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Interpreting Beyond the Binary:
An Exploration into the Experience of American Sign Language Interpreters Beyond and
Between Female/Male Binaries

By
Tristen Evah Hellewell

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

*Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies
and Communication Equity*

**St. Catherine University
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Abstract

This study explores the experience of sign language interpreters who exist between and beyond female/male gender binaries. Limited research in the field of sign language interpreting to date centers the experiences of transgender and non-binary interpreters, prompting the need for inquiry into this population. Through a mixed-methods approach using surveys (N=31), interviews (n=4) and a focus group (n=4) participants were asked to describe experiences with colleagues, interpreter users, hiring bodies and the general interpreting field. Three themes emerged from the findings including (a) collegial relationships indicating both lack of support and instances of collegial solidarity; (b) personhood of interpreters pertaining to extralinguistic knowledge and interpreter identity; and (c) binary constructions within the field of interpreting. This work seeks to build interpreter scholarship beyond gender binaries and incorporate a gender expansive foundation for research to come.

Positionality

Research is a snapshot in time, built on available literature and oriented towards expanding areas of inquiry for the future. This study, as with all studies, is built relationally between participants and the researcher. Understanding the relationality of the work requires the researcher to practice self-reflexivity, and understand their own subjectivities within the research process (Bourke, 2014). Before presenting this work, I acknowledge my positionality as a white, educated, non-binary, neuroqueer, hearing, sighted, non-heritage signer and nationally certified American sign language interpreter. My interest in this research is centering interpreters between and beyond female/male binaries. Within this research, I prioritized using the language of participants and sought additional literature based upon findings revealed in the data. This study welcomes the start of the conversation on interpreters outside of male/female binaries, and looks forward to more scholarship incorporating additional perspectives for the future.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Opening Thoughts

In recent years, Western society has seen growing acknowledgement, discussion and representations of people who exist outside of gender binaries. Gender pronouns have begun to accompany email signatures and introductions. Shifts in grasping the nuance of gender transpires around us. This can be seen in evolutions of gendered social roles. It is present in the addition of more gender marker options on legal documents such as licenses, passports and birth certificates (Clark, 2019; Secretary of State, 2022). The conversation ignites acknowledgement that dyadic systems prove inadequate in categorizing gender.

In response to the expanding consciousness of gender identities entering the mainstream, a misconception appears: that this is a *new* phenomenon. The impression of novelty is rooted in the legacy of settler colonialism and white supremacy. Human beings transcending two gendered constructs long predates a white eurocentric and colonized U.S. history (Neptune, 2018; Roughgarden, 2013; Sanchez, 2013). The erasure of human existence outside male/female (m/f) boxes is part of a blueprint that designs systems of power and hierarchy favoring white, cisgender¹(cis), heterosexual(het), christian, masculine, abled, English speaking, sighted and hearing individuals. First and foremost, any conversation examining binaries must point to the scaffolding responsible for building the structures in the first place. Binaries do not represent the ever-expanding nebula of human experience.

Movement to incorporate a more nuanced perspective of gender is necessary. Gender is one of many binaries that afflict language, cultural systems and ideologies therein. Categorization *can* be a tool for which humans find understanding and connection to others with

¹ Cisgender refers to a person who is not transgender (or another non-male/female gender).

parallel experience, as well as shared language to form around lived experience. Categorization however, paves the way for limitations, exclusion, and the formation of hierarchies and domination. This is because categorization is fundamentally subject to the biases of the categorizer. It can ask the malleable messy human self to press itself into one word, an identity, a box to check. Some of us occupying human existence have not had to give much thought to these. To some, checking boxes feels effortless and customary. The effortlessness is what happens when power structures affirm the existence of some as 'normal' and exclude the experience of others as aberrations. Boxes bring implications, especially if we never open them to see how they were built and subsequently packed.

Gender diversity predates western gender construction, much like the *practice* of sign language interpreting predates the incorporation of sign language interpretation as a *profession*. As a profession, sign language interpreting is embedded into U.S. social systems and has created binary boxes within it: powerless/powerful, conservative/liberal, bad/good, ethical/unethical, professional/unprofessional, biased/neutral, qualified/unqualified, disabled/abled, uncertified/certified, female/male, and more. It is customary for these concepts to be cited as 'normal' reflections of wider society and frameworks that exist objectively within the profession. When a binary exists unquestioned, imbalance emerges. Adherence to binaries (either/or thinking), alongside the bewilderment of existence beyond them, is evidence of white supremacy culture in operation (Jones & Okun, 2001).

