discussion Prompts

- What do you see as the benefits from interpreters possessing knowledge of the language and culture of the Deaf Community from the inside-out versus as a second language learner who is a sojourner to the community? What might be some of the additional challenges that exist as a result of being an 'insider' of the Deaf Community?
- What does it mean to respect Deaf people? What does it look like when interpreters are exhibiting genuine respect and regard for Deaf people.
- What are some of the unique considerations when interpreting for deaf immigrants? What are some specific preparation strategies an interpreter should employ when accepting an assignment involving a deaf immigrant?
- What are some possible ways in which interpreters can gain greater cultural competence—not only in the American Deaf Culture, but in the cultures from which deaf immigrants come?
- What does collaboration between Deaf and hearing interpreters look like? What are essential ways that Deaf and hearing interpreters can demonstrate respect and support for one another?
- When conducting language assessments with deaf consumers, what is the purpose and what is the process? How are the findings from the language assessment process used by the interpreters during the interpreting assignment?
- If you were describing the interpreting process to an immigration officer or some other individual

² The acronym BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and people of color. People of color is a general umbrella term that collectively refers to ALL people of color — anyone who isn't white. But because POC is so broad, it loses the specificity that is useful in identifying and addressing separate struggles faced by people of color with different ethnic backgrounds. BIPOC reflects the desire to draw attention to specific injustices impacting Black and Indigenous people—including those who are Deaf. <https://www.healthline.com/health/bipoc-meaning#short-answer>

³ Dr. Tara Yosso is a teacher and researcher who has applied the frameworks of critical race theory and critical media literacy to examine educational access and opportunity within Communities of Color. Yosso's model of Community Cultural Wealth (2005) explores the talents, strengths and experiences that students of color bring with them to their college environment. The model identifies six (6) forms of capital nurtured and developed through the experiences of marginalized communities—aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital. See <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/first-generation-college-student-community-cultural-wealth.10> for an explanation of each. Also see Yosso, T. J. (2005) *Whose Culture Has Capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth*. In *Race Ethnicity and Education*. Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2005, pp. 69-91.

involved with the immigration process, what would you say and why? Team with someone and role play what you would say. Discuss what was clear and effective and what might benefit from adjustment and try again. Rotate this activity.

- Identify two or three of the strategies discussed by the interpreters for interpreting with deaf immigrants. Describe how these strategies could be useful to you in your own practice—in what situations, for what purposes, in what ways?
- What are the five (5) types of capital associated with Yosso's Model of Cultural Wealth? Discuss an example of how interpreters would exhibit these 5 types of capital during their decision-making as interpreters. What contribution do you see Yosso's Model bringing to enhancing your own ethical decision-making?
- How can interpreting agencies improve the information they provide to interpreters about assignments for which they are scheduled? Why do you think this information is often missing in assignment information? What is the implication for consumers and interpreters as a result of insufficient (or possibly incorrect) assignment details? Discuss specific examples as it relates to your own work as an interpreter.
- How would you define discretion and its application to the work of interpreters? In what ways is discretion improved through reflective practice? In what ways can interpreters engage in reflective practice? Identify two or three examples.
- What is your primary take-away from this video? Discuss how that take-away will impact your daily practice and instances when you are interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use.

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Introduction to Yosso's Model of Cultural Capital and its application to interpreting with BIPOC deaf individuals and immigrants	Ethical decision-making involves more than just a set of rules or guidelines to follow. It involves a strong foundation in language and cultural competence.
What it means to respect consumers and their lived experiences	Yosso's Model of Cultural Capital provides a theoretical foundation that BIPOC interpreters can rely on for guidance that gives recognition to the unique knowledge and skills needed by interpreters working within marginalized communities. It is a model that fits their lived experience and the communication access needs of the deaf consumers they serve.
The importance of cultural competence—it's not just language	
Interpreting strategies and techniques and associated challenges	Negotiating meaning with a deaf immigrant who uses sign language in an atypical manner requires that the interpreter have substantive cultural knowledge and experience (with the culture that the deaf consumer is from), as well as visual-spatial language expertise (not specifically tied to ASL).
Training and IEP considerations/gaps	
Preparation considerations	Discretion and judgment by interpreters come from reflective practice and ongoing unpacking of assignments with colleagues and peers.
Language assessment with deaf consumer	

