

Understanding and Working with Dysfluency

Interpreters working in mental health settings are often exposed to clients who exhibit dysfluency from psychosis, etiology of deafness, and language deprivation. Considerations for appropriate interpretations change depending upon the language fluency, background and current diagnosis of the patient. Participants will examine how behavior and language patterns may present themselves differently and review approaches and techniques for interpretation including analysis of working relationships with CDIs in therapeutic settings. Participants will have the opportunity to review and discuss samples.

Session one (three hours) will be a foundational discussion on types, causes, and manifestations of various types of dysfluency encountered in mental health settings and how they confound treatment. Considerable focus will be on dysfluency specific to deaf people and especially those with mental illness, which tends to be unfamiliar to clinicians not experienced in working with deaf people.

Session two (three hours) will be focused on learning and practicing specific skills that will enable the advanced interpreter to work more effectively with clinicians in a therapeutic way. We will touch on teaming with deaf interpreters as well.

Presenter: Steve Hamerdinger

Steve Hamerdinger, Director of the Office of Deaf Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health has been involved with the deaf rights since the early 1980's and has been a leader in the field of mental health and deafness since the early 90's. He has been the Director of the Office of Deaf Services since its inception. Before coming to Alabama in January, 2003, he was Director of the Office of Deaf and Linguistic Support Services at the Missouri Department of Mental Health for ten years.

After receiving his Masters Degree in Counseling at Gallaudet University in 1989, Steve moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico to work as a mental health counselor at the New Mexico School for the Deaf. His practice there focused on deaf children and their families. While living in New Mexico, he was instrumental in helping to establish the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and was elected as the first Chair of the Commission. He is a Past President of the New Mexico Association of the Deaf and remains a member of Cerrillos Lodge #19, AF&AM.

A Past President of ADARA, an organization of professionals networking together for excellence in service delivery to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, Steve has served on numerous appointive boards and task forces. Appointed to the Alabama Licensure Board for Interpreters and Transliterators in 2009, he has also served on the Alabama Governor's Council on Disability. He has chaired the Olathe (Kansas) Disabled Person's Advisory Board and served on the Kansas Mental Health and Deafness Task Force, the Missouri State Task Force on Deaf Education, the Missouri Board of Certification of Interpreters, and the Missouri Supreme Court Commission on Courts and the Disabled. He was named "Deaf Person of the Month" in November, 2008 by Deaf Life Magazine.

Steve's work has been recognized by advocates around the country. He has received awards from the State Associations of the Deaf in Alabama, Missouri, New Mexico and Wisconsin and named a Kentucky Colonel, all in recognition of his efforts in bettering mental health care for deaf people. In 2009, he was named a *Hero in the Fight* by Mental Health America. He was awarded the Alice Cogswell by the Gallaudet Alumni Association award for lifetime achievement in service to deaf people in 2010.

A sought after teacher and lecturer, Steve was the first Reba Hill Memorial Lecturer on Pediatrics at the Baylor University Medical School. He has been a frequent speaker at the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri, an adjunct faculty member of the Kansas City Kansas Community College, where he taught sign language and Deaf Culture and William Woods University where he taught social work with people who are deaf. An engaging and enthusiastic speaker, Steve is in national demand as a trainer and consultant on deafness and Deaf Culture as well as child development, counseling and other mental health and deafness and hearing loss related topics. He is also in demand as a motivational speaker and entertainer.

Steve lives in Montgomery with an ever changing menagerie of four-footed companions.