For every binary there exists occurrences between and around those binaries. Barker & Iantaffi (2019) offer "life from a non-binary perspective is about shifting our framework away from a rigid either/or perspective, towards both/and possibilities, which embrace paradox and uncertainty" (p.16). Interpreting from a non-binary perspective could replace hierarchical binary

structures with both/and possibilities for the field. Building gender expansive practice necessitates embracing paradox and uncertainty.

To say that this topic is broached without problems would be entirely misleading, for even in this introduction we find the first enigma. The concept of binary/non-binary as dichotomous is, in itself, a binary. Additionally, ‘non binary’ is not a term that works for everyone outside of male/female categories. This term should not be a catch all for experiences between and beyond male and female. For the purposes of this paper however, and the start of this conversation, the use of *non* and *binary* will be employed in two ways. Lowercase non-binary (with hyphen) will refer to a broad range of genders around/between/beyond female and male. This particular label will be used as a tool to more succinctly discuss interpreters between beyond and around gender binaries. The intentionality around this is for accessing information succinctly with one term. Nonbinary (without the hyphen) will refer to individuals who *specifically* use the gender identity label when talking about themselves.

The conversation is murky and imprecise, much like interpreting itself, and much like the human experience. It is imperfect and will not claim to be anything else; perfectionism is yet another tenet of supremacy (Jones & Okun, 2001). If we want to actually try to do this work, we have to first reject expectations for ourselves that we are going to always get it right. There is a lot that exists between getting things right and getting things wrong. We have learned these binaries, and we have the capacity to unlearn them. To deviate is to first embrace our own paradox, our uncertainty. Our second step is to open ourselves to the curiosity of what lies between, beyond and around. Third, is to decide what we want to do with the information we are given.

The following chapters within this work will discuss research into the lives of those who live beyond, between and around male/female binaries. This inquiry was conducted over the early months of 2022, and must be continued *far* past the words on these pages. With gratitude and humility this paper presents the study: Interpreting Beyond the Binary.

But *WHY*?

The initial response from some ciswhitehet folk when asking me about the research I would be pursuing was “So, are you going to even have people to study?” The question, while seemingly innocuous, brought with it an undertone that this research would not have enough participants to warrant inquiry. Further, it brings with it the subtle exclusionary message common for us between binaries: that we don’t exist. If we do exist, there are so few of us that our experiences don’t really fit into a broader narrative and thus, are best left out of the data. This presents us with the reason why this study is necessary.

The field of sign language interpreting has long been identified as a profession dominated by white females. According to the 2019 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Annual report, 9763 members self identify as female, 1616 members self identify as male and 125 members identify somewhere outside of male or female reporting as: genderqueer, nonbinary, gender fluid, transgender or agender (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2019). In all the years prior to 2019, membership data reflected the sense that interpreters who were genderqueer, nonbinary, genderfluid, transgender or agender did not exist. It was assumed that all interpreters were either male or female. The question of “are you even going to have people to study?” is a result of the overwhelming representation cis white hearing females (foremost) and cis white hearing male interpreters (second most) have in research and statistical reporting of our profession.

People of the global majority² (PGM), deaf³, white, and hearing people who do not conform to male/female dichotomies exist. Period. We exist regardless of inclusion in professional data. We exist in the *professional* world of sign language interpreting. Non-binary folk exist in the populations of people who *perform* interpreting, cultural and linguistic connection every day: in families, friendships, and communities; folks who may not yet be welcomed into the professional world due to any number of barriers to formal training. Hierarchies have been built for a purpose, and the standards by which those hierarchies are maintained serve as a mechanism for exclusion. This is true in the profession as reflective of greater society. Alok Vaid-Menon (2020) states:

In order to even get a seat at the table, people have to believe that you exist. When it comes to gender non-conforming people, we are still at square one – still having to argue that we are real. What’s never questioned here is, whose standards of authenticity are we being held up to in the first place? (p.37)

Studies in the field of interpreting have discussed gender identity largely focusing on interpreters who conform to white female/male binary standards and only very recently including those who do not. Inquiry into whose standards determine worthy scholarship is necessary in order to expand the number of seats at the table.

When services like interpreting build representative scholarship and increase awareness, transgender and non-binary individuals experience positive physical and mental health outcomes (James, et al., 2016). We can be, live and work with a sense of belonging. As individuals with a multiplicity of identities have power, space and time in public discourse all members of society

²People of the global majority (PGM) refers to 80% of the world's population (Campbell-Stephens, 2020; PGM ONE, 2020) encompassing: Black, Brown, Indigenous people, Pacific Islanders, people of African descent, people of Asian descent, Black and brown people of Latin descent, people of Indian descent, and people with a multiplicity of racial identities. This language is a tool to communicate identities, and comes with the recognition that each of these identities has a distinct experience. Within this paper, PGM will be used to refer to those that make up the global majority, and occasionally BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), and QTPOC (Queer Transgender People of Color) may be used.

