

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work:  
*The Finer Points of Team Interpreting*

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## Definition of Team Interpreting:

“Team interpreting refers to the practice of using two or more interpreters who share the responsibility of providing simultaneous or consecutive interpreting for one or more individuals with limited English proficiency.”<sup>1</sup>

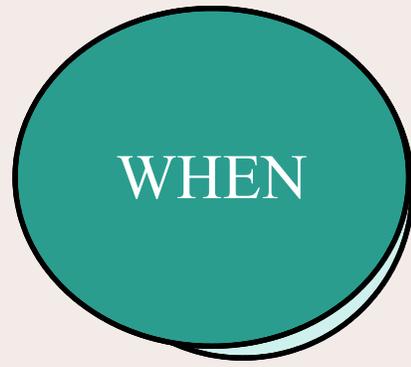
<sup>1</sup>NAJIT Position Paper on Team Interpreting



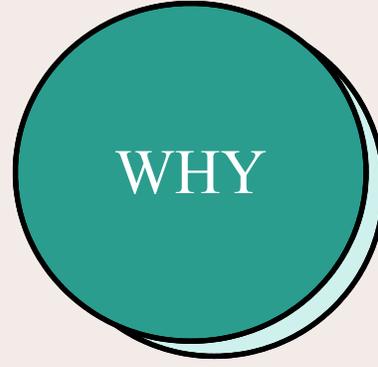
# Agenda



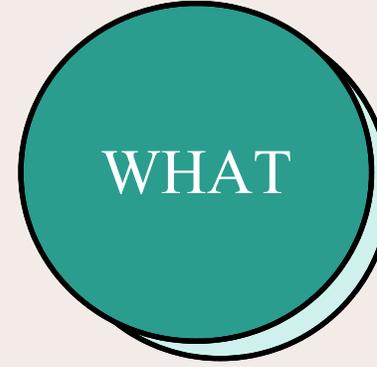
Venues



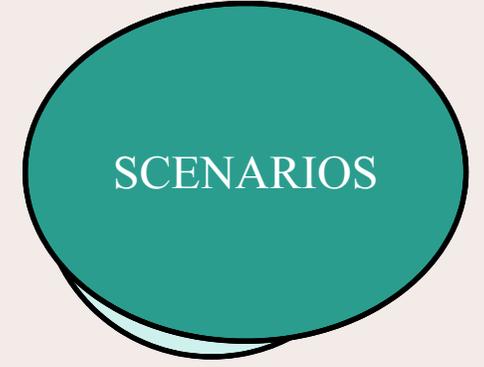
Type;length;  
Complexity



Two  
perspectives



In practice;  
Logistics



Discussion;  
Q & A

WHERE

WHEN



# WHY

INTERPRETER'S  
ROLE

ETHICAL  
OBLIGATIONS



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TEAM INTERPRETING?

PROTECT THE ACCURACY AND  
FAITHFULNESS OF THE INTERPRETATION

PROTECTS DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

# TRUE TEAM INTERPRETING – WHAT IT IS AND ISN'T

In the past - referred to as on/off or  
active/passive

Now - COLLABORATIVE TEAM  
INTERPRETING

# STARTING POINT

BE ON TIME

COME PREPARED

BE FAMILIAR  
WITH THE  
VENUE

# Working Collaboratively

Monitor output

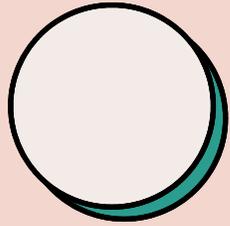
Provide assistance with terms, numbers, dates, places

Switch at regular intervals or as needed

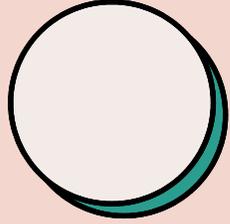
Assist with making corrections to the record

Handle other demands/situations

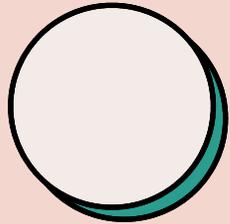
NEXT  
LEVEL:  
THINGS TO  
CONSIDER



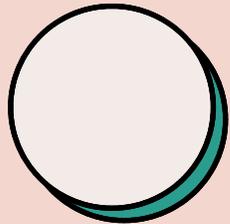
PREFERENCES – e.g. SPACE, TOUCH



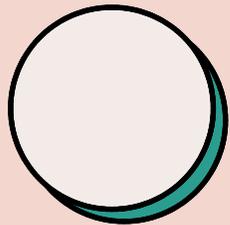
COMMUNICATION METHOD



MIC HANDOFF/SWITCHING ROLES



HANDLING CORRECTIONS TO RECORD



AWARENESS OF STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES

Scenario 1: Susie Q and Bettie B are assigned to team interpret for an 8:30 AM motions hearing in a case involving the burglary of several businesses in the area. Bettie arrives at 8:00 AM, introduces herself to the court clerk and notes down on her notepad the names of the attorneys and defendant. At 8:25 AM, after the clerk has already contacted the interpreter coordinator to ask for Susie's whereabouts, Susie bursts into the courtroom, out of breath and red-faced. She hurriedly sits next to Bettie and immediately says, "Whoops! I forgot my notepad and pen. Do you have some extra paper and a pen you can lend me? I'll give it back when we're done – promise!"

Susie Q



Betty B.



Scenario 2: Alberto and Sofia have been assigned to team interpret for a lengthy trial involving the use of various types of firearms in a gang related shootout at a local bar. Since the trial is a week away, Alberto decides to contact Sofia to discuss some of the terms that may come up during the trial. During their phone chat, Sofia offers to share via email a glossary of ballistics terms she obtained from the Southern District of New York that was compiled by staff interpreters there. They also decide to meet in person or by phone to go over any other pertinent information that might help with their assignment.

Alberto



Sofia



Scenario 3: : Cristina arrives for a preliminary hearing assignment and is met by Juan, her assigned team mate who promptly informs Cristina that, “I have a quick appointment at 2:00 PM so I need to leave at a quarter to 2:00 but I’ll be back at around 2:45 or 3:00 at the latest.” Seeing the surprised look on Cristina’s face, Juan adds, “Don’t worry! This is a simple case. You can handle it!” Because Juan is a senior interpreter, Cristina stays quiet and accepts the arrangement without further comment.

Cristina



Juan



Bonus - Scenario 4: Armida is actively interpreting during a preliminary hearing with her team mate Fulano when she looks over and sees that Fulano is sound asleep and quietly snoring. Abruptly, right at the half hour mark, Fulano wakes up, grabs the mic from Armida and begins to interpret simultaneously.

Yours Truly



Fulano





**LASTLY:**

**BE PATIENT**

**BE KIND**

**BE HUMBLE**

**BE FLEXIBLE**

# Thank you!

Armida Hernández

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