Conversation 2: Mark Morales & Rayni Plaster Torres – 46:59 Minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/81qRtYIKD7w>

Description:

In this video, Rayni Plaster, CDI interviews a Deaf Interpreter, Mark Morales, who has extensive experience in interpreting for deaf individuals who immigrate to the United States, primarily from Mexico. Together, they explore the role of the interpreter and how it is adapted to accommodate the needs of deaf individuals who are not fluent in American Sign Language and/or exhibit atypical language use. Establishing the interpreter role and interpreting process with both deaf and hearing consumers is discussed, as well as some of the implications associated with assuming explanations are understood or sufficient. When misunderstandings arise, how to make adjustments and/or corrections are also discussed. Strategies used by interpreters when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use are explored and applied to specific interpreting scenarios.



Discussion Prompts:

- How would you approach the language assessment with a deaf consumer you are meeting in the lobby of a doctor's office? What things would you discuss and why? How long would you engage in the assessment? What specifically would you be looking for and why? How would you know you have sufficient information to proceed with interpreting? In what ways would you use the information from the language assessment during the assignment? How would you engage the hearing consumer in the process? What are the implications of NOT conducting a language assessment as part of your assignment preparation?
- Imagine you and a team interpreter are assigned to interpret an appointment at a doctor's office with a deaf individual who exhibits atypical language. During the language assessment phase of the assignment, it becomes clear that you will need to use consecutive interpreting and that it is likely to require additional time to establish and facilitate communication. How would you go about making this known to the medical team? How would you go about negotiating for the additional time needed to achieve effective communication? Role play an interaction with the nurse or doctor where you explain your role, the interpreting process, the need for consecutive interpreting and potentially more time than has been planned.
- Why is it important for the cultural identity and worldview of the interpreter to align with the deaf consumer? How does it impact the interpreting process? How does it impact trust and rapport? How does it impact team interpreting relationships?
- Why is it likely that in most assignments with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use the interpreter will have to use multiple strategies over the course of an assignment in order to achieve the greatest degree of linguistic access? What are examples of strategies that might be used, and which strategies are more likely to be used for what type of questions?
- When interpreting questions from the hearing consumer to the deaf consumer what is important for the interpreter to consider? How does the interpreter gain an understanding of the type of question being asked, what type of information is being elicited, and how the information will be used? Why are these elements important?
- What are some of the challenges associated with team interpreting for deaf individuals who

exhibit atypical language use? What are some of the notable differences in role between a Deaf and hearing interpreter and how might these differences impact the interactions between the interpreter team? Imagine you are part of a Deaf-hearing team interpreting for a deaf individual who exhibits atypical language use during a doctor's appointment. How would you explain the roles of the team interpreters to this individual? How would you explain it to the doctor and/or nurse? Role play the explanation process.

- What life experiences have you had that can contribute to your understanding of world views and life experiences that differ from your own? For example, have you traveled extensively internationally, or did you grow up as part of a military family that relocated often? If interpreters have narrow or limited life experience and knowledge of cultures other than their own, what are some activities they can engage in to increase their appreciation of diverse experiences—particularly the experiences of individuals from marginalized communities? What is the consequence of not having an appreciation of diverse life experiences and cultures?
- How has the COVID epidemic impacted interpreting? With the increase in the use of online tools for connecting consumers—like Zoom—what are new considerations interpreters must keep in mind? What is the implication of using technology when working with deaf individuals who use atypical language?

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Accepting assignments—what you are told versus what you are confronted with when you arrive	Deaf interpreters and hearing interpreters bring different worldviews and life experiences to the interpreting process. These can become even more evident when teaming an assignment that involves a deaf individual who exhibits atypical
Establishing role/role definition with both the deaf and hearing consumers (can be an ongoing process throughout the assignment)	use of sign language.
Language assessment process with deaf consumer	Deaf interpreters will often use strategies and techniques that hearing interpreters (HI) are unfamiliar with or are beyond their capacity. This can make the HI uncomfortable and lead to efforts to have the Deaf interpreter function more 'traditionally' (versus effectively). It is imperative that the interpreters do sufficient advance preparation to get on the same page prior to beginning the assignment. Also, they must have trust and respect for one another during the interpreting process so they can resolve issues that may arise.
Goal of language assessment	
Building trust and rapport with deaf consumers	The cultural and linguistic background of the interpreter contributes significantly to the communication process when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. The more the cultural identity and worldview of the interpreter aligns with the deaf consumer, the more effective the rapport between them will be.
Importance of knowledge of the deaf consumer's cultural framework and life experience and ability to use it while negotiating meaning	
Application of interpreting strategies to different interpreting assignments	When working with deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language use, the interpreter needs a wide range of communication strategies (such as use of drawing, props, acting out information, flexible visual-spatial language use, etc.) to be
Issues with time and sequence of events	

