

Title - How Individualism Affects Interpreters as They Relate to Clients, Colleagues, and Make Ethical Decisions

Program of Study – American Sign Language and Interpreting

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Abstract: This research examines America's dramatic shift towards individualism and how this has a negative impact regarding American Sign Language (ASL) and English interpreters as they relate to their clients, colleagues, and make ethical decisions. Much of the interpreting profession has Christian roots, yet America is rapidly abandoning the principles it was founded on; this is causing a rise of individualism, poor morals, and lack of investment in relating to others. This research examines the history and development of the interpreting profession and how America's culture is changing the values this field once stood for. This paper includes quantitative data that shows a decrease of people who identify as Christian as well as percentages that show what individuals rest their moral decisions on. Findings indicate that, without believing in God as an absolute authority, morals are often based on what is deemed right by each individual. This research discusses that this way of thinking has influenced all generations of people, especially the millennials. Data shows that, in the past, interpreters and students had close bonds with the Deaf but now they are separating from the Deaf community, and this could be linked to America's increasingly individualistic culture. This paper also analyzes the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's (RID) Code of Professional Conduct (CPC), which was designed to provide interpreters with guidelines for making ethical decisions. This research shows that poor morals can drastically alter ethical decision making, which is critical for interpreters bound by the CPC. In conclusion, if individualistic interpreters see themselves as the ultimate authority, regarding morals and making ethical decisions, disenfranchisement will occur to clients. Possible

future work that could be connected to these findings include: how interpreting mentorship is affected, how individualism influences interpreters that team together for an assignment, how Christian beliefs benefit society, and how other professions are impacted by individualism.