³ In this paper deaf will be used to refer to a plurality of deaf identities (Leigh, 2019). This in an effort to recognize nuance beyond medical/ cultural models of understanding deaf identities.

benefit from intersectional wisdom (Collins & Bilge, 2020). The profession as a whole will experience positive and collective health outcomes through leveraging power and enriching perspective. This possibility extends past the gender dichotomy in transcendence of any number of binaries, opening the profession to expansive thinking, theories and ways of practice.

Directions and Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of individuals outside of gender binaries with the intention of identifying tools to improve practice and competency in the field of sign language interpreting. This process is multi-directional. Creating spaces specifically for, by and with non-binary interpreters creates connection, focus and intentionality the binary f/m system has attempted to eliminate. Empirical knowledge that comes from interpreters beyond binaries can offer the community deliverance from the confines of binary thinking. If the interpreting community can begin to expand beyond a default of male/female, the possibilities of exploration are limitless. This work is one step in the process of uncovering more.

Information on this subject comes through three different means: a survey, interviews and a focus group. Through collection of personal stories, data, and lived knowledge the question guiding this work is: How does the professional experience of non-binary American Sign Language Interpreters inform the sign language interpreting world on gender expansive practice in the field?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

At the time this research is being conducted, scholarship specifically targeting the experience of interpreters who are neither binary female nor male is minimal. In order to explore the experience of non-binary interpreters the topic must be explored on an interdisciplinary scale. Following sections will seek scholarship in sociology, anthropology and neuroscience to build a base of knowledge and inform this study at hand. Non-binary gender discourse must also be informed by intersectional scholarship. This research consulted works that recognize race, gender, class, and dis/ability as distinctive aspects within an overarching system of domination (Collins, 1990; McRuer, 2006; Moussawi & Vidal-Ortiz, 2020; Nario-Redmond, 2020). These works point to acknowledgements that socially constructed phenomena are related. Non-binary identities coincide with age, race, sexuality, dis/ability, geographical location, religion, culture, class and more.

This literature review will begin with the following concepts: gender and sex, gender and sex binaries, gender expression, identity and orientation, and research on non-binary identities. Literature will then be explored on transgender and non-binary individuals, and gender and interpreting research. Finally, this literature review will conclude with a component exploring research on binary thinking.

Theory and Concepts

Language is a tool to convey thoughts and generate collective meaning. In order to fully explore this work, a foundation of terms and concepts must be laid. These descriptions provide context for *this* specific conversation and honor the probability of language evolving. Scholarship in the following sections will provide the scaffolding needed to understand the

research at hand. Concepts to be discussed are: gender and sex binaries, gender expression, identity, orientation, and non-binary genders.

Gender and Sexuality

Gender and sexuality have been discussed in the world of sociology for decades. West & Zimmerman (1987) discuss gender as conduct and activity that individuals manage and maintain based upon cultural or social expectations of males/females. Butler (1990), drawing upon the work of Simone De Beauvoir (1949) identifies gender as a performance. The interrogation of gender goes further in Moussawi & Vidal-Ortiz's (2020) work naming Black feminist theory and the call on sociology to understand all social phenomena as interrelated. Human gender is not a fact; it is a display, action, decision, a way of social acting amidst a complex web of identity. It is an interdependent social development alongside the subjection of bodies to hierarchical positionality based on race, ability, ethnicity, location, sexuality and class. Gender is something assigned, molded, mimicked, and ever evolving through social learning and experience. It is produced and reproduced through language and mannerisms.

Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) articulate that "Sex is based in a combination of anatomical, endocrinal, and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female" (p. 10). This concept is reinforced in Roughgarden's (2013) book *Evolution's Rainbow* through the discussions of chromosomal, anatomical and endocrine variance in the human condition. Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) discuss biological prototypes of male/female, while pointing out that these prototypes are an incomplete representation of sex possibilities found in humans. Purves & Williams (2001) outline the variance in genotypic (chromosomes) and phenotypic sex (physical characteristics). In the literature human sex is understood as not always

exclusively male (xy) / female (xx). Humans can have variance in chromosomes and phenotypic characteristics (Dreger, 1998). Individuals who have variance in gonads, genitals and/or chromosome patterns are known as intersex individuals. These individuals account for roughly 0.05% to 2% of the population (Jaswal, n.d.). Due to a binary understanding of sex, medical intervention is a primary response from the medical world when intersex babies are born (Griffin, 2017; Vivanco, 2018). The practice of medically forcing intersex babies into a binary sex has been widely critiqued by intersex activists. It is rooted in an ideology that binary gender categories are the only acceptable way to exist as a human.