Being sure of what the hearing consumer is asking about and whether they want a general or specific answer Complications of interpreting during COVID and use of technology such as Zoom (reduced space and movement) Role boundaries, CPC and application of discretion HIs and DIs teaming together—challenges and considerations	effective. In most situations, the interpreter will have to use multiple strategies over the course of an assignment in order to achieve the greatest degree of linguistic access. When interpreters are working with deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language use, it is imperative that a sufficient amount of time is taken to communicate information sufficiently to create understanding. During such processes, it is important to keep the other participants in the communication process aware of what is transpiring. This is one of the benefits of a Deaf/Hearing team of interpreters.
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Conversation 3: Su Kyong Isakson & Kristina Marie Balao Miranda – 40:32 Minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/HeN0ktDxIrM>

Description:

In this video, two Coda interpreters of color, whose parents immigrated to the United States, discuss their unique interpreting experiences working within communities comprised largely of deaf immigrants. They focus on how heritage and identity play a significant role in their work as interpreters. As well, they discuss how norms and expectations of their heritage culture informs their decision-making as interpreters. As part of this discussion, they reference Yosso's Model of Cultural Wealth and discuss application of the model to specific interpreting situations and/or decisions made while interpreting. Further, they discuss the importance of interpreters keeping focus on the deaf consumer(s), their goal(s) and their needs in terms of communication access. This will help interpreters remain humble. Interpreting for Deaf individuals is a gift—one that requires a focus on service versus personal benefit.



Discussion Prompts:

- What is your overall impression of the discussion between the interpreters in the video? What stood out for you and why?
- If you were asked to summarize the video to someone else using 3-4 sentences, what would you say? What would you indicate is the primary take-away from the video?
- What from the video was new information for you? How does the new information fit with what you knew prior to watching the video? What questions about the new information still remain for you?
- What thoughts do you have about the strategies they identified as effective for working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use? Which of the strategies do you use already and/or you see other practitioners using? Which strategies were new for you? What strategies can you see yourself applying right away? In what situations? Provide one or two examples.

- Do you have a clear understanding of how the strategies work, what they look like in application, and how to go about implementing the strategies? Which of the strategies is the most challenging for you and why? What do you see will be required for you to become comfortable in applying the strategy? What resources exist to help you in your process?
- How did the discussion of Yosso’s Model of Cultural Capitol fit with your own experience? What frameworks do you rely on to help you with your decision-making as an interpreter? For example, do you utilize Demand-Control Schema⁴ or some other framework? How do these frameworks compliment your application of the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (CPC)? How does the value system internalized from your family of origin impact your identity as an individual? How does it impact your decision- making as an interpreter?
- What are the factors that you employ as an interpreter to decide when to use consecutive versus simultaneous interpreting? When using consecutive interpreting, do you take notes? If so, what form do the notes take? Have there been instances when using consecutive interpreting was the best choice for the deaf consumer, but not for the hearing consumer (due to time restraints or other factors)? If so, what did you do? If not, what would you do in such an instance and why? Discuss your decision-making process with a peer and compare/contrast the factors leading to your final decision.

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Coda interpreters with immigrant parents and the lived experience of growing up within the immigrant portion of the Deaf Community Many of the skills relied on by interpreters working within the BIPOC and immigrant Deaf communities acquire their skills from lived experiences versus what they are taught in interpreter education programs The disconnect between what is taught in IEPs and what interpreters working within the BIPOC and immigrant Deaf Communities confront and experience The differences between what the hiring agency tells the interpreter	When interpreting with BIPOC and/or immigrant deaf consumers, humility is critical. Humility involves an openness to feedback, not taking things personally, respect for consumer preferences, being able to set your ego aside for the purpose of honoring the goals of the interaction you are interpreting. Keeping your focus on the deaf consumer(s), their goal(s) and their needs in terms of communication access, will help interpreters remain humble. Interpreting for Deaf individuals is a gift—one that requires a focus on service versus personal benefit. One of the challenges that must be faced during interpreting assignments involving deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use is the need for more time than the ‘system’ has planned. Interpreters are key in ensuring that the time needed to establish clear and effective communication is secured. It is deaf consumers who suffer when interpreters do not take the

