

July is French American Heritage Month

Source: <https://www.uawford.org/media/j1vnpqr2/diversity-digest-french-american-heritage-month.pdf>

The United States celebrates French American Heritage Month to honor the contributions and influence those of French descent have made on our country. France was the first country recognized as an ally of the United States and has made impactful contributions to our country's art, laws, social etiquette, culture, and science. France also presented the United States with the most remarkable and noteworthy gift in 1886: The Statue of Liberty, named "Liberty Enlightening the World," to memorialize the alliance between the countries during the Revolutionary War.

"French Americans, also called Franco-Americans are Americans who identify themselves to be of French- or French-Canadian descent. About 11.8 million U.S. residents are of French or French-Canadian descent. About two million speak French at home. An additional 750,000 U.S. residents speak a French-based creole language, according to the 2011 census. Americans of French descent make up a substantial percentage of the American population. However French Americans are less visible than other similarly sized ethnic groups. This is due in part to the high degree of assimilation among Huguenot (French Protestant) settlers. Also, there is a tendency of French American groups to identify more strongly with "New World" regional identities. These include Québécois, French Canadian, Acadian, Cajun, or Louisiana Creole. This has prevented the development of a wider French American identity."

French Culture Facts



"You will not see roads full of SUVs in France, as the country is known for having an excellent public transportation system. Most people use the underground subway systems and tramways to get around."



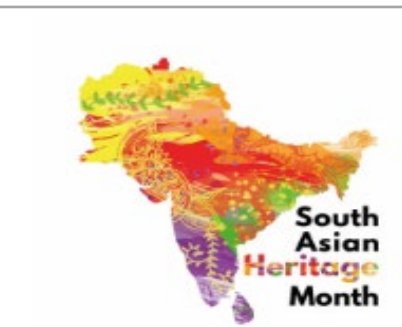
"In France, there is no such thing as a meal on the go. Rather, people take their time eating and typically do not eat dinner until around 8 p.m. Most Americans eat much earlier and faster than the French. In restaurants and cafes in France, you are not required to tip as it can be seen as an arrogant gesture."



"It is almost unheard of to see someone in France wearing sweatpants and sandals in public. People take pride in their appearance and dress more moderately compared to Americans."



"Hugging is sometimes considered more intimate than kissing in France. The French do not use the first name of a person unless they are invited to do so. What is more, speaking too loudly is considered a sign of anger and impoliteness."



July 2024 Calendar

World Autism Month
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- 4 – Independence Day (US)
- 6 – Islamic New Year (Islam)
- 14 – Bastille Day (France)
- 16 – Ashura (Islam)
- 17 – World Day for International Justice
- 21 – Buddhist Lent (Buddhism)
- 22 – Fragile X Awareness Day (International)
- 24 – International Self Care Day
- 24 – Pioneer Day (Church of Latter Day Saints)
- 25 – Feast of St. James (Christianity)
- 26 – National Disability Independence Day (US)
- 26-1 – Hepatitis Awareness Week (International)
- 28 – World Nature Conservation Day
- 30 – International Day of Friendship

3 Emotional States to Look Out for as an Interpreter

Source: <https://certifiedlanguages.com/blog/3-emotional-states-to-look-out-for-as-an-interpreter/>



In early March before the lockdowns imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic began, I had the opportunity to attend the 2020 CHIA Conference in San Diego, CA. The California Healthcare Interpreting Association, or CHIA, is an organization committed to the interests of limited English proficient (LEP) patients and advancement of interpreter education. As such, it provides a wealth of resources promoting ongoing education and professional development workshops — all with the focus to better service the LEP community.

It was around this time in March when talk about coronavirus became louder and more persistent. The lockdowns came soon after and trickled down to most medical settings, affecting the medical interpreting industry.

Many of the medical interactions that interpreters assisted with were fraught with the uncertainty that COVID-19 was bringing to LEP households, and interpreters were suddenly tasked with back-to-back assignments containing high levels of emotions and fear.

As I witnessed these interactions through my QA work and interpreting assignments, my thoughts traveled back to that first weekend in March. It was there when I sat in a conference room (not yet familiar with the concept of social distancing) with a group of over 50 peers that I learned how to handle these very emotional situations that we'd all be dealing with months later.

