

IGNITE

Self Discovery: The Pursuit of
Cultural Competence

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A collection of perspectives by:

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Introduction

Cultural competence is the bedrock of sign language interpreting. As we have seen in demographic reports from a variety of sources over the years, the sign language interpreter population does not adequately represent the diversity of the populations with whom we work. This discrepancy requires us, as professionals, to explore, constantly and consistently, not only our hearing privilege, but our own intersectionality and how our identities impact our work and those who are present for that work.

If sign language interpreters are to acknowledge and deploy their privilege responsibly, we must understand our place and participation in the larger systems of oppression and work towards dismantling those systems.

This inaugural installment of IGNITE provides a collection of perspectives that explore the journey to cultural competence for sign language interpreters. We offer this workbook in an effort to provide a single entry-point for students of interpreting and professional interpreters to analyze and synthesize their own beliefs, biases, and values in order to apply the learning to their professional practice.

Reader Orientation

While most sign language interpreters enter the field with a desire to support communication between signing and non-signing individuals, most come to the work from outside the Deaf community. This is important simply because it means they are more likely to lack the experiences and connections necessary to lead them independently to cultural competence as a practitioner. It is our job, collectively, to educate, support, define, and refine our understanding of the people, languages and cultures with which we work. It is also our responsibility to accept the fundamental challenge of understanding and accepting that sign language interpreters are implicated in the oppression of the Deaf community; we must learn to navigate the intersection of the two roles while leveraging our position for learning.

The first leg of this journey is lead by Robert Lee and his exploration of identity. Identity exploration is fundamental to achieving a level of cultural competence as it requires an

examination of values. After coming to an understanding of our own values, we must attempt to understand the experiences and values of others. Marvin Miller takes over the journey in our second article, focusing on his own experiences on the road to Deafhood. In sharing, Marvin opens a window for us to begin to understand why cultural competence is important to the Deaf community. In our third offering, Aaron Brace offers us an opportunity to peer into his personal thoughts about the dichotomies within the role of a sign language interpreter. This analysis of our role is an excellent example of how cultural competence informs the work of an interpreter. Our final article offers readers a solution. Amy Williamson's article offers us the opportunity to embrace the people who might just hold many of the keys to cultural competence. In supporting and respecting our coda peers and by inviting them to the table, we have the opportunity to learn from those who navigate both worlds so that we may come to a clearer understanding of what allyship can look like.

It is our hope that readers will engage with this workbook to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural competence informs their work while learning to acknowledge and deploy their privilege responsibly.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workbook, readers will be able to:

1. Recognize how the identities ascribed by biology, birth, choice, and others interact to determine the presentation of self in different circumstances. Identify how the identities ascribed by others can impact the relationship sign language interpreters have with the Deaf Community.
2. Define Deafhood. Identify three macro systems disempowering Deaf people. Recognize how cultural competence among interpreters supports the work of the Deaf Community towards equity in contrast to that of equality.
3. Identify the potential impacts of an interpreter unconsciously prioritizing their professional needs ahead of the Deaf people they serve. Describe how an awareness of self contributes to a more conscious interpreter practice?
4. Identify three ways codas are uniquely positioned to provide insight on hearing privilege. Describe how the developmental and formative experiences of codas can be beneficial to the forward progression of the field of sign language interpreting.

Special Thanks

An important part of the StreetLeverage endeavor is the relationship we have with our partners. It is with their support that we are able to accomplish much of what we do. At StreetLeverage we are grateful for the support of our partners in making this first installment of IGNITE possible.



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We would like to extend our gratitude to Dennis Cokely for his insight and guidance on this installment of IGNITE. We also want to acknowledge Jean Miller, Editor at StreetLeverage, for her work to develop the IGNITE Workbook and assemble this installment on the important topic of cultural competence among sign language interpreters.



Identity Presentation: How Sign Language Interpreters Do It With Integrity

Understanding how identity presentation impacts communication is a critical component of successful interactions. Robert Lee challenges sign language interpreters to broaden their perspectives to more accurately represent others in interpreted communication.

“Who are you? Where are you from?” These are seemingly simple questions. However, I find them incredibly complicated to answer, especially in the last few years. Part of my complication in answering has to do with where I currently am in my life, both personally and professionally.

At the time of writing, I am a 40+ year old American who has been living and working in England for the past 6 years. I am not a CODA, but I have been using ASL for more than half my life and have been RID certified for over 20 years. I now use British Sign language (BSL) on an almost daily basis. The change in context has opened me up to the ideas of the multiple identities we have, how we acquire them, maintain them, and how they can change over time. It is clear that we all have multiple identities (e.g. parent, partner, employee, friend, etc.) and present those that are most salient to the interactions in which we find ourselves. Using myself as an example, I would like to discuss both how we see our own identities as well as how we are seen by the Deaf and hearing people with which we work.

“Through others we become ourselves.”
- Lev S. Vygotsky

Origins of Identity

Not all of our identities come from the same place. From the circumstances of our birth to the opportunities we encounter and avail ourselves of, there are a variety of ways in which we acquire identities throughout our lives. Generally speaking, we can break down our identities as coming from four possible places: biologically-determined (or pre-dispositional), circumstances of where/when we are born, those that we choose, and those that are given to us by others (whether we want them or not). These categories are separate but there are interactions amongst them (e.g. because who I am due to my biology may open some choices for me that are closed to others). The chart below gives you some examples in each category:

Biology	Birth	Choice	From Others
Male	American	Irish	“Foreigner”
Caucasian	Son	UK Resident	“Hearing”
Blue-Eyed Near-Sighted	Brother Irish (family heritage)	Interpreter childless	
Red haired	Catholic	Gay (culturally)	
hearing (audiologically)			

Biology

In the first column are those that are more or less biologically determined. In my case, I am a blue-eyed, red-haired, somewhat tall, Caucasian hearing male who is rather near-sighted. While it may be true that environmental factors can play a part (for example, my eyesight might have a genetic predisposition, but how I use or abuse my sight can also have an effect). Also, in some cultures, certain biological traits may be valued more highly than others (e.g. preference for gender of children, or value placed upon height).

Birth

Because of when, where and to whom I was born (New York City, 1960's, to a working class, nominally Catholic, mostly Irish-American family with 2 children already), I acquired the identities listed in the second column.