Binaries and Hierarchies

The gender and sex binary is a way of interpreting the world through an ideology that women and men belong to two distinct categories. *Biological essentialist* theory argues that men and women are biologically different and that the distinction is immutable and predetermined (Saguy, et al., 2021). Biological essentialism (or genetic essentialist bias as described by Dar-Nimrod & Heine [2011]) stratifies genotypes and phenotypes into systemic favorability of certain mental/physical/cognitive abilities, genders, races, ethnicities, and body sizes over others. Sloan (2021) writes “The gender binary gains its power from the false epistemology where gender derives from sex.” This deceptive understanding of human genetic complexity serves as a justification to design a gender hierarchy favoring a social construction of white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied men, male social roles and masculinity.

The gender and social hierarchies observable now have not always been considered the status-quo. Nario-Redmond (2020) identifies anthropological evidence of Neanderthals with disabilities and abilities coexisting in communion with one another (p. 46). Mitchell (2018) names patriarchy as a feature of colonialism, and an imbalance of masculine energy in society.

Hyde et al., (2019) challenges the gender binary/hierarchy with contributing researchers in neuroscience, psychology and neuroendocrinology all fortifying the argument “the gender binary fundamentally misrepresents human biological and psychological states and processes. The drawbacks of the gender binary are numerous and collectively produce what is likely to be an enormous cost to human societies. These costs are especially unfortunate in that they are likely to be nearly entirely avoidable” (p.193). Scholars cited in the above section all critique essentialist bias. The next paragraph will offer an alternative theory.

Socio-cultural theory suggests that gender is a feature of society through social gender construction and expectations (Andrews, 2012; Berger, et al.,1967; Young, et al., 2004). The construction of gender hierarchy is linked to the ongoing structures of racism, colonialism, ableism, audism, vidism, cissexism, anti-fat bias, and all other forms of body elitism. This interconnectedness is outlined by Collins (1990) as part of one overarching structure of social domination. Gender hierarchy through a gender binary, cannot be disrupted without disrupting all socially constructed systems of power. Socio-cultural theory will be used as the overarching framework for this research.

To look deeper into the complexity of gender itself, the next few sections will look at three overlapping and non-conclusive dimensions of gender: expression, identity and orientation expanding on the work of Williams (2013) before looking to contextualizing the non-binary umbrella.

Expression

Gender expression is the outward and situational presentation that a person gives in their social performance of gender alongside performance of all aspects of a person’s identity.

Expressions can present in the way a person dresses, styles their hair, behaves, and could be

pronouns they use in a given situation. (Cherry, 2021; Solomon, 2021). Gender expression includes but is not limited to presentations that may be: androgynous, changing, feminine, masculine, neutral, non-conforming, or any number of options. Expression is built around stereotypes of androgyny, blended presentations, feminine, masculine, and/or more ways of communicating one's gender in accordance with, and/or against, cultural and social cues. Hyde et al., (2019) describes the act of "doing gender" through gender roles, expectations, ideologies, and social presentation (p. 181). Gender expression is co-constructed with other aspects of a person's identity.

Human beings engage with gender performance alongside social expectations and structures of race, dis/ability and sexuality. Cole & Zucker (2007) state that race and gender expression "mutually construct each other" finding that femininity has distinctive meaning for Black women when it comes to: feminine gender role ideology, relationship to feminism, aesthetics in clothing and home-making (p.7). Vidal Ortiz (2002) notes traditional hegemonic performance of masculinity having four main components: success status, toughness and self-confidence, aggressiveness, and avoiding feminine traits (p.191). Transgender men, Vidal Ortiz's study finds, benefit from being perceived as masculine, and also challenge socially constructed ideologies of masculinity. Studies named in this paragraph are two of many studies on gender expression overlapping other aspects of a person's identity. Expression is one component of gender, alongside gender identity and orientation.

Identity

A person's gender identity is the label an individual uses to describe themselves when talking about their gender. The label may or may not align with their gender expression or orientation, but inevitably interlocks itself with other aspects of identity such as sexuality, race,

heritage or geographic location. For example, a person may situationally identify as a female and express themselves with an androgynous or masculine presentation. Gender identities as described by Solomon (2021) “are expansive and do not need to be confined within one collectively agreed-upon term.” A person could have multiple gender identities simultaneously such as: non-binary, genderqueer, femme, and gender non-conforming. Labels can morph, stretch and change as a person’s understanding of themselves evolves. They may also change environmentally as an individual navigates their social world.