⁴ Dean and Pollard (2001) used the framework of D-C theory to examine the nature of demands and controls in the interpreting profession specifically. They defined four categories of job demands that act upon interpreters: environmental demands, interpersonal demands, paralinguistic demands (formerly referred to as linguistic demands), and intrapersonal demands. Controls are skills, decisions, or other resources that an interpreter may bring to bear in response to the demands presented by a given work assignment. Controls for interpreters may include education, experience, preparation for an assignment, behavioral actions or interventions, particular translation decisions, (e.g., specific word or sign choices or explanatory comments to consumers), encouraging –self-talk,” or the simple yet powerful act of consciously acknowledging the presence and significance of a given demand and the impact it is having on an interpreting assignment.

versus what the interpreter encounters once on the assignment What kind of questions interpreters need to ask before accepting assignments The importance of cultural competence in working with immigrant populations Examples of application of Yosso's Model of Cultural Capital to some of their interpreting experiences Teaming challenges—particularly with white interpreters and the struggle to get on the same page Gaps in the NAD-RID CPC in terms of working with BIPOC and immigrant deaf populations	time needed to achieve effective communication. Discretion and judgment by interpreters come from experience and reflective practice. Interpreters benefit from examining their decisions and actions with valued colleagues for the purpose of unpacking assignments and understanding the variables impacting what transpired.
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Conversation 4: Monica Gallego & Rayni Plaster Torres – 1:03:55 Minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/IZdhk8dJrGw>

Description:

In this video, Rayni Plaster Torres, CDI interviews Monica Gallego, a certified trilingual interpreter who works extensively with deaf immigrants. Topics addressed include how to create a collaborative environment for interpreted interactions, assessing language and communication access needs, strategies for utilizing the experiences of the Deaf Consumer with their family members as a source of insight and information, engaging with hearing consumers, the role of notetaking during consecutive interpreting and post- assignment, among other topics. The linguistic and cultural experiences the interpreter brings are an integral part of building the trust and relationship required for a successful interpreted interaction. And the specific knowledge the interpreter has of the life experiences of the deaf immigrant in their country of birth, the more negotiation of meaning can occur. A critical part of the discussion between Rayni and Monica relates to the importance of the team interpreters being on the same page regarding how they will approach the work, divide duties, share responsibilities and support one another. The outcome of the interpreted interaction will depend in large part on how effectively the team interpreters work together. This will be particularly true when one of the team interpreters brings strong cultural awareness and competence relating to the consumer's native culture, and the other does not. It requires an additional level of respect and trust in the trilingual interpreter member of the team.



Discussion Prompts:

