

Association of Transcribers and Speech To Text Providers
184 Midhurst Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230
614-642-2016

ATSP CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(DRAFT)

Submitted August 29, 2017

By: Ethics & Standards Committee

Members:

Beller, Lisa*
Carlascio, Chanel (chair)*
Chibucos, Liz
Pinney, Dana
Poole, Katie*

Scope

The Association of Transcribers and Speech-To-Text Providers (ATSP) seeks to establish and uphold high standards of professionalism and ethical conduct for those providing TypeWell Transcription or C-Print Captioning. This Code of Professional Conduct consists of seven tenets along with their guiding principles and illustrative behaviors.

The tenets of this Code of Professional Conduct are to be viewed as a holistic guide to professional behavior. This document provides assistance in complying with the code. The guiding principles offer the basis upon which the tenets are articulated. The illustrative behaviors are not exhaustive, but are indicative of the conduct that may either demonstrate compliance or violate a specific tenet or the code as a whole.

This Code of Professional Conduct was developed to encompass transcriber roles and responsibilities in every type of situation (e.g. education, medical, government, community). A separate code for each area of transcribing is neither necessary or advisable.

Philosophy

Access to communication is a fundamental and inalienable right of all people; it is the basis of full and equitable participation in all aspects of society and affords individuals the opportunity to reach their full human potential.

People with disabilities have the right to informed choice and access to the highest quality services available. The recognition of these rights and the precious nature of communication are the foundation of the tenets, guiding principles and illustrative behaviors set forth below.

Development

The format and basis of these tenets, guiding principles and illustrative behaviors were drawn from a number of well established professional organizations in related fields. These sources were: National Association of the Deaf, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, TypeWell, C-Print, National Court Reporting Association, and the National Verbatim Reporters Association.

The Ethics and Standards Committee consists of a team of individuals with diverse backgrounds as Sign Language interpreters, University Coordinators, TypeWell Transcribers and C-Print Captionists. The Committee reviewed, thoroughly discussed and carefully crafted each tenet, guiding principle and illustrative behavior to reflect the attitudes, decision making and conduct expected from an experienced, well educated, mature and reasonable provider.

Guiding Principles

It is the obligation of every transcriber to exercise sound judgement, employ critical thinking, and draw from practical experience in the practice of their profession. The guiding principles in this document represent the concepts of confidentiality, competence, impartiality, consumer rights, professional growth and development, and ethical business practices. Underlying all these guiding principles is the notion that the transcriber will do no harm.

When applying these principles to their conduct, transcribers remember that their choices are governed by a “reasonable transcriber” standard. This standard represents the hypothetical transcriber who is appropriately educated, informed, capable, aware of professional standards and fair-minded.

Adoption of this Code of Professional Conduct

ATSP may want to submit this Code of Professional Conduct to Transcribers who are members in good standing for a vote of approval. This Code of Professional Conduct is a working document that is expected to change over time. The guiding principles and the illustrative behaviors may change periodically to meet the needs and requirements of the profession. The aforementioned members may be called upon to vote, as may be needed from time to time, on the tenets of the code.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Tenets

1. Transcribers adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Transcribers possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific communication setting/situation.
3. Transcribers conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and are outwardly neutral toward material, participants, and institutions.
4. Transcribers demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Transcribers demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns and students of the profession.
6. Transcribers maintain ethical business practices.
7. Transcribers engage in professional development.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following terms are used:

Client: Educational, governmental, or other community organization or individual which hires, employs or contracts with professional transcribers for communication access services.

Colleagues: Other TypeWell transcribers, C-Print Captionists, supervisors, or other professionals included as team members.

Conflict of Interest: A conflict between the private interests (personal, financial, or professional) and the official or professional responsibilities of a transcriber in a position of trust, whether actual or perceived, deriving from a specific transcribing situation.

Consumers: Individuals and entities who are part of the transcribed situation. These include individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing and hearing.

