

### **EXERCISE: CVG 3**

Module:	Professional Code of Conduct and Guidelines to Good Practice
Type of exercise:	Case studies and debate
Topic:	Professional conduct and codes of ethics.
Learning Outcome(s):	On completion of this exercise, trainees will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be familiar with several aspects of a judicial interpreter's code of ethics</li><li>• have learned to synthesise information</li><li>• be aware of the tools they have at their disposal to deal with real world situations.</li></ul>
Language (Combination):	English
Equipment:	N/A
Time:	1 hour minimum
Suitable for:	Intermediate
Contributed by:	Carmen Valero-Garcés, University of Alcalá (Spain)

## **EXERCISES**

1. Look for professional codes of ethics for public service and judicial interpreters and translators on the Internet. There are several.
2. Ascertain if there is a code of ethics or guidelines for good practice in your country or area.
3. Read the descriptions of different situations confronted by interpreters provided below. Then complete the following steps as indicated:
  - a. Identify the ethical dilemma presented.
  - b. Examine the interpreter's conduct as presented in each case. Do you agree with how the interpreter handled the situation? Why or why not?
  - c. Compare the way the interpreter handled the situation with the code of ethics and guidelines to good practice you are familiar with. Has the interpreter followed the code and/or guidelines?
  - d. Try to determine how you would have handled this situation.
  - e. Consider the difficulties involved in always adhering closely to the code of ethics and guidelines to good practice.

### **CASE #1:**

I was interpreting in a political asylum case. The petitioner asked to never be returned to his home country because he feared he would be executed. Three days later, I had to translate the denial of his asylum request to him. He was stunned and in a shaky voice asked me if I had translated his request to the asylum board correctly. I got upset with him and told him he had no right to question the quality of my work.

### **CASE #2:**

I am Iranian by birth, but I am married to a Dutch woman and we live in Holland. A while back, my wife was attacked by skinheads who were trying to break into our house. They left spray paint on the wall saying that Iranians were not welcome in their country. The racial insults were very difficult for me and my wife. Since then I have had to interpret frequently for people who suffer from the same kind of discrimination. I find I really want to help these people because I

understand what they have been through, so sometimes I alter their answers a little because I know they don't understand the system as much as I do.

**CASE #3:**

I was once interpreting for a doctor who was performing a medical examination on some people who were applying for a disability grant. The doctor said that the people did not have any type of disability. When I interpreted this decision, I tried to be very diplomatic, but one of the men there got very angry and attacked the doctor. Now I am very scared and sometimes refuse to interpret for people who look suspicious to me.

**CASE #4:**

I was born in X and lived there until I was 21. I know my culture well. I feel very close to my people. It's a nation that for years has been oppressed, tortured and subdued. I know exactly what it means when a woman from X says that she has been raped. My hair stands on end and I get goose bumps. Now I live in a town here in this country where there are many people from my country. I know that there are many misconceptions about our culture and that lies are told that affect the people who live there. This makes the people there very angry and they are psychologically burnt out. Therapists who are not from X cannot understand these people; they have not gone through the same things and cannot understand how they feel. Unfortunately, I am in the wrong profession. Although I have worked as an interpreter for a long time, I think that I am in a position in which I could sometimes be a better therapist than the real ones, so sometimes I just combine both and give the people some advice while I am interpreting based on everything I have seen and learned over the last several years working as an interpreter.

**CASE #5:**

I was interpreting for a Russian man in a police station. I noticed that he was very nervous and agitated. I felt very uncomfortable and I told the police to be careful. After the interview, they escorted the Russian man to the van to take him to prison. He was behind the bars in the van and the two policemen were in front. He managed to get one of his hands through the bars and grabbed one of the policemen by the neck. He pulled out a penknife and cut his neck. The policeman died. I had to continue interpreting for this Russian man even after these events and I felt very upset. I wasn't sure I could be impartial because I really hated that man.