- What is your experience with consecutive interpreting? In what situations do you use it? How comfortable are you in utilizing consecutive interpreting?
- How do you introduce the idea of using consecutive interpreting to the consumers of an interpreted interaction? Assume you are in an assignment where consecutive interpreting is the appropriate choice. Role play agreeing on how you will implement consecutive interpreting with your team interpreter and then with the consumers. What guidance and direction will you give to the consumers regarding how to support the application of consecutive interpreting?
- Monica discusses her use of notetaking during the assignment and how she gives those notes to the deaf consumer to take away from the assignment and for reference afterwards. What are your thoughts about this process? Is it one you are familiar with? What would it change in your practice to utilize notes and to provide them to consumers? What barriers would keep you from doing so? What benefits would come from doing so?
- The importance of taking the time necessary to interpret clearly and accurately was discussed during the interview. Monica mentioned that it was common to be booked for an hour when in reality three hours was needed to interpret for the deaf immigrant. She emphasizes that when working with deaf immigrants, taking the time necessary to achieve comprehension and understanding is critical. What are the implications of this reality for your own schedule as an interpreter? What elements of your schedule would you need to change to ensure you had sufficient time to interpret for someone who required more time? How would you go about preparing to do that? How would you negotiate the need for additional time to complete your work with a team interpreter? With the hearing consumers? With the deaf consumer? What options exist if sufficient time is not available in a single appointment? What barriers exist to you taking the time that is needed? How would you overcome those barriers? What are the implications for your own ethical duty, the deaf consumer and the system if the appropriate amount of time is not taken?
- What are the ways in which an interpreter can confirm that comprehension has been achieved? What are three or four ways the interpreter can elicit confirmation from deaf consumers? Why is eliciting confirmation necessary and important? How can confirmation be elicited in a way that is culturally appropriate and respectful of deaf consumers? What are examples of elicitation techniques that are NOT culturally appropriate or respectful to deaf consumers?
- Interpreters need to be able to discuss their observations about the effectiveness of the communication process in professional ways. This requires interpreters to be able to describe both typical language behaviors and those that are atypical so that all individuals involved in the communication process can make informed decisions. What are ways in which interpreters can do this without marginalizing deaf consumers?
- Role play describing to the various professionals who might engage with a deaf consumer who exhibits atypical language use the issues impacting interpreting. Consider how your description may vary depending on the role and responsibility of the professional you are working with. Role play providing the description to a medical doctor who is seeing the deaf consumer for a general physical, to a immigration case worker who is guiding the deaf consumer through the process of settling into the United States, to an attorney who is handling the immigration process for the deaf consumer and his/her family, to a teacher assisting with linguistic integration. Engage with at least two other interpreters as you do the role play so that one can assume the role of the professional, and one can observe and provide feedback on the process. When providing feedback, the focus should be on the clarity of the explanation (easy to understand by someone unfamiliar with deaf people and their experiences), is efficient in terms of the time it takes, is respectful and professional. You can all rotate roles until you all feel more comfortable providing

descriptions of language use of the deaf consumer and challenges for the interpreting process.

- How would you describe the difference between explicit and implied meaning? In what circumstances is it important for the implied meaning to be conveyed in an interpretation? What factors influence the decision to make what is implicit, explicit? What are the considerations an interpreter must keep in mind when conveying implicit meaning? How can these considerations be monitored by the interpreter and their team interpreter? Provide some examples of implicit meaning from assignments you have done in the past and the implication of that information for the assignment outcome.
- Consider the following text in an ASL Vlog by Jesse Conrad. He is talking about an experience with an earthquake in Virginia. Identify five or six examples of explicit information being communicated. Identify five or six examples of implicit meaning embedded in the text. What is the implication of the implicit meaning for the overarching meaning of the text? Interpret the text and discuss your observations with a peer or mentor.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0xyGdvhsJ8&t=7s>

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Experiences of trilingual interpreters working primarily with immigrant populations	Setting the stage for a successful interpreted interaction involves engaging with all consumers—both deaf and hearing—in a collaborative and unified manner.
Contributions of interpreter education and real-world experience to the preparation of practitioners	A key to team interpreting is engaging in pre-assignment, during and post-assignment briefing and de-briefing. These periods of team communication set the stage for effective collaboration, plus help to build the discretion (through reflective practice) necessary to work with unique populations within the Deaf Community and within specialized settings.
Connecting with all consumers before the interpretation actually begins— both deaf and hearing	As discretion matures through reflective practice, decision-making changes and improves.
Importance of hearing consumers in the overall collaboration process	When working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical use of sign language, be prepared to need more time than has been indicated to ensure clear and accurate communication.
Interpreter as a unifying force in a collaborative communication process	When interpreters fail to take the time to interpret clearly and accurately, the ensuing mistakes or misunderstandings can have significant implications for the system and Deaf consumers.
Team interpreting considerations— Deaf/hearing teams or two hearing interpreters	The nature of the activity that is occurring impacts whether the interpretation can be done in a consecutive (preferred) or simultaneous manner. For example, in group therapy, simultaneous will be expected. Consecutive allows for more time and greater accuracy, and also the use of notetaking.
Language assessment and communication access—utilizing the experiences of the Deaf Consumer with their family members as a source of insight and information	Deaf interpreters bring the unique experience of knowing what it feels like to go through various systems without effective language
Cultural identities/backgrounds and their contribution to perceptions of	