Transcriber: TypeWell Transcribers or C-Print Captionists. This term “transcriber” is intended to be inclusive of all providers of meaning-for-meaning captioning services regardless of method based on the ATSP name “Association of Transcribers...”

Confidentiality

Transcribers adhere to standards of confidential communication.

Guiding Principle

Transcribers hold a position of trust in their neutral role as facilitators of communication. Confidentiality is highly valued by consumers and is essential to protecting all involved. Each communication setting (e.g. education, medical, government, community) has a standard of confidentiality. Under the *reasonable transcriber standard*, professional transcribers and captioners are expected to know the general requirements and applicability of various levels of confidentiality. Exceptions to confidentiality include, for example, federal and state laws requiring mandatory reporting of abuse or threats of suicide, or responding to subpoenas.

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- share assignment-related information only on a confidential and “as-needed” basis (e.g. supervisors, team of providers, members of the educational team).
- manage data, calendars, invoices, records, transcripts and other situational or consumer-specific information in a manner consistent with maintaining consumer confidentiality (e.g. shredding documents, using locked files, password protected online files).
- delivery of the services may involve linking to a web page. Each event should have their own unique web page. This address should not be shared with anyone not directly involved with the assignment or approved by the client ahead of time.
- depending on setting and site policies of the institution employing the transcriber, transcriber may be asked to remove names or private information from the transcript.
- inform consumers when federal or state mandates require disclosure of confidential information.

Professionalism

Transcribers possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific communication setting.

Guiding Principle:

Transcribers are expected to stay abreast of **evolving language use**, current events, trends in the profession of speech-to-text service provision as well as in the Disability Community. Transcribers will facilitate communication and accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, communication mode, setting and consumer needs. Transcribers possess knowledge of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing culture and disability related resources. Transcribers will prepare for assignments ahead of time using prep material provided and other resources available (e.g. internet search, word banks, related course syllabi, etc).

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- accurately transcribe the meaning of spoken utterances made by individuals in the transcribing situation.
- relay the meaning and intent of spoken content without elaboration or interpretation, correcting errors discreetly and expeditiously.
- accurately voice consumer comments and questions.
- only accept assignments for which he or she possesses appropriate skills.
- transcribe environmental sounds (e.g. conversation, alarms, attention getting noises) that are important to the consumer's understanding of the situation.
- deliver services regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other factor.
- assess consumer needs and the transcribing situation before and during the assignment and make adjustments as needed.
- request support (e.g. prep material, team members) when needed to fully convey the message or to address exceptional communication challenges (e.g. noisy environments, professor presentation style, strong accents, dense material, consumers with multiple disabilities)
- judiciously advocate for accessibility by providing information or referral regarding community resources without infringing upon the consumers' rights.

Conduct

Transcribers conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific communication setting.

Guiding Principle

Transcribers are expected to present themselves appropriately in demeanor and appearance. They avoid situations that result in conflicting roles or perceived or actual conflicts of interest. The transcriber will conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the profession.

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- refrain from providing counsel, advice, or personal opinions.
- transcribe information completely and accurately
- consult with appropriate persons regarding the communication situation to determine issues such as placement and adaptations necessary to provide services effectively.
- decline assignments or withdraw from the profession when not competent due to lack of technical expertise or physical, mental or emotional factors.
- avoid performing dual or conflicting roles in interdisciplinary (e.g. educational or mental health teams) or other settings.
- comply with established workplace codes of conduct, notify appropriate personnel if there is a conflict with this Code of Professional Conduct and actively seek resolution where warranted.
- conduct and present themselves in an unobtrusive manner and exercise care in choice of attire.
- refrain from the use of mind-altering substances before or during the performance of duties.
- disclose to parties involved any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest that might cause harm or interfere with the effectiveness of services.
- refrain from using confidential information for personal, monetary or professional gain.
- refrain from using confidential information for the benefit of personal or professional affiliations or entities.

