



Improving Rural Interpreter Skills

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Module 10: Practicing Ethical Decision Making



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[ASL lecture](#) by Joe Toledo

Module Overview & Objectives

Overview: This module introduces how horizontal violence impacts ethical decision making process as interpreters. Through reflective dialogue, this module offers space for participants to look deeper, analyze, and discuss ethical decisions together as a community of learning.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon Completion of this module participants will be able to:

1. Describe the impact of horizontal violence.
2. Explain the importance and benefits of discussing ethical decisions with others.
3. Analyze ethical decisions focusing on the following areas: doing a values assessment, asking questions to understand others' decisions, and identifying outcomes/consequences.
4. Describe a plan of action in creating a community of support for future ethical challenges.

Pre-Test

NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this pre-test

Answer the following questions:

1. Why is it important to have an ethical code in our work?
2. Why is important to talk with others about ethical decisions?



Introduction

Interpreters often work in silos and as a result, interpreting can be a lonely occupation and we just operate on our own without much growth. As we have discussed in module 5, our own identities and values can have some bearing on how we approach ethical challenges in our work as interpreters. It is crucial to consider the potential harm our decisions may have on the deaf consumers that we work with.

By openly discussing our approaches to making ethical decisions with our interpreting colleagues, we will be creating a culture in the sign language interpreting profession that promotes us to develop new perspectives and tools.

When we disagree with another's approach to ethical challenges, horizontal violence is *never* the answer. Together, in this module, you will explore three different scenarios focusing on the following targeted areas: a values assessment, asking questions to understand others' ethical decisions, and outcomes/consequences. Finally, you will determine how you will move forward in creating a supportive community that you can turn to for support when faced with future ethical challenges.

Why is important to talk about ethical decisions?

Let's get thinking:

- Review [Horizontal Violence: Can Sign Language Interpreters Break the Cycle \(ASL version\)](#) by Kate Block.
- Review the [video](#) accompanying the [Safe/unsafe: the impact of horizontal violence, microaggressions, and decision making control on ASL/English interpreters](#) by Sarah Hill. The article in its entirety is available here for optional further reading.

Take notes of what resonated with you from those readings.

GoReact Discussion: Why is it important to talk about ethical decisions?



NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment

Original post directions:

From the previous two resources, create a GoReact post addressing the following points:

- a. Why is important for us to develop a practice of discussing ethical decisions with other interpreters?
- b. What are the potential effects of horizontal violence?
- c. Why do you think horizontal violence occurs over ethical decisions?
- d. What new thoughts and questions do you have?

Response post directions:

React to the post of one of your colleagues by asking clarifying questions, seeking additional information, or expressing an idea that encourages critical thinking and moves the conversation forward.

Values Assessment

Ethics in practice:

This is an opportunity for you to recall and apply what we discussed in module 5 about how values influence our ethical decision. Review the scenario below and consider how you would respond in this particular situation.

A 70-year-old Deaf woman has had the same interpreter for many of her medical appointments at different clinics over several years. The interpreter has observed the woman's low tolerance for pain. Even as a blood pressure cuff tightens around the woman's arm, she reacts as if experiencing significant, intense pain. The interpreter remembers how, on several occasions at the lab for routine blood draws, the woman screamed loudly as the needle went in her arm. The lab staff always is startled and many staff run to respond thinking something terrible has happened. At a new clinic, the doctor wants her to go to the lab for a blood draw after her appointment. The interpreter wonders if she should forewarn the staff about the woman's tendency to scream. (Source: [Malcolm, 2014](#))

GoReact Discussion: Practice scenario #1 (Values assessment)



NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment

Original post directions:

Creating an original post addressing the following questions:

- Briefly summarize how you would respond to this scenario.
- Considering your approach to resolve the ethical dilemma, what are the competing values that emerge?
- How are those values shaped by your identities?
- Why are those values important to you?
- Do you think those values benefit you or the consumers more or equally?
- If you could approach this situation differently, what would you do? Would the same values apply or different ones emerge?

Response post directions: Review your colleagues responses:

- If their post has shifted your thinking in how you might respond let them know and share why
- Ask clarifying questions to better understand their values and decision making process

GoReact Discussion: Practice scenario #2 (Asking questions to understand others' decisions)



NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment

Original post directions:

Review the scenario below and consider how you would respond in this particular situation before creating an original post explaining what your approach will be and why.

You are scheduled to interpret an annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. This meeting includes two deaf parents, a Koda fourth-grade student, and the student's primary classroom teacher who is hearing and does not sign. While the meeting is going on, using sign language, the family has side conversations amongst them however clearly visible to the teacher. What are the possible interpreting decisions in this scenario? What are choices you may decide to make, and why?

Response post directions:

React to the post of at least three of your colleagues by asking questions to better understand their decision and to seek additional information.

GoReact Discussion: Going forward



NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment

Original post directions:

Create an original post addressing the following questions based on your experience in this module practicing ethical scenario discussions with your COL:

- Thinking about your own interpreting work in your rural area, what does your current support for discussing ethical decisions look like right now?
- Based on what you experienced in this module, how do you want to change the current support set-up?
- How do you feel about discussing ethical decisions with other interpreters?

Response post directions:

React to the post of one of your colleagues by asking clarifying questions, seeking additional information, or expressing an idea that encourages critical thinking and moves the conversation forward.

References

- Block, K. (2015, March 10). Horizontal violence: Can sign language interpreters break the cycle? *Street Leverage*. Retrieved from <https://streetleverage.com/2015/03/horizontal-violence-can-sign-language-interpreters-break-the-cycle/>
- Hill, S. (2018). Safe/unsafe: the impact of horizontal violence, microaggressions, and decision making control on ASL/English interpreters (master's thesis). Western Oregon University, Monmouth, Oregon. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/52>
- Malcolm, K. (2014; 2016). Towards reflective practice: Case studies for interpreting in healthcare settings. Saint Paul, Minnesota: St. Catherine University. Retrieved from https://healthcareinterpreting.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Reflective_Practice_Jul_16.pdf

Post-Test

NOTE: You have to log into Canvas to complete this post-test

Answer the following questions:

1. How do our values and biases influence our ethical decisions?
2. When discussing ethical decisions with others, what is the best approach to understand the reasoning behind their decisions?
3. Why is it important to consider possible outcomes/consequences of our decisions?

Correct responses: Various answers will apply.





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