One isn't born one's self. One is born with a mass of expectations, a mass of other people's ideas and you have to work through it all. -V. S. Naipaul

Choice

With the foundation of the first two categories, I have been able to acquire other identities, many by choice. (It should be noted that some of these identities may provide me with privilege; the fact that I am a hearing, Caucasian male is not trivial. Some of this privilege can allow me to avail myself of opportunities that other may not have access to.) I was born an American Citizen by virtue of the place of my birth; however, I gained Irish citizenship (through a process of paperwork) because of the national origin of my grandparents. Thus, as (now) a citizen of

the European Union, I can legally reside and work in the United Kingdom. Professionally, I was fortunate to discover ASL and the Deaf Community and train as a sign language interpreter. Personally, I choose to openly and outwardly identify as a Gay man and make many of my choices (who I affiliate with, relationships, where I socialise) based on that identity.

Social Identity is never unilateral. Individual identity— embodied in selfhood— is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. - Jenkins

From Others

Finally, there are some identities that are 'given' to me by others. It is clear from my accent (both spoken and signed, I am told) that I am not British, so I am recognised (and sometimes labelled as) a 'foreigner' living in the UK. Also, as I am not Deaf (and I am not a CODA), Deaf people often label me as 'hearing' to distinguish me from Deaf signers. Both of these externally gained identities can be seen as either positive or negative (depending on who is labeling me). Also, because of the support I received from Deaf friends, I became a sign language interpreter (even though it is in the 'Choice' column). My experience living in the UK (where I do less interpreting than when living in the US) is that many Deaf people here perceive me as an 'interpreter' because that is a common identity familiar to Deaf people. Even though I may think I have a certain identity (e.g. University Lecturer), external factors are very important in our identity formation and labeling.

Also, I may choose to present anyone of my identities as primary in a given situation. At the eye doctor's,



my near-sightedness is most prominent, at Passport Control in the airport, my Citizenship is the most salient. Thus, I choose to present myself in a way that is appropriate to the situation.

Presentation of Self

In his classic work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1990), Erving Goffman explores the various ways in which we ‘act out’ various identities in the course of our lives. He argues that much of the work we do in social interactions is to avoid embarrassing ourselves and others. Thus, we modify how we present ourselves on a constant basis in relation to others around us. In addition, we can view our multiple identities as nested; we do not ‘lose’ identities, but bring to the front the one(s) most appropriate for the situation we are in (so, in a professional context my identity as ‘friend’ or ‘partner’ may not be relevant to the specific interaction).

How familiar are we with how Deaf and Hearing people present themselves and can and do we accurately convey that in our interpretations? This is stated eloquently by Stephanie Feyne, in [Authenticity: The Impact of a Sign Language Interpreter’s Choices](#):

A simplistic example is of an interpreter who spends all her time in elementary school settings who is then asked to interpret for a job interview at the professional level. That interpreter would have to assess her own skills: Does she know what interviews at this level sound like? Is she comfortable with the jargon of that field in both languages? Does she have the cadence of a

professional? What kinds of utterances are typically produced there – short declaratory sentences or longer, denser utterances? Her goals would be to ensure that if the Deaf person presents himself as a genuine and credible professional, that she then renders his message in an accurate and professional manner, so that the hearing party sees him as genuine and credible without the interpretation getting in the way.

In addition, it is worth asking ourselves, how do we present ourselves to Deaf people (both in interpreting contexts as well as in social contexts)? How does how we present ourselves to hearing people reflect upon the Deaf people we work with? Stephanie Feyne continues:

... we interpreters, myself included, need to ensure we broaden our range of communication so that it is sufficiently wide to cover all the arenas in which we may find ourselves working. We interpreters must explore our own communicative norms so that when they arise in an interpreted setting we can acknowledge them and elect to disregard them consciously rather than having them control our interpreting decisions.

Personal and Professional Identities

Unlike those in other professions, I feel strongly that for sign language interpreters, there needs to be a close connection between some of our personal and professional identities.



If we are not prepared to have personal and professional parts of our lives involved with Deaf people, then we cannot be effective as interpreters. In terms of development of the profession, Lynnette Taylor in [Modern Questor: Connecting the Past to the Future of the Field](#) reminds us that:

The role of the interpreter was shaping itself in response to the changing needs of the community. All of us, interpreters, D/deaf people, and even non signers, were engaging in conversations about how to work together, sharing worldviews, problem solving ethical conflicts, and it was through these conversations and interactions that we began to learn our place in the story. But perhaps more important, these interpreted interactions and witnessing of stories helped us understand the complexities of our community.

Betty Colonomos in, [Sign Language Interpreters and the Quest for a Deaf Heart](#), states:

Interpreters who have no interactions with Deaf people outside of work miss much of the collective history and current burning issues that show up in interpreted interactions and collegial discussions. How can interpreters who hide behind their interpretation of the Code of Professional Conduct – instead of taking responsibility to intervene – employ strategies that are culturally appropriate to solve problems?

It is incumbent upon us as professionals (who, as mentioned before, often have privilege on the basis of identities such as of hearing status, color, gender,

and socio-economic status), as well as members of a community, that we actively engage with Deaf people and not just in interpreted interactions. We need also to be clear about what identities we hold and how we present ourselves in our daily interactions.

Presenting Ourselves With Integrity

So how do we present ourselves in a genuine way to the people we interact with? We are all individuals and those with whom we interact (Deaf and Hearing alike) will expect us to behave in ways that are consistent with who we are and how we identify ourselves. One of the issues of the “machine model” (see for example, (Witter-Merithew 1986), (Baker-Shenk 1991), and (McIntire, Sanderson 1993), among others) was that sign language interpreters were told that they were not allowed to present themselves. This had an alienating effect on all participants, Deaf and hearing alike. While we must be incredibly careful not to “take over” situations, we need to be mindful that how we present ourselves to the participants in an interpreted interaction needs to be genuine, respectful, and following the expectations of those participants. Some questions to ponder:

- Are we familiar with the expectations of how people present themselves in the range of situations in which we interpret (for example, an office staff meeting versus a vocational training course versus a social networking event)?
- Are we familiar with (and do we use) the expected cultural norms of the Deaf and hearing people with whom we interact?

- Are we respectful of the language choices of the Deaf and hearing people we work with?
- Are we familiar with a range of Deaf and hearing people (in terms of age, race, gender, etc.) and how they expect to interact with us in their language(s)?
- Are we comfortable discussing who we are and what to expect when working with us in appropriate ways?
- Do we present ourselves differently to Deaf and hearing people that we know and have worked with before as opposed to people are meeting for the first time?
- Does how we present ourselves engender trust?