Labels co-occur alongside various aspects of a person's identity and expression such as: agender, androgyne, autigender (reserved for autistic folk), butch, femme, neurogender (reserved for neurodivergent folk), transmasculine, transfeminine, stud (reserved for Black and Brown folk [Manders, 2020]), two-spirit (reserved for Indigenous folk [Neptune, 2018]) and many more. Gender identity labels illustrate a deep cultural, socio-political, historical aspect of personhood.

A number of scholars have focused their work on looking at gender identities and the overlap with other aspects of a person’s socio-cultural identity. Manders (2020) spotlights butch and stud identities through “The Renegades” identifying butchness as it intersects with sexuality, gender expression, and race. Resnick (2021) writes about femme erasure and how femme identities navigate social assumptions that femininity = straightness. Neptune (2018) names Two-Spirit identities through cultural-historical context, bridging indigenous and western understandings of gender and sexuality. Intersex activist Pagonis (2019) talks about their experience as an intersex nonbinary person navigating medicalization and social stigma. Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018) centers disabled and sick queer, trans, black, and brown people in discussing intersections of racial identity, gender identity and disability. Dunn (2020) spotlights deaf transgender individuals: Zee Chauhan, Blake Culley, and Asteria L. Summers focusing on

the intersectionalities of deaf and transgender identities. As a final point in understanding gender identity as a social phenomena Kourti's (2021) work centers autistic non-binary and transgender individuals. Research within Kourti's body of work indicates that "30-40% of autistic individuals without learning difficulties" identify as gender neutral (p.91). Works within this paragraph, point to scholarship that situates gender identity as a social, historical, political, cultural, personal phenomena existing in relationship to other socially formed identities.

Gender identity is a personal statement in connection with one's own history, culture, language, dis/ability and understanding of self. Labels are not static proclamation, rather a snapshot in time of someone's gendered existence. This brings us to the last piece of an expanding gender triptych: Gender orientation.

Orientation

Gender orientation is a term coined by Williams (2013) who argues the need for understanding this third component of gender. While identity and expression are aspects of gender that exist relationally, orientation is an aspect that exists internally. It is described by Williams (2013) as the "subjective experience of one's body, including its sexed attributes" (Para. 2). Each individual has an orientation towards their body and gender or sex. It could be ambivalent, euphoric, or dysphoric⁴. The line in distinguishing orientation and identity can at times feel blurry. The need for understanding this dimension of gender is to understand that human gender exists both within the body and around the body. Examples of individuals who have a gender orientation that does not sync with their gender label may be folks who have not yet come out as non-binary, transgender or another non-cisgender identity. It could also be folks who do not have language for their gender but experience a misalignment with their identity and

⁴ Dysphoria refers to the dissonance/discomfort in a person's body when their gender does not match the gender imposed upon them at/pre birth. Euphoria is the feeling of ease, comfort or joy when a person's gender aligns with an imposed gender at/pre birth.

orientation. People can experience gender euphoria where their orientation and labels (identity) feel aligned, or levels of dysphoria where their experience with their own sexed attributes are incongruent with their label or assigned sex. Gender orientation is a new concept that is worth inquiry in future research.

Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals in Interdisciplinary Scholarship

As more non-binary researchers and academics come forward bringing information into public consciousness, the body of scholarship grows. Exploration of literature will now focus in on available research pertaining to the larger experience of transgender and non-binary people. Looking at literature on transgender and non-binary individuals through interdisciplinary scholarship can be used to make parallels in the data uncovered in *this* research on the experience of practitioners working beyond binaries in the interpreting profession

The 2015 U.S. transgender survey report is the second of its kind, building on an earlier study in 2008-9 (James, et al., 2016). This survey collected extensive data on transgender adults in the United States, with the goal of filling a gap in census data. U.S. census data has primarily ignored the existence of transgender adults up until recently. James, et. al (2016) spotlights the transgender community in America; and shows in the data disparities that continue to exist in all realms of society. Additionally this survey gives visibility to the non-binary community -- a community that makes up nearly one-third of the transgender population in America. Currently, anti-transgender bills continue to be proposed in legislatures all over the country. According to the ACLU (2021) the year 2021 set a record for anti-transgender legislation in the U.S. As this research is currently being conducted, Freedom for All Americans (2022) reports 2022 as rapidly catching up to 2021 with anti-trans legislation.

