



## **DEAF INTERPRETER-HEARING INTERPRETER TEAMS**

### **Instructor Plan:**

#### **Unit 3- Assessing the Need for a DI-HI Team- Additional Settings**

Although three particular settings where DI-HI teams often work are described in this unit, it is also important to recognize that DI-HI teams work in a number of additional settings. These settings include, but are not limited to: mental health interpreting, legal, public events settings, and national/international interpreting and/or Deafness-related conferences. Each of these settings is described below.

#### **I) Additional Settings**

1. Employment settings: Deaf people throughout the world work in almost every conceivable type of employment setting. From lawyers, to doctors, to teachers, from technical experts, to computer analysts, to consultants; from factory workers, to construction workers, to janitorial workers, Deaf people are employed in a vast multitude of settings. In the United States, laws are in place that strive to ensure equal access for Deaf individuals in the work place. The Americans with Disabilities Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates access to employment settings, meeting certain criteria, for people with disabilities. Though this is the ideal the country is striving for, it must be noted that there are a variety of factors which may impact the actual provision of accommodations in the employment setting that would allow for Deaf employees to truly have equal access to their work environments.

Interpreters may be asked to interpret for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in a variety of employment related situations spanning an innumerable array of settings in which Deaf and Hard of Hearing people work. Dependent upon the consumer's language needs in these environments, a DI may be a necessary addition to the interpreting team. Lack of appropriate access in the work place can result in detrimental effects to an individual. Without clear communication, it is possible for a Deaf employee to misunderstand office policies and procedures, promotion and advancement opportunities, and other important work-related information. Additionally, it is possible for contract negotiations, employee sanctions, and other legally related information to take place in the workplace, and the need for full communication access in these settings is vitally important.

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The NAD/RID Code of Professional Conduct requires that all interpreters carefully consider the assignments that they accept, and part of this consideration process is to evaluate the need of a DI in any setting. If an interpreter deems it necessary to include a DI in an employment environment, they must be able to justify this request to the employer. In employment settings it is also important to be sensitive to the concerns of the consumer when asking for additional interpreters on the interpreting team. The Deaf consumer may have concerns about overburdening their employer with requests for accommodations, so a conversation with the Deaf consumer is necessary in these settings. Additionally, it is important to have clear and concrete justification for the inclusion of a DI so that the employer may understand the benefits of utilizing a DI when interacting with their Deaf or Hard of Hearing employee.

## 2. Mental Health Settings

As a unique setting with potentially high-stakes results, mental health interpreting requires extensive specialized knowledge, training, skills, and cultural and linguistic competency to effectively facilitate communication among stakeholders. One of the primary challenges in these settings is the fact that mental health professionals depend heavily on language form and content, including subtleties and affective tone, to diagnose and treat mental illnesses.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3DKvZMfFLdWmFVV2tydVRFTHM/view>

Additionally, evaluations, tests, therapy decisions, and therapy approaches are based on English and hearing norms (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). This is compounded by the fact that many mental health providers do not have specific training to work with deaf individuals (Pollard, 2005).

Unfortunately, misdiagnosis of deaf individuals is common (McCay and Daigle-King, 1999). Misdiagnosis of healthy deaf individuals may be due to differing linguistic, cultural, and social norms between the interpreter(s), therapist(s), and Deaf consumer(s). Also, misdiagnosis of deaf individuals who *are* suffering from an illness or disorder but are overlooked may also occur because of assumptions by the mental health worker, or even the interpreter, of disfluency, differencing cultural and social norms (Pollard, 2005). Due to the complexity and serious nature of these settings, their potential for life-altering outcomes, and so much riding on the nuances of language, culture, and social norms a DI-HI team can be a literal life-line for all involved.

## 3. Legal:

Legal interpreting can occur in any setting, however, in this course we focus on three distinct settings: courtroom proceedings, attorney/client interactions, and

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interactions with law enforcement officials. Due to the serious nature of these settings and their potential for life-altering outcomes, interpreters working in legal environments must be confident that their work and conduct is effective, accurate, and ethically sound. “It is best practice to collaborate with deaf interpreter specialists in law enforcement settings because deaf interpreters are able to enhance the accuracy, meaning, and effectiveness of the interpretation” (Stewart, K., Witter-Merithew, A., Cobb, M. , 2009, p.37). There is also legal authority for the use of certified DI-HI teams in courtroom settings. While in other settings the DI-HI team may not necessarily be certified, in statutes pertaining to courtroom interpreting, certified interpreters are explicitly required. The Federal Court Interpreting Act, which oversees the provision of interpreters in Federal courts, states “special interpretation services” are authorized when these services will “aid in the efficient administration of justice.” 28 U.S.C. 1872 (k)(1994). In addition to federal statutes, more state laws are now also requiring courts to appoint CDIs to the interpreting team. For a listing of state laws pertaining to CDIs in courtroom settings see Section B (pp. 46-88) in Mathers, C.M. (2009). The Deaf interpreter in court: An accommodation that is more than reasonable. National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers.