authority, systems, status differentials, etc. Time as a barrier or asset to the interpreting process Explicit versus implicit meaning and the impact for implication of the message Unique considerations for different settings—such as mental health and in-patient treatment Self-monitoring as interpreters and avoiding some pitfalls associated with taking on the role of care-taker/protector/savior	access. They have those instances within the system that are often more challenging or frustrating for a deaf individual. It is useful for Deaf interpreters to take the lead in navigating the systems in which team interpreter work. Confirmation of understanding is essential when working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. Confirmation of understanding with all involved in the interpreted event helps to pace the interpretation, reduce assumptions, ensure greater reliability and accuracy of the information being exchanged. Confirmation should be done in a variety of ways through different elicitation techniques. Interpreters need to be able to discuss their observations about the effectiveness of the communication process in professional ways. This requires interpreters to be able to describe both typical language behaviors and those that are atypical so that all individuals involved in the communication process can make informed decisions. Interpreters need to focus not only on what is being said, but what is meant by what is said—what is being stated both explicitly and implicitly. Often what is implied carries the implication of the information and this is information that needs to be transmitted explicitly when transferring meaning from one language to another. Interpreters benefit from monitoring their temptation to ‘fix’ the deaf consumer’s language when it is incomplete or unclear. What is the consequence to the consumer and the system trying to serve them when this occurs? Consider what motivates the interpreter’s desire to protect/defend the deaf consumer. How does that motivation fit with being an ally versus benefactor? How does it fit with what is expected regarding the role of the interpreter?
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Conversation 5: Jennifer Harvey & Trenton Marsh – 35:31 Minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/UvG0nBboPUw>

Description:

In this video, two certified interpreters—one Deaf and one Coda interpreter—discuss their experiences working with deaf consumers who exhibit atypical language use. The interpreters, Trenton Marsh and Jennifer Harvey, discuss the challenges of preparing interpreters to work with a diverse and complex community of language users and the need for more Deaf individuals to be recruited and prepared as interpreters. Historically, interpreter education programs (IEPs) don't provide enough exposure to certain portions of the Deaf Community—such as deaf youth, deaf immigrants, and others with significant language variation. The result is a workforce that is at times ill-equipped to meet the demands of interpreting for deaf individuals with unique and challenging communication and access needs. Deaf interpreters can bring a level of life experience and exposure to diverse signers needed to assist with the language needs of the underserved portions of the Deaf Community. Their experiences in Schools for the Deaf, Deaf families, Deaf social systems, etc., provides them with a foundation they can draw on when interpreting. During their discussion, the interpreters focus on how to build strong relationships within Deaf-hearing interpreting teams, how to empower deaf consumers during the interpreting process and the importance of interpreters making the commitment to continuing professional development and growth.



Discussion Prompts:

- What is your experience in working with Deaf interpreters? Who has a responsibility to recruit and training more Deaf interpreters? What is the role of hearing interpreters in requesting and relying on Deaf interpreters more often? What are the barriers to them doing so? How can those barriers be eliminated?
- Role play requesting and justifying the need for a Deaf interpreter. Practice making the request to an interpreting agency at the time they request you for an assignment; at a court assignment after meeting with the deaf consumer and determining a deaf interpreter is needed; during an IEP meeting when discussing the access needs of a young deaf child from a deaf family, and at a mental health appointment after struggling through a difficult assignment and preparing to schedule future appointments. Conduct the role play with two other peers so that you can rotate roles (interpreter making the request, the hearing decision-maker, and a person who observes and provides feedback) and provide feedback to one another. When providing feedback, the focus should be on the clarity of the request and explanation/justification (easy to understand by someone unfamiliar with deaf people and their experiences), is efficient in terms of the time it takes, is respectful and professional. You can all rotate roles until you all feel more comfortable making and justifying the request for a Deaf interpreter.
- What thoughts do you have about the strategies the interpreters identified as effective for working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use? Which of the strategies do you use already and/or you see other practitioners using? Which strategies were new for you? What strategies can you see yourself applying right away? In what situations? Provide one or two examples.

