



WORKING WITH ASL INTERPRETERS

Professional interpreters will provide **American Sign Language (ASL) services**. We invite you to review and follow the following best practices. Our goal is to facilitate communication and create an accessible environment that upholds **language justice** and **language access** for D/deaf and Hard of hearing (DHH) persons.

Definition> Sign language interpretation: the interpreter translates from spoken English to American Sign Language (ASL) for the DHH persons. When a DHH person responds in ASL, the interpreter then voices for the rest of participants. Some DHH persons, however, may choose to voice for themselves.

1. **At the start of your event**, let the audience know the event is being interpreted and that they should see the interpreter(s). Ask DHH persons to confirm that they can see the interpreter(s). **Introduce interpreters by their names to the entire group.**
2. **Speak at a moderate pace**, not too fast or too slow. The interpreter will ask you to slow down or clarify if needed.
3. **Be aware of lighting and backgrounds**, if lights will be turned off or dimmed (for viewing overhead projections) the interpreter needs to be visible at all times.
4. **Provide any reference materials and handouts to interpreter(s) in advance:** PowerPoint slides, and other materials allow the interpreter to better prepare to translate the content.
5. **If you plan to read something aloud, provide the interpreter with a copy before you begin**, when reading aloud, people often tend to speak faster than normal. This may affect the interpreter's translation of the material. If possible, try to slow down a bit when reading.
6. **Speak in a loud voice**, so you can be heard clear across the room.
7. **Speak directly to the DHH person**, not to the interpreter(s). A common mistake is to say, "Tell them..." or "Ask them..." Instead, make eye contact with and speak

directly to the DHH person as though the interpreter is not present. **Ask the DHH person to explain something if you do not understand it**

8. **One person talks at a time**, when a group of people meet, they tend to talk over one another. Be mindful that the interpreter can only interpret one message at a time.
9. **Interpreters work in pairs**, understand that the work of an interpreter is mentally and physically challenging and that the interpreter requires sufficient breaks throughout the day.
10. **Expect lag time**, during group discussion, remember that the DHH person will receive information slightly delayed in relation to the rest of the group. Look to the interpreter to assure s/he has completed interpreting questions presented to the entire group so that the DHH person has an equal opportunity to respond.
11. **Be sensitive to the fact that interpreting places additional visual demands** on the DHH person that may cause fatigue.
12. **The speaker and interpreter should both be in the deaf consumer's line of sight**, make sure you do not stand between the interpreter and the DHH person.
13. **Understand that although ASL interpreters aim to provide objective interpretations, they are Deaf culture allies and will advocate for the DHH person as needed.**

Questions? Contact us at asl@globalyns.com

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