Legal interpreting, however, does not only happen in a courtroom. Deaf clients seeking legal counsel may retain the services of an attorney to get expert advice, to prepare for formal legal proceedings, to seek other possible resolutions provided by the law, and for a variety of other reasons. Attorneys work from a specialized body of knowledge and in doing so ensure that all personal or business-related concerns are conducted in a manner that is in full agreement with the laws of the land. Due to the specialized and critical nature of this type of legal work, DI-HI teams serve best in meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of all parties involved.

Additionally, settings with law enforcement individuals are typically high-stakes legal interactions. The consequences of these interactions can have life-altering implications. Investigations, interrogations, and interviews conducted by law enforcement personnel seek to gather accurate and complete information about potential criminal activity. In fact, the way a suspect handles being interrogated will often determine the eventual outcome of a case. For this reason, these types of interactions with law enforcement officers rely heavily on the clarity of the language used in the questioning process. CDI-CHI teams are the best way to ensure that misunderstandings and errors in the interpretation are kept to a minimum. These teams maximize the accuracy and clarity of the message and ensure the protection of the life and liberties of those involved.

#### 4. Public events:

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A public event is defined as being “any event open for the general public such as, exhibitions, expositions, fairs, festivals, entertainment, cause-related, fundraising, and leisure events” (<http://definitions.uslegal.com/p/public-event/>). These events can vary in terms of their purpose and either be a one-time event or periodic in nature. Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to these public events through the provision of sign language interpreters has become a commonly accepted practice. These public venues create ideal opportunities for DI-HI teams because they are typically planned well in advance, and there is ample opportunity for teams to obtain preparation materials, coordinate logistics, and otherwise prepare for their work together. With the DI on stage, participants gain exposure to seeing the work of a DI-HI team in what is typically a non-life threatening environment. Having had this exposure and positive experience, individual participants may in the future seek out the work of a DI-HI team for their own interpreting needs.

#### 5. National/International Interpreting and/or Deafness-Related Conferences:

National and International organizations established by and for Deaf people regularly convene for membership/leadership meetings, host educational and advocacy-related conferences, coordinate rallies, hold public awareness events on human/civil rights topics and other such events. Examples of such organizations are: The National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), Intertribal Deaf Council, National Asian Deaf Congress, The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), and American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB) to name a few. DI-HI teams are well suited for interpreting events hosted by these organizations for a number of reasons. As members of Deaf communities, DIs often have direct knowledge and experience with the topics and issues discussed in these forums. This first-hand knowledge allows for both a broad and personal understanding of the meaning, intent, and goals of the participants and leaders. From this base, DI-HI teams can better meet the needs of the participants.

Likewise, National and International Interpreting organizations such as the National Alliance of Black Interpreters (NAOBI), the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) regularly host conferences, meetings and events for their membership. These organizations provide Deaf and hearing interpreters: educational opportunities, ethical and skills credentialing, and advocacy. They endorse the practice of hiring DI-HI teams by showcasing the skills of DI-HI teams working for their hosted events. DI-HI teams can ensure greater access for a wide-range of participants and, in addition, serve as role models as they publicly display the work produced by DI-HI teams.

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### Legal

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### Public Events

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## Suggested Resources

### Employment Settings

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (1997). Standard practice paper: Use of a Certified Deaf Interpreter. Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3DKvZMfFLdbXFLVVFsbmRzTVU/view>.

### Mental Health Settings

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### Public Events

Bienvenu, M., & B. Colonomos (1992). Relay interpreting in the 90's. In L. Swabey (Ed.), *Proceedings from Eighth National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers: The Challenge of the 90's: New Standards in Interpreter Education* (pp. 69-80). Pomona, CA: Conference of Interpreter Trainers. Retrieved from <http://www.diinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Bienvenu.pdf>.  
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