- Do you have a clear understanding of how the strategies work, what they look like in application, and how to go about implementing the strategies? Which of the strategies is the most challenging for you and why? What do you see will be required for you to become comfortable in applying the strategy? What resources exist to help you in your process?
- Describe the factors most frequently identified as contributing to atypical language use by some individuals in the Deaf Community. What has been your own experience in working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language? How did these interactions go? What did you find that worked and what didn't work in establishing and maintaining communication? Provide one or two examples of both.
- As you think about ethical decision-making, how do you approach it as a process? Which of the tenets associated with the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct⁵ do you find the most challenging and why? Discuss an example of a situation where you were confronted with circumstances that required compliance with this tenet and explore what about the situation made compliance challenging.
- Much of ethical decision-making is based on an interpreter's discretion. How would you define discretion? How does discretion differ from personal choice or preference? How is discretion forged? How does an interpreter advance their discretion—help it to mature and become more reliable? What is the consequence of not having a reliable or mature base of discretion—for the consumers of the interpreter's services? For the interpreter?
- What are some of the ways the interpreters discussed empowering deaf consumers? How do these fit with your own experience? In what ways do you use your role as an interpreter to empower deaf individuals? How does empowerment fit into the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct? What does empowerment look like in application?

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Settings in which interpreters work CDI as staff member Considerations when working with Deaf youth Training and IEP considerations Working with a CDI Checking in with consumer and elicitation techniques System thinking and system protocol Strategies and techniques	There is a need to recruit more deaf individuals to serve as interpreters and to provide training that prepares them to be qualified. ITPs don't provide enough exposure to certain portions of the Deaf Community—such as deaf youth, deaf immigrants, and others with significant language variation. Deaf interpreters are concerned with how to empower deaf consumers with sufficient access to communication so they can act autonomously/with self-determination to the greatest degree possible. This can be challenging in terms of the gaps in knowledge and experience that may exist for the deaf consumer (ex: telephone etiquette or courtroom protocol).

⁵ A copy of the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct can be downloaded in either English or Spanish from the following RID website.
<https://rid.org/ethics/code-of-professional-conduct/>.

Factors contributing to atypical language use by deaf individuals	Hearing interpreters have much to learn about effective teaming with Deaf colleagues. The demands of interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use provide evidence of the demand for more qualified Deaf interpreters. Hearing interpreters need to make the investment of time and commitment to become competent in working with Deaf interpreters in a range of situations.
Team interpreting: Considerations for Hearing interpreters	
Boundaries and the CPC; developing discretion and DO NO HARM	

Conversation 6: Samond Bishara & Michelle Draper – 29:04 minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/hDD2ohZCZxA>

Description:

Samond and Michelle, two certified interpreters, discuss their experiences working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use with a specific focus on deaf children and deaf children who are part of immigrant families. Samond, who is a Deaf interpreter who comes from an immigrant family himself, discusses some of the challenges associated with serving the needs of deaf children who are still in the process of language acquisition and development of personal/cultural identity. One of the consistent challenges is that of working with hearing interpreters who are either not accustomed to working with a Deaf interpreter or who have insufficient experience in working with deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use. The limitations of the hearing interpreter result in a greater burden to the Deaf interpreter in some situations. Samond talks about how he has worked with hiring entities to better assess the risks involved in sending novice interpreters to such appointments and determining when novice interpreter involvement is appropriate and when it is not. As well, both Samond and Michelle discuss topics related to interpreter role and responsibilities, misconceptions that exist regarding the role of a CDI, strategies for negotiating meaning, challenges associated with ethical decision-making, team interpreting dynamics, and other related topics.



Discussion Prompts:

- A common dilemma in the interpreting industry is how novice interpreters gain experience in handling more complex and diverse assignments if they are not assigned to them. Part of the dilemma is the reality that high risk situations are not an appropriate place for novice interpreters, but sometimes what seems like a routine, low risk situation can quickly change to a complex situation with high risk. What were some of the suggestions offered by Samond in addressing the inclusion of novice interpreters in more high-risk settings? How do his suggestions fit with your own experience? What additional considerations can you and your peers identify for addressing the challenge of inducting novice practitioners to the practice of interpreting while protecting the interests of consumers? Who ultimately should decide whether a novice interpreter is involved or not involved in an assignment? Why?
- How does working with Deaf children differ from working with adults? How does working in an elementary school setting with a Deaf child differ from interpreting in a community setting with

an adult? How does it differ in terms of role and process? Discuss with peers and develop a chart that compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between interpreting for deaf children in elementary school settings and interpreting for deaf adults in community settings.