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A Final Point

If we cannot accurately present ourselves with integrity, it will not be possible to accurately represent the participants through our interpretations. Integrity starts with each one of us.

Questions for Consideration

1. Take a few moments to use the chart in the article to examine your own identities. Were you surprised by any of your answers?
2. As you read, did any past assignments come to mind where identity presentation (yours or someone else's) may have impacted the situation? Did you recognize that at the time?
3. What are some ways you can become more familiar with a more diverse range of identities in both the Deaf and hearing communities?

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Deafhood: Liberation, Healing, and the Sign Language Interpreter

Marvin Miller provides a personal exploration of the Deafhood journey – the internal and external dialogue on what it means to be a healthy Deaf person today – and the role sign language interpreters have and can yet play in that journey.

[This is an English translation of Marvin's presentation at StreetLeverage - Live 2015 in Boston, MA.]

I have spent a lot of time thinking about my presentation today. This morning's lectures were astonishing and impactful. They were all fantastic. Those of you just joining via the live stream missed out, but you can view them later when they are posted. The presentations correspond nicely with topics addressed in the Deafhood curriculum - they create a similar sense of discomfort, anxiety, loss of equilibrium, and conflicted feelings. We often label these issues systemic problems. We say the problem lies with "the system" as if it is one huge monolithic system. The system itself works at multiple levels—at the educational level, the interpreter training program level, the community level, and the world level, and these levels all interact with one another.

More and more, we've seen discussion about identities, which has given rise to the term intersectionality. This is an important concept, because, as [Amy Williamson](#) said, for her, it's not a question of being either hearing or Deaf. She's both in one. To choose would be impossible. Our community must grapple with the complexity of these multiple levels of identity. Left to wonder how I could neatly package for you the Deafhood course, training that is comprised of three separate sections, each lasting 20 hours, I had to pick carefully

which aspects I could share with you all. I truly wish I could transfer the needed understanding a la "The Matrix".

It would be so nice if you could just be rapidly injected with the wisdom and knowledge necessary to navigate this world. How many of you dread the thought of going to the gym to work out, or having to practice a skill to become proficient? For those who are studying to become interpreters, entering the Deaf community and learning to sign, I wish we could just exchange our experiences, and, in an instant, just like Neo, suddenly get it. Sorry, StreetLeverage, you'd be out of business. I wish it could be done that way, but it can't. So, what do we do? We come to events like this. We learn from these talks; we discuss these ideas, and then the discussion grows and evolves. It enters the larger discourse and continues to morph and develop until it becomes our reality.

Bill Ashcroft, cited in Paddy Ladd's book, points out that people think discourse is all about discussing what reality is. No. It's the discussion and the germination of ideas that create and shape the reality. Take this hotel - the building, the grounds. Someone had an idea. They needed to create something in this space, came up with a design - an idea of what



everything should look like from the grounds to the pond, to the floor plans. Take this conference. It began with an idea. With each step of the process, everything had to be considered: Where the conference would be held, in what kind of space, with what kind of draping behind the stage? It all starts as an idea. Every decision was analyzed and discussed until it became for us a reality. That very process is crucial.

I didn't come here to lecture you, or to explain how to accomplish this task, or to list all the things you should do. I'm not an interpreter myself. I'm not a CDI. I am Deaf, my parents are Deaf, and I have four Deaf children. I'm engaged in the community, and I work with many interpreters. So, while I bring that set of experiences, I won't preach at you. What I would like to do is share something with you - my Deafhood journey.

My Deafhood Journey

This is my journey. As I share my personal journey, I want you to have some realizations of your own. Again, I won't tell you how to apply this knowledge or how to think about it. Have the discussions, do the analysis. As [Sharon Neumann-Solow](#) said this morning, it won't be comfortable. As you uncover some truths about yourself, you'll be tempted to hide them, to deny them, to refocus on others' work in this process. Don't.

Ironically, my journey began while I was teaching the Deafhood course. It's true! People say, "You already knew all about Deafhood before!", but that's what happened. I had been serving on the board of the

Deafhood Foundation and had gone through the course training on the job when I became President of the Indiana Association of the Deaf, which has an ASL program that offers non-credit classes to the wider hearing community. The ASL program was great, but it dawned on me that while it was perfectly fine to provide courses to the larger hearing community, we weren't providing those same opportunities and training to the Deaf community. Deaf people would derive an enormous benefit from the course. The potential for growth and development in the community was immense, but the course wasn't offered to Deaf people. I was stunned. It was time to establish a course on Deafhood for the Deaf community. We got the approvals, built the curriculum, gathered the materials, created the power points, pored over the readings, and began teaching the course. In the first class, the stories were incredible. Everyone from seniors to youth, from the grassroots to the college-educated, all shared their stories and had lively discussions about their experiences. Class after class has been like that ever since, and now, four years later, we've just completed our 26th and most recent training here in Boston. A few of you here took it. It was terrific.

That has been my journey to a greater understanding of Deafhood. We know of the oppression of Deaf people. We know the struggle, the colonization of language and culture, the history of bans, and on and on, but to engage in the deeper analysis is different. People often say, "Well, I'm a Deaf person, I sign and know Deaf culture, I'm fine. Why do I need this course?" When you take the course, it's astonishing. It's truly an eye-opening experience. Once you learn some key pieces



of information, you're able to reframe your entire understanding of our experience. It's extremely powerful.

Now, I want you to take a few seconds to focus on my next topic - the differences between Deaf community values and hearing majority culture values. (Marvin originally provided a slide outlining Deaf Community and hearing majority culture values.)

Values

You see that we have two columns, one depicting hearing values, and the other depicting Deaf values. I want to make note of a couple of things. First, notice that the top value under the Deaf column is "visual". As Deaf people, we cherish our vision. We treasure ASL, so vision is very important. Further down we see "tactile". I would say that order should be reversed. The tactile is more important than the visual. We know this because the Deafblind community is still a part of the Deaf community. They still use ASL. They still embody Deaf culture even though they don't see. We're known to say that we cherish our vision, and vision for us is indeed important, but we must recognize that the culture and the language are still transmitted regardless of visual ability.

