



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Written Assessment SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

A: KEEP ALL ASSIGNMENT-RELATED INFORMATION STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL:

EXAMPLE: After an interpreting assignment, the person who hired you asks you to disclose specific information which occurred during the assignment.

RESPONSE: As an interpreter, it is your responsibility to maintain total confidentiality with regard to all information exchanged during an interpreting assignment. You should explain to the person who hired you that the interpreter's Code of Ethics prevents you from revealing any assignment-related information. However, you may offer to interpret for any of the parties involved.

EXAMPLE: The school counselor asks you to report the nature of a student's personal conversation which you interpreted.

RESPONSE: It is your duty to maintain total confidentiality of all information revealed during an interpreting assignment. However, you are required to adhere to, and obey, all state and federal laws. If you receive information during an interpreting situation which causes you to suspect child abuse, you are required by law to report your suspicions to the proper authorities. The proper authorities may be a school counselor, the school principal or the police. In this case, the guidelines of the RID Code of Ethics are overridden by law.

B: RENDER THE MESSAGE FAITHFULLY, ALWAYS CONVEYING THE CONTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE SPEAKER, USING LANGUAGE MOST READILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE PERSON (S) WHOM THEY SERVE.

EXAMPLE: While you are interpreting from sign to English for a deaf consumer, she continually refers to "Sharon" when meaning "Sharman".

RESPONSE: As the interpreter you should voice what the deaf person has said, “Sharon”, and take no responsibility for the content of the information relayed. Hearing people often make the same type of mistakes, and it is not the interpreter’s responsibility to correct source message errors.

EXAMPLE: You are called by an agency to tactile interpret for a deaf-blind person for a meeting. As you begin to interpret, the consumer pulls his hands away.

RESPONSE: Although you were asked by the agency to tactile interpret, this may not be the communication modality preferred by the client. In all situations, you should determine, with the consumer, which language modality and communication mode is preferred and most clearly understood. The consumer may not be able to tell you his preference, but it often becomes evident during personal interaction.

C: SHALL NOT COUNSEL, ADVISE OR INTERJECT PERSONAL OPINION:

EXAMPLE: You are interpreting from sign to English for a deaf consumer who usually speaks for herself. She has asked you to voice the exact words she uses, but you realize the hearing consumer has misunderstood part of what was said. You know that by adding one simple three-word phrase, the misunderstanding will be clarified.

RESPONSE: Voice exactly what the deaf consumer has signed and take no responsibility for the content of the conversation. It is your personal opinion that the information you want to add will, in fact, clarify the misunderstanding. Furthermore, the deaf consumer has already asked you to voice verbatim thereby assuming full responsibility for the conversation.

EXAMPLE: While interpreting at a bank for a deaf consumer who is requesting loan information, the deaf consumer asks you if the interest rate is competitive with other banks in the area.

RESPONSE: You are at the bank as an interpreter to facilitate communication between the two parties and not to give advice or counsel the deaf consumer. Therefore, you should voice interpret the question to the loan counselor as it was asked by the deaf consumer. It is at this point that you may feel the need to step out of the interpreting role (always make it clear to all parties that is what you are doing) to explain the function and purpose of an interpreter.

D: SHALL ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS USING DISCRETION WITH REGARD TO SKILL, SETTING, AND THE CONSUMERS INVOLVED.

EXAMPLE: You are not screened or certified but are taking the VQAS soon. You are asked to interpret in a life-threatening situation.

RESPONSE: Regardless of how competent you may think you are, your qualifications have not been verified, and therefore you should not accept the responsibility for assignments which may involve a life-threatening situation. You should be knowledgeable about interpreter referral agencies and qualified interpreters in your area who can be called upon in the event such emergencies arise in the future.

EXAMPLE: A good friend of yours, whose mother recently passed away, asks you to interpret in a situation which you feel may become very emotional.

RESPONSE: Although you may be qualified to perform the service, your personal friendship may preclude you from rendering services in a professional and unbiased manner. Therefore, you should refrain from accepting this assignment and offer whatever help you would offer to any other friend in a similar situation.

E: SHALL REQUEST COMPENSATION FOR SERVICES IN A PROFESSIONAL AND JUDICIOUS MANNER:

EXAMPLE: You are asked by a deaf person to interpret for a counseling appointment at the Department of Social Services. You have the qualifications to perform the assignment but you have not received billing information.

RESPONSE: As a professional interpreter, it is your responsibility to know where to obtain assistance in procuring billing information and be cautious not to provide your services voluntarily. Voluntary services can result in poor quality services and unreasonable expectations among deaf and hearing consumers. Interpreters are professionals in private practice and should be compensated accordingly for their expertise.

EXAMPLE: After you decide you would like to perform the service; you should make a reasonable request for compensation to ensure that all parties are aware of your professional status. Reasonable compensation does not have to be monetary; for example, you may request that your dinner be provided at no charge or that the cover charge be waived in exchanged for your services.

F: SHALL FUNCTION IN A MANNER APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION:

EXAMPLE: You are asked to interpret at the employee's annual picnic for a local bank. You are qualified to do so but are unsure how you should dress to maintain your professional status.

RESPONSE: In this situation, the most appropriate attire may be shorts or jeans. Dress jeans, or possibly modest shorts, with casual shirt in a color that contrasts with your skin tone. Inappropriate attention would be drawn to an interpreter who wears a business suit to a picnic.

EXAMPLE: A psychologist asks you to sit next to the deaf client during an intake evaluation.

RESPONSE: This seating arrangement will probably not be conducive to the facilitation of communication. Therefore, it would be appropriate for the interpreter to step out of the interpreting role to explain the most appropriate seating situation (i.e. next to the counselor so that eye contact with the deaf client can be facilitated).

G: STRIVE TO FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS, PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES AND READING OF CURRENT LITERATURE IN THE FIELD:

EXAMPLE: You are asked to “transliterate simultaneously”

RESPONSE: The term “transliterate simultaneously” is a technical term. “Transliterating” refers to the process of reformulating one language to another form of the same language, such as signed English to spoken English. “Simultaneous” refers to voicing or signing with minimal time lag, such as a live television newscast. Thus this term, “transliterate simultaneously”, means to transliterate exactly what is said using English word order in the manner presented by the speaker.

EXAMPLE: You are given the opportunity to participate in the VQAS at no charge, but are not sure you are fully prepared to do so at this time. You have taken some sign language and interpreting courses, but have no actual experience interpreting.

RESPONSE: The VQAS is a diagnostic skills assessment designed to identify your strengths and offer suggestions for professional development. By participating in the VQAS process, you are demonstrating your desire to further your knowledge and skills in the field of interpreting. If you are not sure if you are ready to take the assessment, you may consult a representative from the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH), or the Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (VRID) for additional guidance.

H: STRIVE TO MAINTAIN HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF ETHICS:

This tenet encompasses each of the other tenets. Although no separate examples can be given to assess an interpreter’s sole ability to strive and maintain professional standards, the ability to keep information confidential, to render the interpretation faithfully, to avoid interjecting, advising, or counseling, to accept assignments appropriately, to request compensation for services, to function in a manner appropriate to the situation, and to continue to develop professionally are all included within the ability to maintain high professional standards.