

  
*VET in Interpreting and Justice*

## Interpreting in Emotionally Challenging Settings

  
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KU Leuven 16 April 2016



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## Plan of Action!

- 1. Welcome
- 2. Ground Rules
- 3. Introductions
- 3. Working in Emotionally Challenging Settings – What are these? Why are they challenging?
- 4. Trauma, Secondary Trauma/Vicarious Trauma
- 5. Legal, Interpreting and Human Considerations vis-à-vis the work
- 6. Self-Care

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## Ground Rules

- 1. Mutual Respect
- 2. Confidentiality
- 3. Shared space: everyone has the right to contribute [or stay silent]
- 4. If you need to leave to get fresh air/ catch your breath, that is just fine....
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## Introductions

- Your name?
- Why you chose to come to this workshop
- What you hope to gain.

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Some background:  
EU and pan-national level  
issues

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## European Directives

- **Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation**-right to interpretation at all stages of the procedure (pre-trial, trial), right to translation of essential documents, MS shall bear the costs and ensure the quality.
- **Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information** - MS shall ensure that the information provided shall be given orally or in writing, in simple and accessible language, taking into account any particular needs of vulnerable suspects or vulnerable accused persons.

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 JUSTISIGNS  
VET in Interpreting and Justice

## European Directives

- **Directive 2012/29/EU on minimum standards on victims' rights** –applicable as of November 2015
- **Directive 2011/92/EU on Child Sexual Abuse:** provisions on protection and assistance (including interviewing); notion of **particularly vulnerable victims**
- **Directive 2011/36/EU on Trafficking in Human Beings and protecting its victims:** specific provisions on child victims and unaccompanied child victims

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 JUSTISIGNS  
VET in Interpreting and Justice

## UNCRPD (2006)

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **Basis?**
  - For every child killed in warfare, 3 are injured & permanently disabled. In some countries, up to 1/4 of disabilities result from injuries and violence (WHO).
  - Persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence or rape, according to a 2004 British study, & less likely to obtain police intervention, legal protection or preventive care.
  - Research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their non-disabled peers.

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## Working in Emotionally Challenging Settings

- **2 Questions:**
  - What do you think of as emotionally challenging settings?
  - Why are they challenging?

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## Maybe...

• **General Domains**

- Working in settings where Deaf participants are not respected as we believe they should be.
- Working with co-interpreters who are "coasting" or unprepared or who seem disrespectful/ uncolleagial.
- Working in contexts where the interpreters scope of practice (Dean & Pollard) is not understood-> we are professionally undermined.
- Having our work called into question when we believe we have done a good job (e.g. police interpreting > court case)
- Feeling judged by our colleagues (e.g. interpreting at a conference of interpreters!) OR calling out our colleagues if WE believe they are not doing the job that they should do.....

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## Maybe..

• **Specific Domains:**

- Interpreting for children who have been abused or who are distressed.
- Interpreting for victims of abuse and sexual violence
- Interpreting for women who have had miscarriages
- Sometimes – interpreting at funerals.
- Sometimes – interpreting in family law cases, psychiatric settings, etc.

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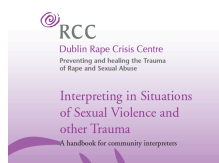
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## Acknowledgment

- The content I draw on here is based on training I received from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC).
- I have completed DRCC training for interpreting sensitively with victims of sexual violence and other trauma on a number of occasions.
- I have also completed their training of [interpreter] trainers programme (2013).




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# What are the affects of trauma?



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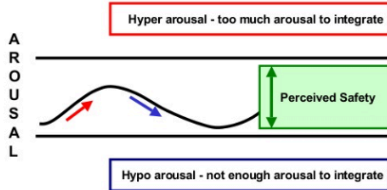
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## Window of Tolerance



Adapted from Empowering the body in the treatment of trauma: The role of Somatic Experiencing in trauma, by P. Ogden, 2006. Paper presented at the conference: The Embodied Mind: Integration of the Body, Brain, and Mind in Clinical Practice, Los Angeles, CA. Slide by Sophia Deborah Erez © 2008 520.302.5859

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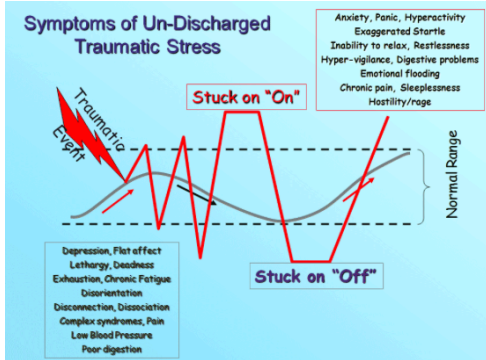
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## Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress



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## Secondary (or Vicarious) Trauma



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## Interpreting Considerations

- **Lots of Questions to consider BEFORE you take on emotionally challenging work...**
- Are you the right person?
- What do you need to have in place to make this do-able?
- Are you comfortable doing this kind of work?

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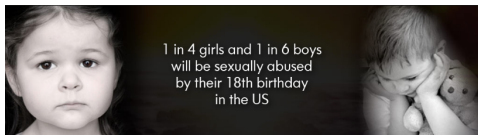
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## Skill Set



- Do you have the language skills and vocabulary necessary for detailed police investigative work/medical terminology/court language?
- Will you be comfortable translating accounts of perhaps violent sexual acts and talking about genitalia and other sexual organs, translating accurately the terms used by the victim, or may this cause embarrassment and discomfort for you?