The other thing I want you to notice is that one of the Deaf values is 3-D space while its hearing counterpart is linearity. [Pat Graybill](#) remarked that ASL can express two events simultaneously, using two hands. A spoken language cannot divide the tongue to achieve this. So, linearity belongs to the hearing world, and three-dimensionality belongs to the Deaf world. We each prize our respective values. Music is an important value of hearing people. I often see people grooving to music through

earphones. You see it everywhere. Hearing culture holds music as a high value. Music is also an integral part of almost all movies, as I learned from a friend. It's even used in car chase scenes. I hadn't realized that music was used throughout the film in this way before.

So, we see these two different sets of values, yet each value is no better or worse than its counterpart. They're equally valued as important, and should be respected as such. Understanding the values of these two worlds gives us a rich opportunity to engage, share, learn, and even borrow from one another. When the power is shared equally across that exchange, it is wonderful. Do we in the Deaf community see an equal exchange of ideas and values across these two worlds today? Do those in education and other systems of power who make decisions about our language and culture regard us as equals? No. Hearing majority cultural values subjugate the values of the Deaf Community. The relationship between the two are unequal and unhealthy from a Deafhood perspective.

Unequal and Unhealthy

The Deafhood movement is the culmination of the work of Dr. Paddy Ladd, who spent over ten years studying and unpacking our experience until he arrived at a framework that helps us to more deeply understand the forces of oppression, forces which include audism, racism (which has permeated our history), and linguisticism.

The thread that ties it all together is the concept of hegemony, the colonizing force that seizes power and control over our language and culture, demeans it, and



compels us to adopt the language and culture of the dominant, powerful class until we internalize its false superiority. The vicious, intentional, and persistent practice of degrading a people and then replacing their culture and language with that of the powerful class continues today. The message is, “Our way is better. It’s a hearing world. Spoken language is better. English predominates. Work opportunities only exist in the hearing world.” Despite our protestations and pleas, despite our saying, “We are capable. We can do it. Sign language is important,” they just continue, “You can always learn ASL later. It’s important that you practice speech now.” This ideology is prevalent throughout society.

That’s why I was so inspired yesterday by the students from The Learning Center, who were here sharing their poems and stories. It was spine-tingling. The children were expressing their experiences, showing us the depths of their hearts in beautiful ASL. I couldn’t have done that in my day. Our teachers, some of whom I loved, were mostly hearing. They signed in English, and I internalized their colonialist message. But the children yesterday were expressing themselves in ASL. They have internalized a different message.

Brenda Schertz has said we are making some progress, but sometimes I just want us to make quantum leaps. Internalizing a positive cultural identity happens for some, but I must remind you that the kids from The Learning Center and my four Deaf kids do not represent the vast majority of Deaf children’s experiences. Those who are proficient in ASL, who have internalized

Deaf culture through Deaf adult role models, only amount to 5% or 6% of us. The Indiana School for the Deaf is fantastic. It’s a bilingual-bicultural program where over 80% of the administration is Deaf, including the superintendent and principal. Over 80% of the teachers are Deaf. While we applaud them for their program, we also see that, sadly, most Deaf schools cannot boast those numbers.

Again, once we recognize that the brutal, demeaning, forceful replacement of culture and language is our lived experience, examining that hegemony helps us to understand how it impacts us, not only culturally, but at every single level. It impacts how parents interact with their children—CODAs, SODAs, and hearing children. It impacts how interpreter training programs are run. It impacts how teachers in those programs teach. It impacts how we frame our thinking and how applications are made according to that frame. For Deaf people, that framing is drastically skewed, which forces us to work extremely hard to make sense of it. When we look at our Deaf and hearing values side by side, we see that the Deaf values are utterly suppressed and supplanted by the hearing values. That suppression has a lasting, crushing effect on our people.

This colonization is so ingrained that the moment a Deaf baby is born, they are automatically victim to its crushing effect. They aren’t aware that it’s not normal. They assume that it’s okay. I grew up this way myself, as did many of you, thinking that this is normal. The Deafhood course instructs us to look within, to recognize the position we’re in, to say, “Wait a minute. This is not okay,” and to challenge the colonizer to step off. But when we do challenge



the status quo, the answer is, “You’re going to start complaining? This is not new. This is how things have always been. This is just the reality. There’s nothing to be done.” We answer, “No, this is not reality.” But then, as we get on with our lives, all of our subsequent conversations—with sign language interpreters, at RID conventions, at StreetLeverage, in the community, in Deaf education, at CEASD - happen under this paradigm of cultural suppression, with our values rendered subservient to hearing values. We are powerless in the discourse. As we attempt to discuss working together as allies, we’re situated in this dizzying, skewed frame. We try to talk about collaboration with sign language interpreters who get paid to work in mainstream settings with Deaf children, and we’re agonizing in our disempowered position. Can that conversation be a healthy, equal exchange? It’s incredibly hard. Equality is simply not there.

I talk with CODAs, and I agree that the Deaf community should get together with CODAs and discuss how we can raise our children, both Deaf and CODA. Often the Deaf community has mixed feelings about CODAs, and I don’t want to disparage them, as there are many tremendous CODAs out there. But, as an example, the governor of South Dakota, Dennis Daugaard, is a CODA. I met his father who is very sweet and fluent in ASL. We’ve had lovely conversations. I also met Dennis before he was governor and chatted with him. Did he do anything in his tenure as governor to protect the Deaf school? No. It has closed. Now it is just an outreach center. That was very upsetting. Of course, I don’t blame him personally. It goes back to how we were raised and the messages we internalized growing

up. Having these conversations in the context of an unequal power relationship is extraordinarily difficult. This concept is very important to understand. All of this leads to false divisions such as the divisions between using ASL or oral methods, being educated at a Deaf school versus being placed in a mainstreamed setting. The list of divisions is long, but they are all false.

False Divisions

Our community has been divided and compartmentalized under a host of different labels. Audism plays a huge role here. “Your child can’t hear? She failed the hearing test? We must hurry and start speech training, never mind what those people over there are saying.” This notion of ignoring our input, coercing us onto their path, and rendering us helpless, divides our community. Among the many important lessons we can take from Ladd’s work on Deafhood, there is one critical message.

“All Deaf people are our brothers and sisters.”