Scandurra, Mezza, Maldonato, Bottone, Bochicchio, Valerio & Vitelli (2019) look at the health of non-binary individuals to identify differences in health outcomes between non-binary/gender queer people, binary transgender individuals and cisgender individuals. The findings in this study leave more research necessary. Studies did indicate non-binary/gender queer individuals are at greater risk for negative health outcomes, but did not provide specific guidance on mitigating that risk. The risk for negative health outcomes due to anti-trans policies and attitudes is affirmed in James, et al. (2016) research. Scandurra, et al. (2019) identify some methodological limitations within the studies and the need for further research centralizing the experiences of non-binary/gender queer individuals. This systematic review helps to guide some trajectories for research in non-binary/gender queer populations that can be adapted to fitting specifically the research of non-binary/gender queer interpreters.

Hall (2020) dives into non-binary mental health and resilience. Using a mixed method quantitative and qualitative approach, exploration is conducted into tools non-binary folk have crafted to combat depression and anxiety. Pointing to studies by Cantor et al., (2020); Grant et al., (2011); Goldberg et al., (2019); and James et al., (2016), this work names where most research has provided focus: disparities and poor mental health outcomes for non-binary individuals. As a contrast, Hall focuses on the resiliency strategies already in place and working in non-binary communities. Themes discovered in resiliency strategies include: community, distraction, therapy, and therapeutic techniques to mitigate the stresses of: work/school, interpersonal stress, pandemic and identity. This study gives credit to the work that non-binary people do every day to survive through depression and anxiety, deploying creative strategies and community solidarity. Hall comes to the work positioned as a Black nonbinary researcher, bringing the essential lens to the work as a person with lived knowledge. The research ends with

the quote “nonbinary individuals are a unique, multi-faceted, resilient community deserving of respect, dignity, and celebration.” This quote drives work conducted here on non-binary interpreters.

Davidson (2016) takes a look at non-binary and transgender inequality in the workplace as pertaining to gender identity and expression. Results outline workplace disparities between non-binary and cisgender colleagues in terms of: job placement, hiring/firing practices, promotions and salary determinations. Grant et al., (2011) highlights the compounding factors of race and gender in workplace disparities. Issues within the workplace highlighted include: appropriate etiquette in cis/transgender workplace relationships (e.g. how do cisgender individuals treat transgender individuals), concerns transgender folk have deciding whether or not to be ‘out’ in the workplace, bathroom accessibility, workplace dress-codes, and official documentation practices pertaining to gender options. Davidson’s research can be used to open the conversation of the professional experience of nonbinary sign language interpreters, drawing parallels from the generalized experience of transgender and nonbinary professionals across disciplines. While some of the language in this study is outdated (e.g. the use of “nonbinaries” as opposed to non-binary individuals), the content points to numerous evidences that the professional world has not largely been a welcoming place to those that exist between female and male genders.

Savoia (2017) conducts a qualitative study delving into the lived experiences of nonbinary individuals and how they express their gender identities across a variety of contexts. This study investigates the experiences solely of non-binary (not cisgender/not binary transgender) individuals in the workplace and relationships. Savoia focuses on how non-binary individuals understand and perform their gender identities in the workplace, in intimate partner

relationships, with friends and in the LGBTQ+ community. The researcher identifies distrust marginalized groups have with academia and the risks of outing themselves to strangers. This underscores the importance of non-binary researchers leading research into non-binary lives. While the sample size in this study was small, it opens a discussion distinguishing non-binary experiences from cisgender and binary transgender experiences.

Gender and American Sign Language Interpreting

Gender is an aspect of identity that influences and impacts individuals' and the world around them. Artl's (2015) mixed methods qualitative/quantitative study examines trends of gender identity within the profession of ASL-English Interpretation. The central focus examined gender-related trends among female and male practitioners of interpreting, and how gender identity impacts the role and experiences of American Sign Language - English interpreters. Of the survey respondents, 81.7% of respondents self identified as female, 15.3% identified as male and 2.8% identified themselves as genderqueer, non-binary, transgender or other (Artl, 2015). Findings in the study indicate that a blend of 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits suits the malleability of the sign language interpreting profession. Non-binary or transgender interpreters however, were not included in the analysis of the study. The exclusion of non-binary/transgender interpreters prioritizes a binary framework, and illuminates the need for more research.