Respect For Consumers

Transcribers demonstrate respect for consumers.

Guiding Principle:

Transcribers recognize the consumers' right to full inclusion with complete communication and facilitate direct communication between participants without interference or distraction. Transcribers behave in a manner that reflects well on the consumer. Transcribers consider consumer requests or preferences regarding service provision and comply when reasonably able to do so. Transcribers maintain a symbiotic relationship with the disability community through volunteering, pro bono services or other community involvement.

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- comply with consumer preferences regarding formatting, logistics, transcribing style, etc when it is appropriate to the situation and provider is reasonably able to do so.
- obtain consent of consumers before bringing a mentee/observer to an assignment.
- facilitate communication access and equity; support the full interaction and independence of consumers. *[e.g have the consumer raise their hand to be called on to ask a question rather than having the transcriber raise their hand to be called on to read the consumers question]*
- ensure communication access by monitoring the quality of services provided by themselves or others; requesting teams or substitutions as necessary.
- engage in skill development without negatively impacting consumers' communication access.

Respect for Colleagues

Transcribers demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns and students of the profession.

Guiding Principle

Transcribers are expected to collaborate with colleagues, maintain appropriate personal boundaries and monitor work quality to foster the delivery of effective services. Transcribers understand that the manner in which they relate to colleagues reflects upon the profession in general.

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- are consistently courteous towards colleagues, interns and students of the profession.
- work cooperatively with team members through consultation before assignments regarding:
 - logistics
 - monitoring the accuracy of the message
 - role of the support transcriber
- approach colleagues privately to discuss and resolve breaches of ethical or professional conduct through standard conflict resolution methods; report conduct to supervisor or client after such attempts have been unsuccessful or the breaches are harmful or habitual; file a formal grievance only as a last resort.
- assist and encourage colleagues by sharing information and serving as mentors when appropriate
- obtain consent of colleagues before bringing an observer to an assignment.

Business Practices

Transcribers maintain ethical business practices.

Guiding Principle

Transcribers are expected to conduct their business in a professional manner whether in private practice or in the employ of an agency or other entity. Professional transcribers are entitled to a living wage based on their qualifications and expertise. Transcribers are also entitled to working conditions conducive to effective service delivery.

Illustrative Behavior

Transcribers:

- accurately represent their qualifications, such as certification, educational background, and experience; provide documentation when requested.
- honor professional commitments and terminate assignments only when fair and justifiable grounds exist
- promote conditions that are conducive to effective communication, inform the parties involved if such conditions do not exist, and seek appropriate remedies.
- inform appropriate parties in a timely manner when delayed or unable to fill assignments.
- reserve the option to decline or discontinue assignments if working conditions are not safe, healthy or conducive to service provision.
- refrain from harassment, or coercion, before, during, or after the provision of services.
- render pro bono services in a fair and reasonable manner.
- charge fair and reasonable fees for the performance of services and arrange for payment in a professional and judicious manner.
- determine fees independently, entering into no unlawful agreements with others with respect to fees to any user.
- notify client of cancellations, no shows, or assignments that run over scheduled time to ensure honest and accurate billing.
- refrain from using confidential information for personal, monetary or professional gain.

Professional Development

Transcribers engage in professional development.

Guiding Principle

Transcribers are expected to foster and maintain competence and the stature of the profession through ongoing development of knowledge and skills. Transcribers strive to consistently meet the professional standards as set forth in the Code of Ethics.

Illustrative Behaviors

Transcribers:

- increase knowledge and strengthen skills through activities such as:
 - pursuing higher education
 - attending workshops and conferences
 - seeking mentoring and supervision opportunities
 - participating in community events,
 - engaging in independent studies
 - active membership and contribution to ATSP
- keep abreast of current literature including laws, policies, rules and regulations that effect the profession.
- routinely monitor transcription accuracy, meaning for meaning output, grammar, formatting and technical skills via professional, peer and self-evaluation.