Now is the time for the community. We often dismiss members of our community who attempt to assimilate into the hearing world or who have been mainstreamed. We shut them out. We say, “What can I do? How can I help 80% of our people? Privacy laws prevent me from contacting them. It’s impossible to reach parents and early hearing detection and intervention (EDHI) groups.” We don’t take responsibility. Are we to become an ever smaller, elite group? No. Now is the time to recognize that they are all our brothers and sisters. Their culture, their language, their very nature has been stripped of them, brutally replaced by the ideology of the



dominant majority. We have to say, “No more”. Many Deaf and hard of hearing people are out there today with a very weak sense of identity, and their lives are a struggle. We need to step in on their behalf. At the same time, the reality is that Deaf people often do not have the power to fight the system. With little to no power to fight against the system, it is hard to imagine how we can create change.

Along my journey I’ve thought this through and discussed it with others. I’ve come to realize that something out there is stopping us, blocking us from making progress. Rosa Lee Timm expressed it beautifully yesterday in her performance, that desire for a Deaf ideology to get through. But sadly, too often our ideas don’t penetrate. Despite our amassing all the scientific evidence, all the cognitive research to support sign language, our attempts to share that evidence are ignored. Today, 90% of parents still choose an oral-only approach. They don’t sign at all with their Deaf children. I watched Ryan Commerson’s graduate thesis, [Re-Defining D-E-A-F](#), and one part struck me. The whole thesis is great, but I keep coming back to one concept - reframing.

Reframing Perceptions

Stuart Hall is a well-known Black sociologist who studied the impact of mass media on how people perceive the Black community. It is profound work, and he examines the idea of how our perceptions get locked into the subconscious where they become understood as common sense. Honestly, how many people in the world assume it is common sense that Deaf people cannot read beyond a 4th or 5th-grade level, or that it is common sense that Deaf people should not drive or do a whole host of things?

These subconscious perceptions affect not only Deaf people and their myriad identities but also CODAs and interpreters, too. We assume that many of these perceptions are common sense, and we see these assumptions reflected throughout the discourse.

That got me thinking, how can we get inside the subconscious of the colonizing forces and expose the distortion? To Ryan’s point, we can’t only promote the positive aspects of our people and culture, saying, “Deaf is beautiful! ASL is beautiful!” We must also expose the distorted beliefs of the powerful. We must disrupt their belief system, and in doing so, open up the possibility of new interpretations and new meanings. This has to happen in the discourse. Afterward, we can instill the positive attributes of the culture and foster their new understanding.

In the Deafhood coursework, we talk a lot about reframing. Reframing is powerful. In political discourse, we see Democrats and Republicans constantly reframing the issues. They play games with reframing to bolster their positions. For us, it must involve understanding that our subconscious perceptions frame our assumptions. When we research facts and find that they don’t comport with our frame, we discard those facts wholesale. They can’t penetrate our subconscious. That is why facts get ignored. Often the Deaf community says, “We need more research. We need to educate them!” No. Stop it. We can’t beat them over the head with it. We can’t get through to them that way. This applies to me personally as a white, straight man. I have privilege. I experience oppression as a Deaf person, but I have major privileges which are rooted in my



subconscious. So, I have to ask myself, do I think about Deafblind people? Am I considering Deaf people of color? Do I think about Deaf people with disabilities? No. My frame is still locked in my subconscious.

The board of one Deaf organization was talking about bringing in more Deafblind members, more Deaf members who have a disability, and more Deaf people of color. We wanted to build genuine relationships, not just hold them up as tokens and pat ourselves on the back. We realized it would require entering authentic dialogue to achieve real understanding, and that only from that place could we move forward together. While I agreed with this stance, I was also confronted with my privileged frame. When we were discussing Deafblind board involvement, I immediately thought about our non-profit status as an organization, about the cost of SSPs, and the extended time we would need for our meetings. I was fidgeting nervously.

This was my subconscious frame preventing me from moving forward. My impulse was to say, "Let's deal with this later. We can talk about this in a year or two when we're ready. Let's wait." Recognizing these thoughts was shocking to me. I was horrified that I wanted to say, "Wait." This familiar, hurtful command had been stored inside my subconscious, and I was about to make the same demand of others.

Last weekend, the board of Deafhood Foundation (DHF) invited Najma Johnson from a group called, Together All in Solidarity (TAS), for training on intersectionality. It was an introductory, 4-hour course. We barely scratched the surface. The dialogue was amazing, though,

and it was a phenomenal training. However, some people responded that while the training was good, they felt encumbered by the notion that they'd have first to look at the issue of intersectionality, then at Deaf issues, then at educational issues, then at early intervention issues, then at interpreting issues, and so on. But intersectionality is not an isolated issue that we discuss and then shelve while we tackle each other issue in turn. It cannot be divorced from all of these other issues.

You must study, learn, and train on intersectionality until it permeates your thinking about everything, until it becomes a part of your lens. How we see the world must be infused with intersectionality. It is no small feat. We must incorporate intersectionality wholly, such that how I view the Deaf Black community, the Deaf Mexican community, the Deaf disabled community, the Deafblind community, has to change. The time is now. No more of the message, "Wait. We need to put Deaf people first. We'll put the rest of you on hold. Just wait." How long have they been waiting? Are we building actual relationships this way? No.

Now, I want to close with a discussion about a very important word - vulnerability. In her famous TEDTalk, Brene Brown states, "Vulnerability is not weakness."

On Vulnerability

Do you want change? Do you want to foster creativity and innovation? You get there by opening yourselves up to reflection and examination, by apologizing for the things you do and say that are hurtful or problematic, and by being willing to engage



in dynamic discussions about them. Also, you must recognize the power structure within our different organizations. Who are the decision makers? If it's a white majority, what do you do? What if it's all Deaf, yet all white? It is time for us to stop, to say, "No more." How do we step back and make sure that we're on equal footing? Often, we who have the power say, "Come on! Let's talk!" But it doesn't work that way. People in disempowered positions feel afraid, uncomfortable, and unsafe. We have to figure out how to make sure that the power dynamic in the discourse is equal. Only then will a productive conversation ensue.

We need to heal. We have a lot of healing to do together.

Questions for Consideration

1. Consider the privilege(s) you possess. What is one conversation you can start today which may serve to rebalance a local power structure that currently disenfranchises Deaf people?
2. What are three tangible changes that associations for interpreters can make to be stronger allies to the Deaf community?
3. Think of a time when you have gotten caught up in a system of oppression, unwittingly disempowering Deaf people or perpetuating a hearing power structure. If you could go back to that situation, what would you think about? How might you approach a similar situation now, knowing what you know?

About the Author



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Marvin teaches Deafhood classes across the country to the Deaf community, and he is on the board of Deafhood Foundation. Marvin has a background in media and journalism. He is the father of four Deaf children, and he resides in Washington, DC.