The exploration of gender in interpreting continues with Jones (2017), who uses a feminist lens to conduct research focusing on the experiences of female interpreters. In this study gender bias in interpreted interactions, and the impact on interpreters and consumers, is explored. The researcher identifies gaps in research about how gender bias affects the perception of consumers. The data and findings of this study set a foundation for further research to be conducted and inform interpreter communities of practice. A question in the research was "How

hearing participants' perception of a Deaf male presenter differed when they heard a female interpreter compared to a male interpreter.” The participants included male, female and non-binary individuals. The results showed higher ratings given to the male interpreters when it came to trustworthiness and intelligence (Jones, 2014). Overall the study did not find a statistically significant difference in bias, though the researcher expected to find one. This study presents an interesting approach to examining gender bias in the work of interpretation. Still, there was a bias in the research itself focusing entirely on cisgender binary structures.

Morgan (1994) rejects the binary construction of patterns and traits as masculine and feminine and instead identifies a different binary construction of powerless/powerful language. The author/researcher identifies different linguistic aspects as defining powerless or powerful language use. Within the construct of binary discussion, the author still identifies the cultural and societal forces impacting the way in which men and women use language, and the intentional choices interpreters make to adjust their speech in order to more effectively match the dialogic style of the person for whom they are interpreting. This resource shows the necessity of transcending binaries in the interpreting profession. Morgan’s work is dated 1994, but is still widely used and implemented within the field itself. Contributions of non-binary interpreters to this discussion are necessary to expanding the body of research on language use and gender.

Donovan (2019) focuses the first study of its kind on the experiences of LGBTQ+ interpreters in the world of Video Relay Service (VRS). This research discusses gender as a social experience and construction, and how that impacts practitioners in the field. While exploring the experiences of the wider LGBTQ+ in video relay service, Donovan’s (2019) findings identify the binary nature of the interpreting field. Non-binary interpreters, as well as members of the wider reported LGBTQ community navigating consumers’ gender confusion

(questions about what gender they were), gender assumptions and expectations in VRS.

Outlining key themes around gender attribution, preferences and misgendering, Donovan's study opens the door for conversations focusing on nonbinary and transgender interpreters to discuss their experience in other interpreting settings.

Ehrlich (2020) focuses study on lesbian interpreters, building on Donovan's work conducted the year prior. This study looks into the relationships of gender identity/expression, lesbian identities and disclosure in the profession. Participants note three main contributions to disclosure of lesbian identity: "other LGBTQ people and/or LGBTQ environment, family, and being out" (p.44). Overall, Ehrlich finds that the evolution in society has created more acceptance and safety for lesbians to be out both in their personal lives and in the interpreting profession. However, there was note of variance in safety dependent on geographic location and concern over whether or not lesbian identities would be accepted if disclosed. This study spotlights the L within LGBTQ interpreters, and gives an insight into gender expression and the concepts of 'coming out.' Ehrlich makes note the importance of not conflating all LGBTQ interpreter experience as a monolith. Focusing on lesbians spotlights the uniqueness of their experience. This holds true when it comes to the need for focus on non-binary interpreters.

McDermid et al., (2021) conducted research into gendered translations, and how sign language interpreters handle voicing pronouns when interpreting from American Sign Language into English when a gender is not conclusively known in the source text. Male dominance theory and gender neutralization are discussed in noting social shifting from binary hierarchies.

McDermid et al. (2021) conducts a mixed method study on how a group of 22 nationally certified (predominately white female) interpreters navigate ASL source text with non-disclosed genders. The findings of the study indicate eleven different strategies to handle the non specific

genders identifying the singular use of “they” being the most widely used strategy. Recognizing the use of “they” as increasingly common for gender non specific singular pronouns provides insight into the descriptive and creative way language can be used to normalize non specific genders. On a deeper level this work illuminates the ways in which non-binary thinking is already expanding possibilities for the work conducted by sign language interpreters. This leads to the final section of the literature review: Thinking Beyond Binaries.

Thinking Beyond Binaries

The conversation now moves beyond gender binaries alone to contemplate where beyond binary thinking can contribute to the field of interpreting. Research has been conducted on how social existence has been shaped and reduced to polarizing ideologies. Expanding beyond binary thinking can improve human creativity, nuance, understanding continuums and flexibility.