- Michelle discusses how much of ethical decision-making is based on an interpreter's discretion. How would you define discretion? How does discretion differ from personal choice or preference? How is discretion forged? What are some of the ways Michelle references? How does an interpreter advance their discretion—help it to mature and become more reliable? What is the consequence of not having a reliable or mature base of discretion—for the consumers of the interpreter's services? For the interpreter?
- Reflecting on how interpreters are scheduled for community or contract assignments, what do you see as the information that needs to be shared with an interpreter as part of accepting an assignment? When the information that is needed is not available to the interpreter, what should the interpreter do? What is the consequence of accepting assignments without sufficient information? What is the consequence for the consumers? For the interpreter? For the agency that does the scheduling? What can interpreters do to improve the quality and thoroughness of information they receive related to assignments they accept?
- Identify what constitutes a risk for interpreters. What kinds of risks are common and/or unique to interpreting? What factors contribute to risk during interpreting (EX: complexity of the content being expressed, length of time available for the assignment, mental state of the consumer, etc.). What are examples of risks that exist or could arise while interpreting? Create a list. Compare your list with peers. What commonalities exist? What differences exist?
- Assess your readiness to interpret for deaf individuals with atypical language. On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate yourself—1 = not yet ready and 5 = experienced and well versed. What are the things you need to do to become better prepared to work with this portion of the Deaf Community? What is the plan of action you can follow to become better prepared? What resources do you need to help you become better prepared? Do you have ready access to these resources? If not, how can you secure access? How much time will it require to gain greater readiness? What are the motivations for doing so?
- What questions remain for you regarding interpreting for deaf individuals who exhibit atypical language use? How can you get answers to your questions that remain?

Content Summary:

Topics Addressed	Main Points
Variations in atypical use of ASL Team Interpreting concerns Lack of training with this population Training considerations Strategies for negotiating meaning Deaf immigrants Role of CDI and misconceptions	Ethical decision-making involves discretion and knowledge of the range of appropriate and acceptable options from which an interpreter can choose. This requires significant work experience as an interpreter in a broad range of settings and with a diverse range of consumers. As a result, novice interpreters are not yet ready to interpret for deaf individuals who use sign language in an atypical manner. They need a strong foundation in communication engagement in more natural and authentic settings with deaf people in general and this portion of the deaf population specifically, before accepting assignments. Assignments with deaf individuals who use sign language in

Novice interpreters and Deaf interpreters: concerns and considerations Ethical considerations Informing hearing consumers when the goal of the interaction cannot be achieved (ex: gaining informed consent) Gaps in the NAD-RID CPC	an atypical manner often involve higher risk due to language limitations. Deaf interpreters are disadvantaged if novice interpreters are sent to assignments as the team interpreter for assignments involving consumers who exhibit atypical language. This makes the work of the Deaf interpreter more complex and challenging and this in turn impacts the deaf consumer. Interpreters working with consumers who exhibit atypical language need to have a high degree of adaptation skills to accommodate variations among consumers. “One size doesn’t fit all.” Interpreters need a myriad of techniques and strategies when working with this portion of the deaf population.
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CALI Staff

- Diana Doucette, M.Ed., CI, CT, Director and Principal Investigator
- Erica Kramer, BS, BS, NIC, Project Coordinator

Consultants

- Anna Witter-Merithew, M.Ed. CSC, SC:L, OIC:C, CI, CT, Project Coordinator
- Elayne Kuletz, M.S., Web Technology Specialist

Filming (2020)

- Access-Simplified, Videographer Services
- Yoon Lee, B.A., Film Editor
- MFD Solutions, Videographer Services
- Samond Bishara, M.Ed., CDI, Model Interpreter
- Michelle Draper, M.S., NIC, SC:L, Ed:K-12, Utah Professional, Model Interpreter
- Mónica Gallego, M.A., NCC, BEI Trilingual: Advanced, Model Interpreter
- Jennifer Harvey, M.S., CI, CT, SC:L, NAD V, EIPA 4.6, Model Interpreter
- Su Kyong Isakson, M.A., NIC, EIPA 5.0, Model Interpreter
- Trenton Marsh, CDI, Model Interpreter
- Kristina Marie Balao Miranda, A.A., B.A., NIC, EIPA 4.5, Model Interpreter
- Mark Morales, DI, Model Interpreter
- Carla Shird, M.A., LPC, CDI, Model Interpreter
- Rayni Plaster Torres, B.A., M.S., CDI, SC:L, Model Interpreter