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The Duality of the Sign Language Interpreter

Aaron Brace candidly analyzes the dichotomies faced by many sign language interpreters. Instead of avoiding conversations about audism and privilege, it is important to uncover and acknowledge them.

Before I can even consider being an ally to Deaf people in the face of societal audism, as a sign language interpreter I must address another overlooked and, at times, more pernicious *enemy*—the sign language interpreting profession itself.

Enemy is, perhaps, too strong a word for the darker side of my role in Deaf people's lives, but as it stands in counterpoint to the term *ally*, I find it opens a useful window into the duality of my role. I'd like to share some traces of this shadowy figure that I've spotted in the mirror over the last thirty years in both my interpreting process and my doing business as an interpreter. I learned to manage parts of this enemy long ago, while in other ways he will always challenge me.

The Enemy Lurks in My Interpreting Process

Inspiring trust and delight in my customers happens, rather paradoxically, more easily when they feel I understand that there's no real reason they *should* trust me, and that the reason for my presence, at all, is something less than delightful. They need me to be aware that I come with potentially harmful side effects.

Put another way, I sometimes feel I'm like Dr. Jekyll, keeping Mr. Hyde on a strong, short leash. As did Dr. Jekyll, I have to keep this lurking enemy to heel, because he:

Tends to Monopolize Deaf People's Time, Attention, and Space

I've come to understand that my habit of making a beeline to a Deaf person's cubicle and cheerily plopping myself down in the guest chair to start establishing our working relationship is often, well ... annoying. The first time I took it upon myself to acknowledge he might be busy and offered to wait elsewhere, the Deaf person's sense of surprise and relief was palpable. This has led me to look for other instances where my presence or my good intentions get in my customers' way and can be managed less obtrusively.

This tendency also manifests itself in how I approach prep. My insistence on time to prepare with a speaker may prioritize my need for confidence in the quality of my product over the speaker's need for confidence in hers. Insistence on advance prep can also have the effect of implying either that I'm not confident in my comprehension of the source language or that I



suspect that the speaker won't express herself well. Also, I may over-estimate how much my product improves as a result of the preparation I demand.

Overestimates His Centrality to the Relationships Between Deaf and Hearing People

I think he must have had a hand in writing the RID Philosophy Statement:

"The philosophy of RID is that excellence in the delivery of interpretation and transliteration services between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people who are hearing, will ensure effective communication."

On some level I truly want to believe in this. If I don't, how do I have the nerve to interpret at all? But my customers are not well served by a quasi-messianic philosophy that valorizes my role far above theirs. It's also simply inaccurate; customers often communicate effectively despite my excellent service rather than because of it. They also, due to forces beyond the reach of my service, can end up not communicating effectively.

Is a Fundamentalist in His Adherence to Interpreting Models

I am tempted to embrace new wisdom on effective practice in a way that stigmatizes older wisdom as outdated and oppressive. I believe that fully empowered customers may still request that I perform more like what we'd call a machine or a conduit. Even as I understand that some customers express such a preference because that's all they

think sign language interpreters can do, or they think they're doing me a favor in making my job "easier." My Mr. Hyde and I go 'round and 'round over whether it's more oppressive to comply with requests that might stem from internalized oppression or an incomplete understanding of one's options, or to presume that it's even my place to try to "diagnose" such things.

Is Wired to Privilege Auditory Input Over Visual Input

I realized at one point that my default strategy for managing turn-taking was to always finish what the hearing person said before attempting to get the floor for the Deaf person. On one hand, it merely revealed my auditory bias. On the other, it perpetuated the notion that the hearing person was the holder of knowledge, and the Deaf person was the needy receptacle. Once I realized this input bias and its implication, I over-compensated by stridently talking over hearing people the second a Deaf person raised her hands. While I've since greatly improved the equitability of my turn-taking management, I've only very recently learned that I maintain eye-contact in a way that doesn't accurately convey the availability of the floor in ASL discourse, depriving Deaf people of cues that would help them manage graciously taking the floor for themselves.

The upshot: The choices I make in the name of effective practice almost always come with potentially dangerous side-effects that I must predict and be prepared to mitigate.

The Enemy Lurks in the Business of Interpreting



For several decades, interpreting has been a viable profession for me due to my having appropriate education, skills, and credentials. Because it has been viable for so long, I've never been forced to think much about this Mr. Hyde-like enemy and his conception of what I do as a profession, a career, and a business. There is a need to confront this enemy because he:

Expects His Degree and Professional Credential to Command Respect

I wonder if it was necessary, in order to put forth the immense effort needed to earn a degree and professional certification, to believe that these things say more about my ability than they really do. Hearing people, including my family members and the people who are usually responsible for hiring me, typically consider me an expert because I have a degree and a certification after my name. It's tempting for me to do the same. It's tempting to resent having to prove myself anew to each customer and each colleague I meet. It's tempting to feel betrayed by the institutions that authorized my entry to practice, knowing that savvy customers consider me competent in spite of my paper qualifications, not because of them.

Is Rigid About Best Practices and Industry Standards

There's a fine line between what I need in order to do my work well and what I want in order to make it easier. I often lose sight of that line. I insist on industry standards like going rates, cancellation policies, two-hour minimums, and best practices like requiring a teammate and prep materials, as if these

were all cast in stone, even at times when there might be a good reason to waive or modify them. I also don't want to legitimize disreputable agencies that don't follow standards, even when this may cause customers whose are stuck with those agencies to suffer. This is another issue on which this Mr. Hyde-like character and I go 'round and 'round.

Maintains Faulty Expectations of a Profession, a Career and a Business

I was raised to expect that a profession would provide all of my material comfort, and that at some point I would cease having to defend or prove my expertise. I expected I could pursue a career ladder in my own best interests, and that there would always be a higher rung to reach for. I expected that as a businessman I would be expected to prioritize maximizing profit, at least slightly, ahead of all other considerations.

These unexamined expectations clash with my reality even during flush times, but significantly more so in the current economic climate, with an ever-expanding roster of gatekeepers to the work. The situation has become dire for some colleagues, and the volume of my work is trending in the same direction. What happens when my profession can no longer provide the same income? How do I continue to provide customer-centered service while dealing with the financial hardship, the blow to my professional ego, and the feeling of betrayal by my industry?

