

# ETHICAL DECISIONS & BUSINESS PRACTICES:

## Gatekeeping:

### Ethics in Teaming, protecting the MESSAGE



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## Linguistic Gatekeeping



Process through which information is filtered for dissemination, in all modes of communication. Ethical gatekeeping requires “taking the higher ground” and at times, our gatekeeping is done with so much ease the consumers are unaware of our participation in the process.

(Kurt Lewin, 1947)

## Customer Service

You may not think of yourself as serving the public but in almost every case you are. Interpreters are the front line of contracted services. Many points of communication have occurred prior to your assignment.

As an interpreter, you are the face, attitude and integrity of the agency that sent you. Your presence also speaks of your own professional presentation.

When having to deal with the public, are you able to:

1. Listen intently. Ask questions and summarize. Be sure you understand the problem or request.
2. Stay calm and show patience. Even irate customer's respond to respect.
3. Understand company policies and be honest about them. Keep whatever promise you make and don't make any that you can't deliver.
4. Know your product or service. You should know at least as much as the customer using the service or product.
5. Learn to handle surprises well and keep your composure despite the provocations.
6. Put yourself in the shoes of the client. How would you feel with this problem?
7. Use positive language. "I can't" or It won't sound better when they are couched as "the computer will allow me to" ....or "Let me find out".
8. Recognize the times when you will not be able to solve a problem and have a plan to refer to someone who can.

### How do we serve each other? This is a comment from Deaf consumer

I'm just wondering, I wonder if the interpreters are trained in how to switch?? There seems to be a problem!... The interpreter needs to be comfortable with team interpreting, be aware of his/her time and not to be dramatic when his/her team is standing there, waiting for that pause to switch. No need to **flap hands and gasp**, "OH, I didn't see you there!"

# What values do we bring to each decision?

## Scenario

You are the “team” and you notice something important omitted, maybe team didn’t hear it, regardless – this “bit of information- data” is seemingly important.

How do you handle this?

## Reflection/Inquiry

Is it possible (or correct) to “hold” the data, get to the hot seat and “incorporate” as fitting to the discussion at hand (no interruption)? - Possible?

Is it possible to “feed” information to hot-seat interpreter?

## Scenario

After an extremely long day, as you are walking into your next assignment, you instantly discover the clients were not well served, what do we do?

While Interpreting an IEP meeting, you notice incorrect information is disclosed, what is our role?

## Scenario

I work in an educational environment.

Where the team interpreter participates in class discussion. My team actually HELPS the Deaf client with their work / papers / essays / English. Where the interpreter actually becomes like a tutor in the class. And they actually participate in class, by offering their point of view as if they are taking the class themselves?

Inquiry / Reflection: Is there a different standard / measurement of acceptable participation in an academic environment?



## CODES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of **confidential** communication.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters hold a **position of trust** in their role as linguistic and cultural facilitators of communication. Confidentiality is highly valued by consumers and is essential to protecting all involved.
2. Interpreters possess the **professional skills and knowledge** required for the specific interpreting situation.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to stay abreast of evolving language use and trends in the profession of interpreting as well as in the American Deaf community. Interpreters accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, communication mode, setting, and consumer needs. Interpreters possess knowledge of American Deaf culture and deafness-related resources.
3. Interpreters **conduct** themselves in a manner **appropriate** to the specific interpreting situation.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to present themselves appropriately in demeanor and appearance. They avoid situations that result in conflicting roles or perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
4. Interpreters demonstrate **respect for consumers**.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to honor consumer preferences in selection of interpreters and interpreting dynamics, while recognizing the realities of qualifications, availability, and situation.
5. Interpreters demonstrate **respect for colleagues**, interns, and students of the profession.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to collaborate with colleagues to foster the delivery of effective interpreting services. They also understand that the manner in which they relate to colleagues reflects upon the profession in general.
6. Interpreters maintain **ethical business practices**.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to conduct their business in a professional manner whether in private practice or in the employ of an agency or other entity. Professional interpreters are entitled to a living wage based on their qualifications and expertise. Interpreters are also entitled to working conditions conducive to effective service delivery.
7. Interpreters engage in **professional development**.  
**Guiding Principle:** Interpreters are expected to foster and maintain interpreting competence and the stature of the profession through ongoing development of knowledge and skills.