



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INTERPRETING IN HEALTH CARE

Teaching Ethical Decision-Making to Healthcare Interpreters

Guest Speaker: Cynthia E. Roat, MPH

*Webinar Workgroup Hosts:
Erin Rosales & Rachel Herring*

March 22, 2013

www.ncihc.org/home-for-trainers



Housekeeping

- This session is being recorded
- Audio and technical problems



- Questions to organizers (“Chat”)
- Q & A





NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INTERPRETING IN HEALTH CARE

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*an initiative of the
NCIHC Standards and Training Committee*

National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs



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- Mentoring Program
- Support for Trainers of Interpreters in Languages of Limited Diffusion
- **Webinar Series**





NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INTERPRETING IN HEALTH CARE

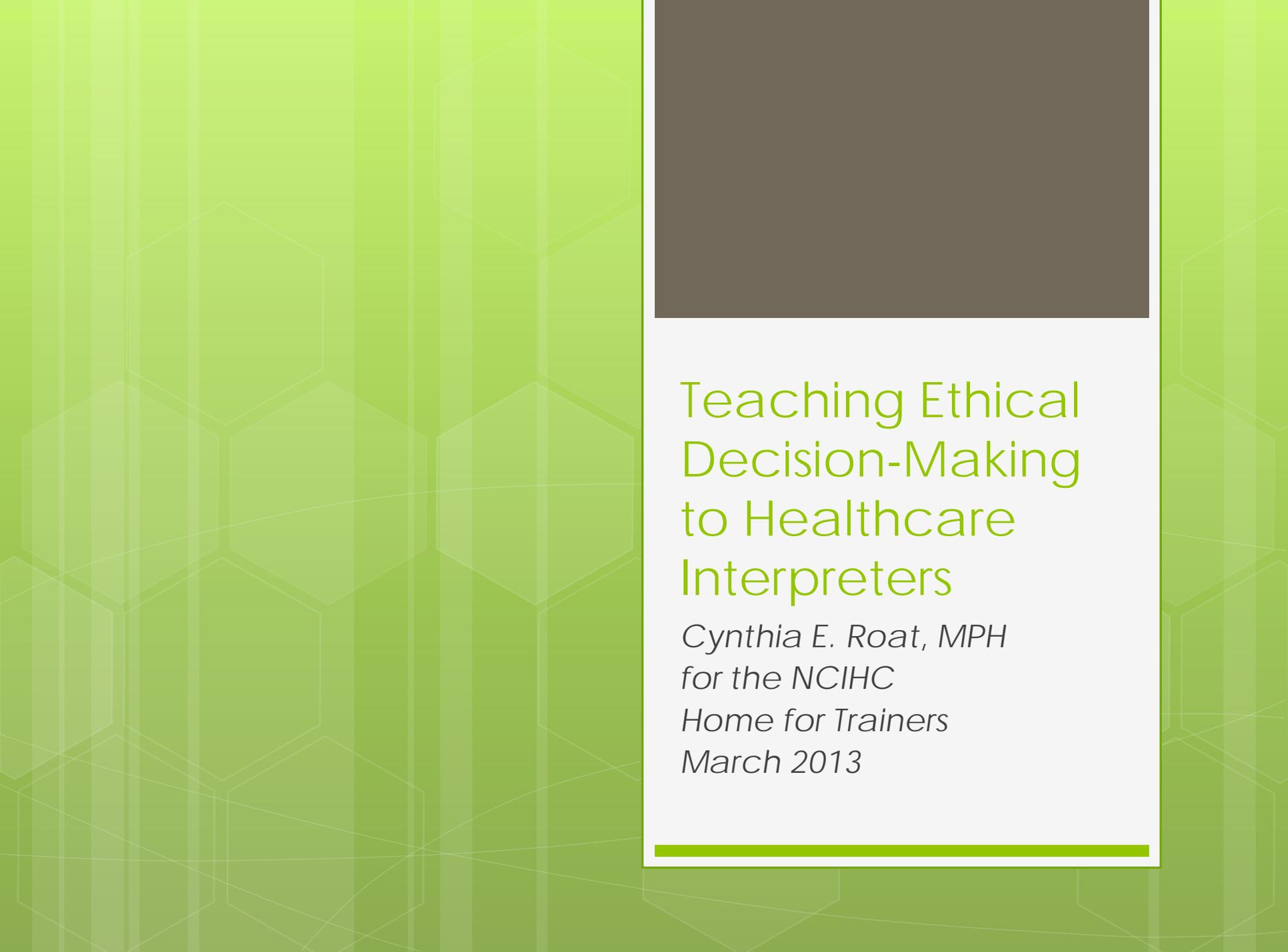
Welcome!