I think that understanding and seriously altering my expectations, learning to live with less to the extent that I can, is the best thing I can do to avoid



having to make choices out of desperation while I work with my community to make things better. I also wonder whether it's viable to continue bringing new practitioners into the field, or into specific markets, expecting that we will all continue to be able to support ourselves solely as sign language interpreters.

The upshot: *A schema roughly bounded by concepts like profession, career, and business fosters expectations of the rewards for my work- expectations of which I'm mostly unaware, yet which can thwart the interests of my customers.*

Living With Duality

One last observation about this enemy in the mirror: he resists thinking about issues like these because he thinks they entail a life of constant apology.

I'm not sure I'll ever fully understand my duality as both ally and enemy in the lives of Deaf people without some measure of guilt. Like many members of privileged groups, I hope to learn the right way to behave toward an oppressed group—once— and never again have to feel unsure of myself or guilty about my privilege. I seek constant validation as “one of the good ones.” I believe this takes a psychic toll

on Deaf people, though—even those who know me well and truly value what I have to offer—when I deny there's a shadow cast by even my worthiest efforts.

I can only hope to be an effective ally against an enemy opposing Deaf people's interests when I understand how “he is us,” and in some ways always will be. When I demonstrate a fuller understanding of both what I give and what I take, it is returned by Deaf people, not with a sneering pleasure at my knowing my place, but with greater trust, friendship, and welcome.

Questions for Consideration

1. Which dualities in the article resonated for you? How do you manage those issues in your own practice?
2. What strategies would you recommend to emerging interpreters to manage their need to prep and their desire to respect the time and energy of presenters?
3. What are your expectations for your career as a sign language interpreter? Do your expectations align with the anecdotal comparisons you receive from your peers? If they do not, what steps can you take to create alignment?



About the Author



Aaron Brace

Aaron Brace credits the course and longevity of his career to Patrick Graybill, Dr. Ted Supalla, and the Deaf communities of Rochester, New York and the San Francisco Bay Area in California.

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The Cost of Invisibility: Codas and the Sign Language Interpreting Profession

Codas are often ignored and undervalued. Amy Williamson provides insight into Coda perspectives and asks sign language interpreters to recognize these peers and the wealth of experience they bring to the table.

I recently attended an interpreter retreat where the purpose was to examine privilege, how it manifests in our individual work lives, our relationships with each other, and within the sign language interpreting profession as a whole. Privilege is a topic that makes for a hard discussion for any group of people. Those of us in attendance included new interpreters, been-around-the-block interpreters, urban, rural, hearing families, deaf families, deaf, hearing, coda, partners of deaf people, and siblings of deaf people. We committed to a weekend of taking the time and space to look at what each of us has to offer. We talked about being marginalized, feeling marginalized, and how we marginalize each other.

We were honest.

We were vulnerable.

Our conversations were raw and invigorating.

It was in this setting that I was, again, pushed to face a reality that I have encountered periodically over my 20-year career...our field does not understand, appreciate, or value what it means to be hearing and raised in a deaf parented home.

The Invisibility of Between

Codas live in an in-between space within the sign language interpreting profession.

We are not hearing. We are not deaf. As such, we are often not seen nor valued. We are; however, both vilified and worshiped in good measure.

From our hearing colleagues, we are told that we are lucky to have deaf parents and that it must have been easy to become an interpreter. We are told that our skills are not up to par because we didn't attend an Interpreter Preparation Program and hearing interpreters tell us that we make them nervous.

From the deaf people we work with, we are told that they are relieved we are present because they can relax and understand what is being communicated. We are also told that we can't be trusted because we may tell our deaf family members their business.

Our experience affords us the opportunity to apply authentic, connective experience and insight to our work. Is this threatening or is this assuring?

An example of the invisibility of between is the lack of coda involvement at the formal and informal decision-making tables within the field. How many non deaf codas have there been over the past few years on the RID National Board? How about within the RID committee structure? How many codas are there on state chapter committees and executive boards? How many codas are there in the wise circle of professionals that you call on when you need to talk out an



issue? Whatever you answer, I will argue, as does Dennis Cokely in his post, [Vanquished Native Voices—A Sign Language Interpreting Crisis?](#), that it is not enough.

What does the absence of this insightful perspective cost the field in the form of forward progress?

The Footings of Invisibility

The Difference That Divides

I grew up the child of intelligent, savvy, funny, competent, employed, educated, honest, bilingual, loving parents who were each part of large extended deaf families. Being deaf in my family is normal. I also grew up being told by every hearing person I encountered (including my own hearing family members) that my parents weren't good enough. That it was my job to take care of them. It was my job to look out for them. Communicate for them. Be their ears. I was constantly pitied.

I was marveled over...the fact that I could hear and they could not was viewed as a miracle. "Bless your heart, honey" was a constant refrain in my southern existence.

Even today, when I tell people my parents are deaf, I am always asked (without fail), "both of them?" as if that would be the end of the world. The second question (without fail) is "what is it like having deaf parents?" as if I have anything to compare it to. I was made fun of by other kids. I was always different...but not in the way that all kids at some point think they are different. I was coda different.

Every coda has this experience. Our experiences vary by degree and extent. Our coda experiences vary as

the temperament and personalities of our parents vary, but there is an experience that is common to all codas. The experience that unifies us is that we all get the same reactions about our parents from people who simply don't know any better.

We are told and whispered all of this, yet; the people being talked about are actually the parents who took care of us. Shielded us from danger. Fed us. Loved us. Yes, parented us.

Conflicting Realities

Never do these well-meaning family members, teachers, friends, strangers say to our deaf parents what they say to us. They wouldn't dare. As young children we are left holding onto it all...most of us choosing (consciously or unconsciously) not to share what we were told with our parents. We held these conflicting realities and were too young to know what to do with them or about them.

Many of us grew up in a home where our deaf parents hated hearing people (with good reason given discrimination and oppression) and were free in talking about their distrust and hate for the hearing community. Many of us developed our own hate for hearing people after witnessing and being victim ourselves to injustice after injustice. We had the hearing community pitying us and telling us we weren't deaf, because by miracle we could hear. We had our deaf parents telling us we were hearing, yet also saying that they hated hearing people. Confusing is an understatement.

The Aftershock

As a result, from a very young age, we decide what we are going to believe. Some of us drink the



Kool-Aid and agree with the hearing community's assessment of our parents. We believe them when they tell us that we need to take care of our parents, look out for them, communicate for them, even pity them. That we are miracles and that it is so very sad that our parents are deaf. Poor us. We believe that ASL is a bastardized form of English and is substandard. We are ashamed of our families.

