Tips for Working Effectively with American Sign Language Interpreters

BEFORE the Presentation Preparation

1. Schedule Interpreters in Advance

- Arrange for certified American sign language interpreters with experience in victim services and trauma-informed communication.
- Work with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing participants to identify preferred interpreters.

2. Provide Presentation Materials Early

- Share PowerPoint slides, handouts, key terminology, and an agenda with interpreters at least 48 hours before the event.
- Highlight industry-specific jargon, acronyms, or sensitive language.

3. Rehearse with Interpreters

- Conduct a brief pre-event meeting to discuss the flow of the presentation.
- Address technical terms, pacing, and any audience engagement activities.

4. Coordinate Zoom Settings

- Ensure interpreters have co-host use to manage visibility.
- Enable the "Spotlight" feature to keep the interpreter visible on-screen.
- Consider using multiple interpreters for longer sessions (over 60 minutes) to reduce fatigue.

DURING the Presentation

1. Establish Visibility

- Ensure the interpreter is clearly visible at all times.
- Avoid cluttered backgrounds and poor lighting.
- Allow interpreters to pin their video for their own reference.

2. Optimize Speaker Delivery

- Speak at a moderate pace to allow for accurate interpretation.
- Pause often, especially after complex concepts or key points.
- Avoid talking over videos, as interpreters need to convey both audio and visual elements.

3. Engage the Audience

- Encourage participants to use the chat function for questions.
- Read key chat messages aloud for user-friendliness.
- Repeat or summarize audience questions before responding.

AFTER the Presentation

1. Collect Feedback

- Ask interpreters and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing participants for feedback on user-friendliness and effectiveness.
- Use feedback to improve future sessions.

2. Share Accessible Materials

- Provide captioned recordings and transcripts.
- Ensure PowerPoint slides and handouts are in manageable formats.

By implementing these best practices, victim service providers can create an effective virtual learning experience for all participants.