## Legal Interpreting Skill Development: Sight Translation

## What is SIGHT TRANSLATION?

Sight translation is the signed rendition of a text written in English into American Sign Language (ASL) and is usually done *in the moment*. Sight translation is sometimes requested - and should be regularly offered - during an interpreting assignment. It is a process that involves a hybrid of skills associated with translation and interpretation (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, 2009).

## What are some basic GUIDELINES to follow?

Given what interpreters know about reading levels within the Deaf population, it is important that interpreters are prepared and offer to provide sight translation of forms utilized as part of the legal

**Example**: In spite of what you may have heard, scientists are just like other people. A scientist walking down the street may look just like an insurance agent

- 8. **Triad Practice Explanatory Texts**: This exercise works well with forms that are providing an explanation of services or processes. When working in a small group of three, rotate roles of 1) interpreter doing the sight translation, 2) consumer of the translation, and 3) observer comparing the translation with the written English text in preparation for providing feedback. The interpreter and observer will each have a copy of the text. The consumer will not. The observer will provide feedback to the interpreter about the accuracy of the translation and the equivalency in meaning between the written text and the ASL translation. The consumer will provide feedback to the interpreter regarding comprehensibility and meaning. The interpreter can discuss what was challenging about the text, the effectiveness of the strategies they used, and what they might do differently were they to do a sight translation of the text a second time. If time permits, allow the interpreter to re-do the translation to incorporate the feedback. Then, rotate roles until each individual in the triad has an opportunity to engage in the sight translation process. As you rotate, change the text so that each interpreter is working with a different text.
- 9. **Triad Practice Interactive Texts**: This exercise works well with questionnaire forms that require the consumer to provide answers to questions. When working in a small group of three, rotate roles of 1) interpreter doing the sight translation, 2) consumer of the translation, and 3) observer comparing the translation with the written English text in preparation for providing feedback. The interpreter and observer will each have a copy of the text. The consumer will not.

The interpreter will collect information from the consumer using the form and providing a sight translation of each question on the form. So, the process is interactive - the interpreter sight translates the questions and the consumer provides answers to those questions. The consumer may put down the written answer and/or the interpreter could record the answers provided by the consumer.

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