



Training: Interpreting for LGBTQIA Newcomers

An increasing number of refugee claimants are applying for asylum in Canada on the basis of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Their arrival in Canada often comes with an expectation that they can be open about who they are, and be met with dignity and respect. However, we have much to learn as a society, before these expectations can become a baseline reality.

In our own society, still widespread assumptions that people's gender identity matches what they were assigned at birth, and that people are heterosexual, can lead to language, actions, decisions, policies and structures that exclude and hurt individuals who do not have the same experience. Those that identify as LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual), navigate on a daily bases structures of exclusion that arise in all types of encounters.

What is the Language Professional's Role?

Interpreters can be one of the first points of encounter for LGBTQIA refugee claimants, and the responsibilities and challenges that come with this task are significant. Interviewers, interpreters, and even refugee applicants themselves may not be familiar with respectful terminology to use.

The topics that are treated in these conversations are culturally and religiously sensitive, and may be difficult to place into words. While interviewers may be reticent to ask questions that are personal, or conversely, may interrogate on matters that are extraordinarily personal, interpreters are under pressure to render exact equivalents of terms that may not exist in all languages. The LGBTQIA newcomer may feel unsafe to be open, hampering their case, and diluting the power of the service which they are seeking.

How Can We Learn More?

Acknowledging these challenges faced by both service providers, interpreters and the LGBTQIA Newcomer, a training has been developed by the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre, in partnership with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). **MCIS will be facilitating the training in a series of one day workshops for FREE.**

The aims of this all-day workshop for interpreters include:

1. Gaining introductory sensitivity to issues commonly experienced by LGBTQIA* newcomers
2. Learning LGBTQIA* terminology (appropriate and inappropriate)



3. Understanding the impact that personal values and attitudes can have on LGBTQIA* clients
4. Analyzing and applying ethical principles to challenging situations that may arise for interpreters working with LGBTQIA* newcomers
5. Gaining awareness of local, provincial, and international resources for interpreters and LGBTQIA* newcomers

MCIS Language Solutions will be providing this training to professional community interpreters starting June 13th. The training will be **free of charge**. While refining your craft as an interpreter, you will also be challenged and inspired. It is a course that will confront you not merely with the realities of LGBTQIA, but also with your own boundaries and assumptions, which you will be invited to explore and re-negotiate, in conversation with your peers and seasoned facilitators.

To register for the program, please visit: <https://www.mcislanguages.com/programs-training/continued-competence/ccregistration/>

For any questions regarding the workshop, contact training@mcis.on.ca.