

# ETIQUETTE WHEN USING A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

- Look at the person when signing/speaking to them, not at the interpreter.
- Look at the person who is signing/speaking to you, even though this may feel awkward since the message is coming through an interpreter.
- Address the person directly:  
Appropriate communication: "Where were you born?"  
Inappropriate communication: "Ask him where he was born."
- When possible, please share any notes, outlines, or handouts with the interpreter in advance, or at the very least, provide a copy of these items to the interpreter during the assignment.
- If, during the assignment, you plan to turn down the lights, remember to leave enough lighting on the interpreter.
- The interpreter may ask for specific seating/positioning to facilitate the best viewing angles for himself/herself and for the client.
- Sign/speak in your normal tone of voice at a moderate pace. The interpreter will tell you if you need to pause, slow down or repeat the information.
- People sometimes read aloud in a different manner than they typically sign or speak. When reading extensively from written materials, consider supplying a copy to the audience and the interpreter. Be aware of the pace of your speech, especially when reading aloud.
- Be aware that the interpreter should interpret everything said, so avoid discussing subjects you don't wish the deaf/hard of hearing person to know.
- When separated from the person you are communicating with, avoid giving messages to the interpreter to relay at a later time to the individual.
- Relax. If you are unsure of the appropriate way to proceed in a particular situation, just ask.