Handling emotions and fear as an interpreter

At the conference in a workshop titled “Managing the Interpreting Encounter: Overcoming Aggression and Emotional Outbursts,” MasterWord president Ludmila Golovine provided tools and valuable tips to help interpreters manage emotional situations on the spot. Its contents served to highlight a component of interpreting that most newcomers do not know: the emotional one. I certainly did not understand the emotional burden that interpreters carry when I began my journey in this industry in 2007.

Interpreters must be prepared to handle emotional outbursts because our daily professional interactions are filled with emotionally charged situations. Sometimes over-the-phone interactions are quick and simple; we help set up routine appointments or confirm a mailing address. But there are often serious and life-threatening medical situations that come our way on any given day. Because of this, it's no surprise that “nearly all language interpreters experience some symptoms of vicarious trauma, burn out, compassion fatigue, or increased stress as a result of their repeated exposure to traumatic information and stories.”

Seasoned interpreters know the importance of ongoing education to help increase their emotional intelligence, and part of this education is learning how to spot (and prevent) certain emotions before they become overwhelming and negatively affect their work.

Here are the top three emotional states to look out for, and strategies to help prevent them from happening in the first place.

Emotional flooding

Understanding and knowing what this is and what triggers it can help you deliver effective, focused interpreting services.

Emotional flooding is the experience of being overwhelmed with emotions followed by strong physiological sensations and an increase of stress. This will often affect an interpreter's cognitive ability, and thus, their ability to interpret effectively.

How to protect yourself: It's good to understand what types of situations may trigger emotional flooding and what you can do to stop it. If you are particularly sensitive to a subject matter when interpreting, it's important that you avoid calls of that nature or excuse yourself from triggering situations.

Some calls that may contain high emotions include medical situations (especially those calls related to COVID-19 or end of life), calls involving domestic violence hotlines, mental health and counseling calls, and, most recently, mortgage-related calls. Ask yourself whether you are triggered by any of these.

LEP aggression during a call

This is not uncommon in mental health calls or in tense situations related to poor healthcare outcomes. Aggression is a tool that an LEP individual may use when they do not feel heard. It's not a personal attack toward you, the interpreter.

Female interpreter stretching in between remote calls to prevent emotional burnout

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How to protect yourself: The best way to handle situations where an LEP individual is becoming aggressive is to step back and allow their emotions to flow. Be faithful in the accuracy of interpretation, and remain calm and neutral as the interpreting party.

Burnout

In times of crisis, interpreters will likely be exposed to severe distress. Too much exposure to repeated stress can cause burnout. Left untreated, burnout can cause a host of mental and physical issues, including headaches, fatigue, heartburn, other gastrointestinal symptoms, and potential for misuse of alcohol, drugs, or food.

How to protect yourself: As part of your professional development, create a plan to avoid burnout. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take frequent breaks
- Adopt breathing exercises
- Hum, sing, or stretch in between assignments
- Debrief with colleagues

The hidden interpreter superpower

Strong language skills and a passion to help others are two skills professional interpreters possess. However, emotional intelligence comes with years of practice and self-awareness. The ability to manage emotional encounters comes with practice and education, but will be a tool that will give your profession longevity and a sense of fulfillment.

New Staff Profile: Farid Hamdard



Farid, the newest member of the Farsi, Dari, and Pashto interpreting team, was born in Afghanistan. He first came to the United States in 2007 as an exchange student. He returned to Afghanistan a month later after completing his program. Later Farid moved to India to pursue further education. In 2018, he earned his BS in Computer Science from the University of Pune and returned home.

While in Afghanistan, Farid started working as an interpreter for the U.S. government, assisting in training the Afghan National Army. Following the fall of the Afghan government in 2021, Farid and his family relocated to the United States.

Farid continued to work as an interpreter for several private companies in the United States. Farid’s native language is Dari, but he is also fluent in Pashto, Hindi/Urdu, and has some proficiency in German—languages he learned during high school and while studying in India.

As a Medical Interpreter at UC Davis Health, Farid takes pleasure in facilitating communication between patients and healthcare providers, ensuring they receive the necessary care. He also enjoys bridging cultural divides through language.

When Farid is not working, he enjoys reading, watching movies and documentaries, hiking, and coding in his free time.

Welcome to the team, Farid!