



Improving Rural Interpreter Skills

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Module 8: What's my relationship with the deaf community?



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[ASL lecture](#) by Elisa M. Velez

Module Overview & Objectives

Overview: This module challenges the participants to think critically about their current relationship with the deaf community through an exploration of various videos and resources.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon Completion of this module participants will be able to:

1. Describe how the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct can be interpreted in ways that could support or harm deaf people.
2. Identify ways how they can benefit from interacting with lifelong members of the deaf community.
3. Describe valuable lessons interpreters have learned from deaf people in their local communities and or/found in this module's resources.
4. Outline how interpreters can change/improve their relationship with the deaf community.

Pre-Test

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

Self Reflection Question:

Briefly describe your current relationship with the deaf community.



Introduction, part I

In this module, you will recall what was learned in modules 4, 5, and 7 as you delve further into analyzing your relationship with the deaf community. Professionalization of the sign language interpreting profession has resulted in the marginalization of deaf people. Molly Wilson beautifully described this issue in her video, [*bypass*](#).

In module 7, we explored power and privilege in interpreting. Fostering a positive relationship with the deaf community is one way to earn deaf consumers' trust in you and their willingness to let you be a guest in their private lives for the sole purpose of providing communication access. In the [From the Perspective of a Deaf Consumer](#) by June Prusak, she discusses the need for accountability in maintaining the trust and positive relationships with deaf people. In the [Experience during my surgery video by Marisa Mills](#), she emphasized the need for an interpreter to be flexible and accommodating to unique individual needs for communication access.

Introduction, part II

We recognize that in your rural communities, there may be not many deaf people. However, that does not make it impossible for you to develop, maintain and nurture relationships with your local deaf community. It is also important to remember that there are diverse deaf people so there is not one deaf community that represents all of the marginalized identities. You can also reach out to deaf people across the country for their insights, including those from other rural communities. The [panel discussion](#) you watched last summer onsite could serve as a good refresher as well.

Feelings about interpreters are not about you

Interpreters are systemic fixes for communication barriers. Those barriers are not about who we are but what we, as interpreters, represent. This idea is illustrated by the two stories below serving as a reminder that consumers' feelings about interpreters should never be taken personally.

- Dr. Naomi Sheneman, CDI exemplified via [this video](#) recalls meeting a deaf man who exclaimed that he HATED interpreters. Sheneman was taken aback by this comment and admittedly started to feel bothered and defensive about the interpreting work. However, after further discussion with this deaf man, she understood why. He explained that he hated that they were interfering with his privacy... knowing every detail about his medical, legal, educational, professional, and personal experiences. He hated that this world made communication difficult and that he is required to work with interpreters to communicate with the hearing world.
- [Interpreters are Worthless](#) written by Ana Garza G'z and published by [NAJIT](#).
 - In this article, the acronym LEP, meaning Limited English Proficiency, is used.

Intent vs. impact

For consideration:

Watch a deaf consumer's [RID: Code of Audism](#) experience.

After watching that video, review the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) available in both [English](#), released in 2005 and [ASL](#), released in 2022 (17 years later).

Both the RID: Code of Audism and NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct will be utilized in your COL discussion on the next page. Consider both the intent and impact of how the CPC and its accompanying Ethical Practice System (EPS) affects deaf communities.

GoReact Discussion: NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct Analysis



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

Original post directions:

1. Create an original post with two parts:
 - a. In the first part, discuss what problems with the grievance process you noticed from the person's story (video).
 - b. In the second part, what areas from the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct could be interpreted in a way that harms the following marginalized groups:
 - i. Deaf people
 - ii. Deaf people of color
 - iii. Deaf disabled
 - iv. LGBTQIA deaf people

You can offer examples. You can also make suggestions on how the CPC can be modified to fit the needs of deaf/marginalized individuals in your rural communities.

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.

GoReact Discussion: Learning from lifelong members of the deaf community



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

Original post directions:

Watch [this lecture video](#) about a pilot study conducted by Dr. Sheneman in 2019. In module 2, we reviewed Gournaris's dissertation, which emphasized the importance of learning from native language models. Create an original post addressing the following questions with this point in your mind: formal training in an interpreter education program is not necessarily sufficient:

1. What else can you learn from deaf people other than having them as language models?
2. What can you learn from Codas?

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.

GoReact Discussion: Case analysis



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

Original post directions:

Watch [Deaf Disempowerment and Today's Interpreter](#) by Trudy Suggs. Analyze the scenario in the doctor's office that she described in her presentation. Create an original post addressing the following questions:

- What power imbalances emerged in this particular situation?
- If you were the interpreter in this situation, how might you transform the situation to ensure a positive outcome for the deaf consumer?
- If you could talk with that particular interpreter, what would you say and suggest in terms of a different approach? How will you make a case for supporting positive relationships with deaf people?
- What important takeaway points did you get from her presentation about deaf disempowerment? How will that shift your future relationship with deaf people?

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

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Post-Test

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

Self Reflection Question:

1. What is your current relationship with deaf people? Provide a detailed description.
2. Do you want to change this relationship, if so why?

Correct responses: Various answers will apply.





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