Guest Speaker:

Cynthia E. Roat, MPH



“... one of the nation’s premier authorities
on language access in health care.”



Teaching Ethical Decision-Making to Healthcare Interpreters

*Cynthia E. Roat, MPH
for the NCIHC
Home for Trainers
March 2013*

Goals for this workshop

- Clarify what ethics are and why they are important to interpreters.
- Review the National Code of Ethics for Healthcare Interpreters
- Share some techniques for teaching ethical decision-making in short, medium, or longer courses.

What are "ethics?"

A principle of right or good conduct.

- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

The principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.

- Merriam-Webster.com



Cynthia E. Roat, MPH

Ethics reflect values

- Beneficence
- Fidelity
- Respect for the importance of culture and cultural differences

How to use ethics: an evolution

- To begin, a list of rules to be followed
- As we grow, a guide to decision-making

Rules vs. guidelines

Ethics as rules

- Reflects a view of interpreting as a **technical profession**.
- Focuses on **learning the rules**.
- Less useful to practicing interpreters, but a **necessary starting point**?

Ethics as guidelines

- Reflects a view of interpreting as a **practice profession**.
- Focuses on **learning the principles** behind the rules and **how to apply** them.
- More useful to practicing interpreters, but takes time to develop **professional judgment**.

Example: Confidentiality

- What is **the rule**?

“Interpreters treats as confidential, within the treating team, all information learned in the performance of their professional duties, while observing relevant requirements regarding disclosure.”

- What is **the purpose** of the rule?

- How can the rule be **applied**?

Ethical Dilemmas

- These occur when two canons of the Code of Ethics seem to guide the interpreter to two mutually exclusive courses of action.

Example: Provider speaks and asks the interpreter not to interpret. Accuracy or respect?

- Or when following a canon of the Code seems to violate one of the values behind the Code.

Example: Interpreter knows critical health information not shared with the provider.

Resolving ethical dilemmas

- Requires an understanding of the principle behind the canon.
- There are often multiple possible resolutions.



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Teaching ethical decision-making

How you teach depends on:



- Your group: how experienced are they?

- Your agenda: how much time do you have?



Cynthia E. Roat, MPH

Teaching ethical decision-making, one hour

1. Introduce the concept of ethics.
2. Read the canons of the National Code of Ethics.
3. Apply to straightforward sample situations.

Teaching ethical decision-making, four hours

1. Introduce the concept of ethics.
2. Break into small groups and have each group
 - a) read a canon of the National Code of Ethics,
 - b) explain the canon in their own words, and
 - c) provide an example of how the canon could be applied.
3. Debrief in a large group.
4. Provide escalating ethical dilemmas. Which canon(s) apply? Provide clear answers.

Teaching ethical decision-making, eight hours

1. Introduce the concept of ethics.
2. Break into small groups and have each group:
 - a) read a canon of the National Code of Ethics,
 - b) decide what the principle is underlying this canon; what it is trying to accomplish; what its purpose is, and
 - c) provide an example of how the canon could be applied.
3. Debrief in a large group.
4. Provide escalating ethical dilemmas. Which canon(s) apply? Brainstorm options. Analyze consequences.

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Brainstorm options. Analyze consequences.



From Robyn Dean, M.A., C.I./C.T., University of Rochester, *Beyond "It Depends...": The Practice Profession Shift in Interpreting*, 2010.

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Brainstorm and analysis

- What could you do?
- What ELSE could you do? And what else?
- What are reasonable positive outcomes of each option? How likely are they?
- What are the reasonable negative outcomes of each option? How likely are they?

Let's look at an example



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Boundaries

1. The canon:

The interpreter maintains the boundaries of the professional role, refraining from personal involvement.

2. What is the principle underlying this canon? What is it trying to accomplish?

3. Example



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Boundaries, cont'd

4. Dilemmas

- Provide escalating ethical dilemmas.
- Which canon(s) apply?
- Brainstorm options.
- Analyze consequences.

Summary

- Ethics guide professional behavior.
- A study of the Code of Ethics is most useful if understanding of the canons is followed by:
 1. discussion of underlying principles,
 2. concrete examples
 3. consideration of dilemmas focusing on options and analysis of likely outcomes.

Discussion and Questions

Cynthia E. Roat, MPH

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Announcements

- Future events
- Session Evaluation
- Follow up via email

TrainersWebinars@ncihc.org



Thank you!

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