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## Impact - on You

- **REFLECTION task**
  - Think about a situation that upset you.
    - **What triggered the response? [overlaps probable!]**
      - **Environmental?**
      - **Intrapersonal issue?** (e.g. A personal memory of a similar experience was triggered?)
      - **Interpersonal issues** (towards you? Towards a client?)
      - **Paralinguistic** (verbal expressive skills of participants – pace/ maybe atypical language use in a psychiatric setting/ detailed descriptions of a traumatic event)?
    - How did you respond (physically? emotionally?)
    - How did you “resolve” those feelings? (Or did you?)

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## Other Thought Qs

- What supports are in place for you?
- Have you been given any guidelines as to the amount of time your services will be needed for?
- Have you considered the implications regarding maintaining boundaries if the contact is to be prolonged? Eg. A journey of several hours, a medical forensic examination, a journey back again and statements to be made at a police station.
- Should a second interpreter be considered is not already provided?
- Have you given due regard to how the norms of our work might impact on our capacity to deal with the narrating of the traumatic event?

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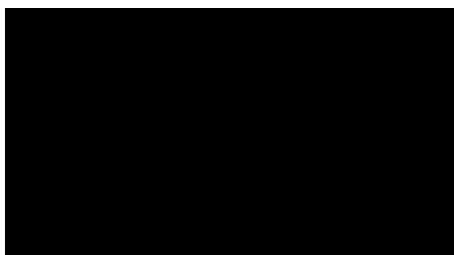
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## Leonie O’Dowd, DRCC



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## Human Considerations:



- No matter what is happening, your role is to **remain calm** and facilitate communication.
- Try not to become over involved or get drawn into the client's emotions; the best way you can help the client is by remaining calm, professional and separate from the emotions arising.

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## DRCC notes:

- You may become upset or angry or otherwise dismayed by what you hear. This is understandable. **This is a normal human reaction.**
- **The role of the interpreter is quite unique:**
  - Not only do you have to listen with great attention to the story, you have to interpret it and retell it.
  - While the concentration on interpreting can provide a protection from fully 'hearing' the story, there is a type of engagement with the story involved in sign language interpreting which is not found in any other role.

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## Legal Considerations

- **You may be called as a witness in court.**
- **Your interpreting may be called into question.**
  - Video records of your interpreting may be examined forensically.
  - Alternative interpretations may be put forth.
  - Your ethical decision making may be called into question.
- **You may be cross-examined.**
  - Your relationship to the victim may be examined.
  - Your credentials may be examined.

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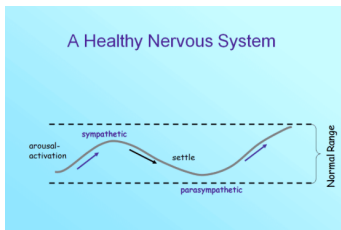
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## Self-Care



- Self-help techniques may help you to cope with any distress involved and to maintain your professional calm.

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## Self-Care

- DRCC suggests that we limit our imagining of distressing events > stimulates mirror neurons in a negative manner, opening potential for vicarious trauma.
  - *Is this possible for SLIs? If not, what do we do POST-interpreting job?*
- The DRCC also suggests working with images that are comforting >> stimulates mirror neurons in a positive manner, delimiting potential for vicarious trauma.

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## Developing Operational Strategies

- Clearly outline the scope of practice of the interpreter: there are limitations to this role!!

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## PRE-Session

- When you know you will be interpreting a traumatic session, arrive early. Be focused (don't be distracted).
- Take on the protection of your role – remind yourself that your work here is important, that you will address it with seriousness and concern, but that your 'real life' is separate.
- Briefing
- Disclosure of relationship/knowledge of client

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## DURING the Session

- Notice how you are feeling
- You can ground yourself – sit into your chair and feel the floor under your feet. Take deep breaths. Bring to mind someone supportive. Take a drink of water.

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## DURING the session

- Avoid mirroring the posture, facial expression/ breathing pattern of the person describing the traumatic or violent experience – this can bring on the same feeling reaction in you.
- Learn NOT TO imagine people you care for, especially children, in a similar situation to that described. This can be traumatising.
- Handling the viewing of disturbing images\*

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## DURING the session

- Other Issues:
  - Transparency
  - Non-judgmental approach
  - Taking breaks as necessary

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## POST-Session

- **Debriefing Sessions**
  - With professional stakeholders, if possible
  - With a supervisor/ mentor (bearing in mind confidentiality requirements)
- **Self-Care**
  - Stretch, shake-out tension from your body.
  - Watch your degree of involvement: We may want to 'fix' the situation/rescue someone – be aware of boundaries.
  - Use the journey home to unwind: reflect for the first third, consciously put it away for the second and look forward to what you will do next in the last third.
  - Be careful: be mindful – reflect on your own window of tolerance
  - Exercise, eat well and get rest: trauma has a physical impact.

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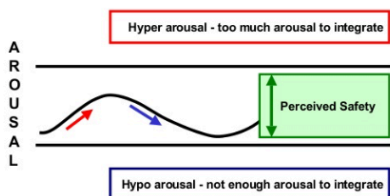
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## Checking -in

- How are YOU feeling?

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## Follow up

- **Preparing?**
- Discourse type/ content for understanding the kinds of narrative you might come across as an interpreter - there are many online sources of material that you can review.
- Be aware that the content can be upsetting – be adequately prepared, emotionally. It IS impactful.

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## Some Video Data

- **Trigger warning: There is discussion of sexual abuse in these videos.**
- Alison's Story (in English) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQTrbg1S-hU>
- These Walls Can Talk (RTE) <http://www.rte.ie/player/ie/show/these-walls-can-talk-30.00.36.00/1.05.46.350/?ap=1> [May not be available outside Ireland]
- Victims of Historic Sexual Abuse at Deaf School Speak about their ordeal (Newsnight/DeafHear): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dnbr67Qn0s>

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