



DeafHope

Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI):

A CDI is an individual who is Deaf or hard of hearing and has been certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as an interpreter. The CDI has extensive knowledge and understanding of deafness, the Deaf community, and Deaf culture in addition to excellent communication skills. They are fluent in both English and American Sign Language. A CDI may be needed when the communication mode of a Deaf individual is so unique that it cannot be adequately comprehended by hearing interpreters. A CDI would be more able to meet their special communication needs. Such individuals may:

- communicate in home signs, signs unique to a family but not known in the community
- use foreign sign language
- have minimal or limited communication skills, or be highly visual communicators
- use signs particular to a given region, ethnic, or age group
- have characteristics reflective of Deaf culture not familiar to hearing interpreters

Because the CDI is a “native” user of sign language, they will be able to identify linguistic subtleties and nuances embedded in the communication of a Deaf individual. While a hearing interpreter may acquire fluency in American Sign Language, they may not have the skill and flexibility to adequately interpret for a Deaf person who uses other visual communication modes.

The CDI works as a team with the hearing interpreter(s) to provide high quality interpreting. The hearing ASL interpreter will interpret the message from the hearing person to the CDI. The CDI will then process the message linguistically and culturally and interpret it to the Deaf person in the way best suited to achieve optimal understanding and participation.

The benefits of using CDI with a hearing interpreter include:

- optimal communication access, receptive and expressive
- full understanding by all parties
- clarification of linguistic and/or cultural confusion and misunderstanding
- efficient use of time and resources
- freedom for the Deaf individual to communicate in their native language without the added strain of attempting to communicate in English-like sign
- opportunity for the Deaf individual to think and respond more appropriately as well as understand the exact intent of the questions or dialogue

Using a CDI as a team member with qualified and certified hearing interpreters, communication by and for all parties involved may be more efficient, accurate and equal.

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