



## Code of Ethics

### Association of Serbian Sign Language Interpreters

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3. Confidentiality
4. Impartiality
5. Capability
6. Accuracy
7. Continuing professional development
8. Professional solidarity
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#### **1. Professional practice**

- Interpreters shall properly prepare themselves for an interpreting assignment (familiarize themselves with the topic, terminology, context, etc.) as well as show up for the assignment in time – at least 15 minutes before the start;
- Interpreters shall check to see if there are any communication barriers, that is, whether they and consumers use the same sign language;
- Should unexpected communication problems arise (such as working with persons who have cognitive problems, those who have not received formal education or have minimal language competence, or dealing with a foreign sign language) interpreters shall seek help (from, for example, more experienced colleagues, deaf interpreters, linguists...) in order to do the assignment to the best of their ability and convey the message accurately and fully;
- Interpreters shall refrain from giving advice or interjecting personal opinions;
- If, for any reason, interpreters are not able to do the work contracted, they shall inform consumers about it in time and help find replacement;
- Should consumers seek information about where to obtain some advice or service – for example, deaf clients might be unaware of the existence of the social services center – interpreters shall share the information, avoiding an infringement of consumer rights or a discussion about the services;
- Interpreters are expected to conduct and present themselves in a manner befitting the interpreting situation. The image interpreters project reflects on consumers;
- Interpreters shall avoid situations that constitute a conflict of interest;
- Interpreters shall not use confidential information obtained in the course of interpreting for any personal, financial or professional gain.

## **2. Competency**

- Interpreters shall provide the best service they possibly can;
- Interpreters are expected to keep abreast of any new features in signing;
- Interpreters shall accept assignments in accordance with their knowledge, skills, current physical and mental state, and clients' needs;
- Occasionally, interpreters might not be aware of the complexity of assignment beforehand; should this be the case, they shall inform consumers about it on the spot so that an adequate solution can be found;
- Interpreters shall acquire information that will help them assess whether they can carry out the assignment and thus decide whether they will accept it;
- Interpreters shall evaluate clients' needs and interpreting situation before and during the assignment and be ready to make adjustments when necessary;
- Interpreters shall convey the content and the tone of the message faithfully, using the language which consumers understand best and which befits the situation, and correcting any mistakes they might have made in a discrete and effective manner.

## **3. Confidentiality**

- All information interpreters obtain in the course of interpreting are strictly confidential and shall be held in confidence;
- Interpreters are released from this obligation when ordered by law (e.g. court, police, etc). In such circumstances, interpreters shall provide the authorities with pertinent information;
- In certain situations, interpreters might exchange information with colleagues who work on the same assignment and only if necessary, with fellow interpreters or a professional team, in order to resolve a professional dilemma;

## **4. Impartiality**

- Interpreters are mediators and advocates of participants in communication;
- Interpreters shall always remain neutral, impartial, and objective;
- Interpreters shall not alter or modify a message for political, religious, moral, philosophical or any other biased or personal reasons;
- Should interpreters not be able to meet the condition of impartiality, they shall consider other options such as not accepting the work contracted, or withdrawing their services from the assignment.

## **5. Capability**

- Interpreters shall be accountable for quality of the work done and shall accept the assignment only if they are certain they have a proper knowledge, skills and abilities to do it.

## **6. Accuracy**

- Interpretation shall be faithful and every message of the source text shall be rendered faithfully. This is not to be confused with a literal interpretation (transliteration). A faithful interpretation implies that the form, the tone and the deeper meaning of the source message shall be conveyed

in a manner which makes it intelligible and felt in the target language and culture. Not a single piece of information shall be omitted or added in the course of this process.

## **7. Continuing professional development**

- Interpreters are expected to maintain the level of competence and professional practice by further enhancing their knowledge and skills.

This implies that interpreters shall:

- Attend workshops and conferences on sign language, both at home and abroad;
- Seek advice and collegial consultation;
- Participate in the events of the Deaf community;
- Enhance their knowledge of the language and culture;
- Keep abreast of the specialized field they work in (medical, legal settings, etc);
- Familiarize themselves with current tendencies in the field of interpreting, legislation, policies and regulations, and all acts that have some impact on the interpreting profession;
- Try everything that might help them do their job as professionally and effectively as possible.

## **8. Professional solidarity**

- Interpreters are expected to work together with their colleagues. The way they treat their colleagues reflects on the profession.

This implies that interpreters shall:

- Maintain good interpersonal relationship with their colleagues;
- Work with team interpreters and negotiate logistical issues with them before embarking on the assignment;
- Offer professional support when needed and monitor the accuracy of interpretation when working as part of a team;
- Directly discuss the situation in which any breaches of the Code of Ethics occurred with a colleague, trying to resolve it, and only if these attempts fail or the violation proves to be highly detrimental or repetitive file an official report;
- Offer help and assistance to colleagues, empower them through an exchange of information, and undertake a mentoring role where appropriate;
- Ask for a colleague's consent before inviting any of the trainee interpreters to attend the assignment;
- Resolve all conflicts and differences with colleagues in a direct and civilized manner and avoid damaging the reputation of colleagues and the interpreting profession.

## **9. Non-discrimination**

- Interpreters shall provide services to consumers in a professional and effective manner irrespective of ethnicity, nationality, gender, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other factor.

## 10. Respect for consumers

- Interpreters shall respect a consumer's choice of interpreter, mode and dynamics of interpretation in view of the qualifications, possibilities and given situation.

This means that interpreters shall:

- Respect a consumer's choice of the mode of communication and convey the message accordingly (using Serbian sign language or sign supported Serbian, that is, Signed Serbian);
- Always approach consumers professionally;
- Ask for a consumer's consent before bringing any of the trainee interpreters to the assignment;
- Facilitate communication and equality, and support complete interaction and independence of consumers;
- Respect differences that might emerge in signing.

Sign language interpreters work under certain terms and conditions laid out in the **Standard Practice Paper**.

Due to the lack of interpreters, interpreters might find themselves in situations in which they will not be able to comply with one of these rules (e.g. the rule to avoid situations which constitute a conflict of interest or situations in which they cannot remain impartial). In these circumstances, a consumer shall immediately be informed about it so that an adequate solution may be found.

A violation of the Code of Ethics will be cause for disciplinary action, including removal from the List of Interpreters.