Others of us come out fighting and defend our parents and the deafness within us with a vengeance. We shoot verbal (or physical) daggers at anyone that dares attack the reality and validity of our existence. In fifth grade, at least one of us is sent to the Principal's office for giving what-for to the biggest kid in the class for calling her parents 'dumb.' We hate hearing people for putting us in the position to question our parents' abilities, intent, and love.

Then there are the rest of us who vacillate between the two extremes, yet usually settle somewhere in the middle. We find a way to navigate between our deafness and our hearingness, yet never really feel a part of either.

We are all coda. Not deaf. Not hearing.

We are somewhere between.

Depth of Perspective

Our uniqueness doesn't have to do with language fluency. Defining a coda by language fluency or native/near-native/native-like signing fluency misses the point completely. Some of us grew up not knowing how to sign fluently ourselves. Many of us fingerspelled everything we said to our parents. Some of us spent the first few years of our lives

assuming we were as deaf as our parents and were perplexed when we were not taken to the school for the deaf on our first day of kindergarten.

We are not all interpreters and those of us who are don't have it come 'naturally' to us. We work very, very hard at a very, very difficult task, interpreting. Some of us do it well. Others of us struggle.

Our insight comes from spending our developmental and formative years in this between space.

We have brokered between the deaf and hearing worlds our whole life. Disdain. Joy. The mundane. We have done it or seen it communicated directly. We learned fast and early what it took for the local mechanic and our dad to understand each other. This unique experience leads to a skill that cannot be taught in an IPP. It can't be learned by having a deaf sibling or deaf partner even. It's not about 'knowing' sign language your whole life. Our uniqueness is about being parented by a deaf person. A person that you can't just walk away from, avoid, or never see again. A person who is oppressed on all sides...by their families, by their education, by the media, by the judicial system, by their employer, and, yes, sometimes by their own children.

The word 'parented' is the operative one here. It implies a bonding, a relationship of dependence, of value sharing, of boundary teaching. We were parented by competent people who were viewed and treated as incompetent by the majority of society. A majority that takes it upon themselves to tell you how incompetent your parents are under the guise of kindness or good deeds. This experience is unique and solely a coda's.



Deaf children of deaf parents do not get this reaction directly from the hearing people they interact with. They are pitied and vilified and objects of fetishism (this is how I describe the folks who think sign language is beautiful hand waving and don't really get the linguistic and cultural aspects of the community) the same way their parents are. Their experience having deaf parents is unique to that relationship. They do often function as brokers within the deaf community but their experience is very different from that of hearing children with deaf parents.

Leveraging Insight

Codas have lived life in a deaf parented home after the interpreters and well-meaning hearing people have all gone home. It is then that our deaf parents whisper to us what they dare not say in front of them. We continue to hold the secrets of our deaf parents and the secrets of the hearing community (including hearing interpreters who quietly share their sentiments).

As described by Alex Jackson Nelson in, [Sign Language Interpreters: Recognizing & Analyzing our Power and Privilege](#), this experience is rich and results in a deep understanding of hearing privilege:

“Many Codas have experienced unique and complex roles, having hearing privilege in a Deaf family, straddling two cultures and dutifully providing communication access without pay. Perhaps, a deeper understanding of privilege contributes to their intrinsic connection to the fight for humanity.”

Alex goes on to state, “In my observation, many Codas possess an unequivocal understanding of privilege and power that is not easily recognized by non-Coda interpreters (including myself.)”

Perhaps, with this unique and unequivocal understanding of hearing privilege, codas still have a contribution to make to the field. After all, and as Dennis Cokely pointed out in [Vanquished Native Voices—A Sign Language Interpreting Crisis?](#), codas have been the bedrock of our field.

What contribution do you think someone with this unique insight and perspective can make?

A Standing Invitation

I shouldn't have to say that our perspective brings value to our profession. Retreats like the one I attended shouldn't be the only place and time we talk about who we are and what we have to offer. Codas shouldn't have to beg for a place at the decision-making tables of our field.

Yet, here I am. Saying it. Begging for it.

We, codas, are here. We have a lot to share. Invite us to the table. Pull out a chair for us. Welcome us.

Questions for Consideration

1. Consider your own relationship with codas in your daily practice. Have you engaged with a coda interpreter about their unique perspective(s)? Why or why not?
2. What prevents interpreters who are not codas from engaging in meaningful dialogue about the coda experience?



3. For coda interpreters: What are some ways individual interpreters can welcome you to the table? What does that look like for you?

About the Author



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Amy is a doctoral student, interpreter, consultant, and educator with an interest in heritage language signers, native bimodal-bilingual interpreters, and interpreters in educational settings.

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In The End

As sign language interpreters, it is important to identify bias and privilege and to recognize gaps in our personal understanding of the diversity of the human experience. By examining the broader implications of hearing privilege, audism, identity representation, inclusion versus exclusion, and our attitudes towards our Coda peers, sign language interpreters can move toward becoming greater supporters of social justice in the field of sign language interpreting.

Cultural competence is not a destination. There is no finish line. The path to cultural competence is ongoing and complex; it requires a level of humility, openness, curiosity, discomfort, perseverance, and strength of character in order to navigate successfully.

Considerations

Discussion Questions

- In what ways is audism subtle and insidious in the field of sign language interpreting?
- Why is it uncomfortable for hearing sign language interpreters to discuss audism and social justice models within the Deaf Community?
- As a sign language interpreter, why do the words you use matter when talking about the Deaf Community and social justice?
- As a sign language interpreter, the conversation about oppression within the Deaf Community implicates you. How do you ensure your voice is not at the center of the discussion?
- How does moving the conversation about social justice forward benefit you as an interpreter?
- How can sign language interpreters use their hearing privilege to move conversations about social justice forward?

Cultural Competence Inventory

1. Complete the Personal Identity Wheel document found [here](#).
2. Complete the Social Identity Wheel document found [here](#).
3. Identify three areas of cultural competence that are strengths for you.

4. Identify three areas of cultural competence where you have room for improvement.
5. Spend 60 min seeking feedback on both your cultural competence strengths and weakness and discuss the role of identity in each.
6. Determine one area of improvement to begin focus on (most impactful first).
7. Identify three resources that can used to reinforce your long-term cultural competence learning.

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