



Improving Rural Interpreter Skills

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Module 15: Healing-centered engagement



Module content developed by Naomi Sheneman
[ASL lecture](#) by Jennifer Rogers & Joe Toledo

Module Overview & Objectives

Overview: This module exposes participants to trauma-informed care which has been shifted to healing-centered engagement. The participants will identify how this knowledge can be applied to their work as interpreters.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon completion of this module participants will be able to:

1. Distinguish between trauma-informed care and healing-centered engagement.
2. Illustrate how trauma could impact how people interact with us and how we respond to trauma in our work.
3. Give examples of strategies for managing trauma in our work.

Pre-Test

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

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between trauma-informed care and healing-centered engagement?
2. How does trauma emerge in our work as interpreters?



Introduction

We all experience trauma. Trauma is not something that we did instead, it is something that happened to us. Trauma can be a singular catastrophic event such as a death, one-time rape, witnessing violence, or an accident. Trauma can be ongoing such as grief, loss of a job, separation from family and friends, divorce, abandonment, illness/severe injury, abuse, sexual trafficking, enslavement, imprisonment, or war. For some people, traumatic experiences manifest into a post-traumatic stress disorder in which the individual internalizes an automatic fight or flight response even for non-traumatic events (daily conflicts with individuals).

Marginalized people experience trauma more frequently due to systematic oppressions in place as well as individual microaggressions. For example, deaf children may experience ongoing trauma from being put in a mainstream setting where they are constantly “othered” or labeled as different. Court proceedings are part of a system that can be traumatizing for marginalized individuals. Najma Johnson discussed this further in their [panel presentation](#) (time code: 10:04-15:21) as well as how trauma impacts one’s body. One good book to read on trauma and how it impacts the body: [The Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel van der Kolk. Read this [article](#) about the potential impacts of trauma on workplace.

Trauma is a significantly huge topic that impacts all of us one way or another. This module will focus on how an understanding of trauma can support our work as interpreters. You are encouraged to continue learning more about trauma in your own time seeking resources that interest you.

GoReact Discussion: Case Analysis



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

Original post directions:

Scenario: An interpreter reported that she would not interpret for a particular deaf consumer because he never smiles. There is a reason why this deaf consumer does not smile. He is living with terminal cancer so he has more bad days than good.

Create an original post addressing the following prompts:

- Identify possible reasons why the interpreter feels they can only work with smiling consumers.
- Reflecting on your own interpreting work; Have you ever worked with a deaf consumer where you struggled sync? What strategies did you implement in that situation (before, during, and after the assignment)? Had you considered the person's traumatic experiences as something that could be of influence?

Response post directions:

Respond 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.

Trauma-informed approach

What is trauma-informed approach? The SMI Adviser [website](#) offers a very concise description of trauma-informed approach.

Basically, incorporating trauma-informed practice in our work as interpreters is to avoid re-traumatizing the individuals within an interpreting situation. In Module 8, we discussed one situation about how one deaf man said he hated interpreters. For some people, having interpreters can be traumatizing. For some deaf people, being the only deaf person in the room can be traumatizing.

Some resources to get us thinking:

- [Being Informed to Trauma](#) by Jeff Wallace discusses the effects of trauma and the opportunity of being informed about trauma to create a change wherever you are at and no matter who you are.
- [A Trauma Informed Framework for Change](#) describes how trauma-informed approach can be incorporated into systems and services.
- [The Voice of Compassion: Exploring Trauma-Informed Interpreting](#) by Marjory Bancroft.
- [We Owe Our Clients Trauma-Informed Communications \(and so do you\)](#) shares strategies on how to incorporate trauma-informed communication in our interactions with others.

Reframe: Healing-centered engagement

Previously focus has been on trauma-informed care, however in recent years there has been a paradigm shift to focus on healing-centered engagement.

Simply put, **trauma-informed approach is about understanding what happened** to that person. **Healing centered engagement is about understanding what feels right for that person.**

Healing centered engagement takes a holistic approach to the person's trauma by identifying how trauma is experienced and how healing can occur collectively so a group/community can move forward. This follows the [Ubuntu philosophy 'I Am Because We Are'](#).

Healing-centered engagement

What is healing-centered engagement?

Dr. Shawn Ginwright is a strong proponent of healing-centered engagement and has done numerous talks and papers on this topic. [The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement](#) is one article that nicely synthesizes healing-centered engagement.

[What is Healing Centered Engagement](#) was created to offer an overview of Dr. Ginwright's work.

[Promoting Healing Centered Engagement \(HCE\) Using Trauma –Sensitive Communication Skills](#) is a presentation that demonstrates how healing-centered engagement can be put into action.

Vicarious Trauma

The intersection: vicarious trauma & interpreting

In support of the healing-centered engagement, we need to consider how interpreters are repeatedly impacted by learning about or witnessing traumatic events in other people's lives through interpreting. As a profession, we are collectively impacted. Deaf people are collectively impacted as well. Some interpreters have left the profession due to vicarious trauma meaning less supply for communication access.

As you work through those resources about vicarious trauma and interpreting, think about how the healing-centered engagement framework can be applied to support our interpreters as they deal with vicarious trauma in their work.

- [Shielding Yourself From the Perils of Empathy: The Case of Sign Language Interpreters](#) (Harvey, 2003) & accompanying [ASL synopsis](#)
- [Vicarious Trauma Among Interpreters](#) (Lai, Heydon & Mulayim, 2015) & accompanying [ASL synopsis](#)

GoReact Discussion: Healing-centered engagement and vicarious trauma



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

Original post directions:

Create an original post addressing the following prompts:

- How do you think interpreters who live in rural areas experience vicarious trauma as compared to interpreters in more urban areas?
- What have you done to address/resolve vicarious trauma for yourself?
- What ideas do you have for how the healing-centered engagement framework can be used to cope with vicarious trauma?

Response post directions:

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

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Additional Resources

- The CATIE Center offers a [webshop](#) focusing on a trauma-informed approach.
- [ThinkSelf's website](#) offers resources related to trauma-informed interpreting.
- Related to victim service interpreting: this is a [manual](#) for interpreters.
- Mental health services are also another resource to explore in your local area.
- Self-care resources for interpreters are available:
 - [Crezee, Atkinson, Pask, Au & Wong, 2015](#)
 - [Cross-Caldwell, 2017](#)
 - [Gordon, 2017](#)
 - [Jen Kagan Yoga](#)
 - [Virtual Therapy Works](#)

Post-Test

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

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between trauma-informed care and healing centered engagement?
2. How does trauma emerge in our work as interpreters?
3. Based on what you have learned in this module, what are three strategies you want to try in your interpreting work to practice healing centered engagement?

Correct responses: For all responses various answers will apply.





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