Katilainen, et al., (2014) gives an extensive look into ideologies of West v. East, Us v. Them, in *Binaries in Battle : Representations of Division and Conflict*:

Binary representations of reality are at the core of all human thinking. We tend to divide things into two opposing, often differently valued extremes, such as true against false, us against them, and good versus evil. We also logically define by opposition: e.g. alien as not familiar and deviant as not normal. (p.4)

In outlining the consequences of binary ideologies, Katilainen, et al., (2014) delves into the way in which human beings become objectified into tools to maintain power hierarchies. One example was that of soldiers ranked in order of command (through obedience to the system) (Katilainen, et al., 2014, p. 114). We can envision the implications that numerous binary constructions lead to the definition of human beings based upon one category of their existence. Through this reduction of complexity, borders are constructed and reinforced, walls are built

between human beings and lines are drawn creating an illusion of separation that (while manufactured) has dire implications for the ways in which we think about and classify one another. As described in this text, the danger occurs in normalization of binaries such that they become the default. The status quo of Western construction fortifies binaries rather than plurality in the human experience.

Gaither's (2018) work explores plural identities coexisting and fluctuating even within one social domain (e.g being biracial, bisexual, bigender). Multiplicity in identity, human expression and orientation contradict the status quo of either/or categorization that dominant society imposes. The intersectional nature of multiplicity in identity naturally provides a flexibility that can give way to more creative and ingenious ways of thought and understanding the social world. Detrimental impacts of biases and binary construction on the wellbeing of individuals with multiple coexisting identities are noted within this work. Gaither (2018) ends with the invitation for research to continue exploring the positive consequences of reflecting on intersectionality and multiplicity in pushing past the stagnation of binaries.

Finally, Moulin de Souza & Parker (2020) points to how transgender and non-binary people actively divert established rules and regulations towards freedom and liberation. The authors state "Living a non-binary identity also brings with it, or demands, an agency through which individuals constitute themselves as a subject by reworking the discursive materials which are available to them" (p.75). The wisdom that non-binary people carry problematizes the oppressive power regimes of all manufactured polarizations. Non-binary identities are the embodiment of a collective and plural existence. Disrupting hierarchies and supremacist ideologies disrupts the corresponding enforced limits. This gives way to freedom and creativity as seen in the natural continuum of humanity, benefiting all people.

Conclusion

The field of interpreting has seen very limited research specifically directed towards non-binary practitioners. Donovan (2019) gives the most attention to transgender and non-binary interpreters to date. McDermid et al., (2021) speaks to the use of gender non specific pronouns as a linguistic tool already being employed in the field. Other work in the interpreting field has largely followed binary gender lines. It is for this reason that this literature review has sought research and scholarship outside of the interpreting field, venturing into the worlds of sociology, anthropology and neuroscience to build a base of knowledge and inform work to come. The next section will describe the methodology used in this research, before sharing the results and findings.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Research to date on gender diverse interpreters has been limited. Due to limited available scholarship and theory, this study took a ground-up approach to its design, data collection and data analysis. Inquiry was conducted into the experience of interpreters outside of male/female binaries through surveys, interviews and a focus group with. At the completion of the collection phase, the data was analyzed to observe codes, themes and theories that emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The survey included quantitative methods of data collection particularly pertaining to demographics of participants (N=31). Semi-structured interviews (N=4) and focus group (N=4) employed qualitative methods to data collection. Using mixed methods, participants were provided with three avenues (survey/interviews/focus group) for sharing empirical data and lived wisdom.

Inclusion Criteria

In order to construct the anonymous survey (see Appendix G), Qualtrics was the software of choice. Qualtrics was chosen due to its intuitive survey design capabilities as well as the ability to anonymize the responses including erasure of IP addresses. This ensured that all responses were unable to be traced back to individuals, unless they specifically chose to disclose contact information. The first three survey questions provided inclusion criteria necessitating participants to: be at least 18 years of age, working as an American Sign Language interpreter and identify outside of the female/male gender binary. Those who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study were automatically directed to the end of the survey.

Recruitment and Participants

The survey was distributed via RID Inc, group BeLGIT* current and former regional representatives as accessed on the RID, Inc website and through personal connection. It was also shared on two facebook pages: *BLeGIT* Queer Member Section of RID Interpreters* and *ASL Interpreters - Queer Space*. Recruitment information was used for both groups, consisting of a flier (see Appendix A) with accompanying image description and written explanation of the study. *BLeGIT* Queer Member Section of RID Interpreters* facebook page had roughly 910 members when distributing recruitment materials. *ASL Interpreters - Queer Space* had roughly 850 members. Due to the privacy settings on both of the aforementioned facebook pages, sharing was not possible for folks who might have wanted to, therefore, the recruitment materials were also made publicly available on the facebook account page created specifically for research purposes. This allowed individuals to more widely share the study with other interested individuals. At the beginning of the survey, participants viewed the consent forms (Appendix D) and were provided with a spreadsheet of national crisis and counseling resources (Appendix I). In total 31 participants completed the survey with at least 3 individuals from each of the five RID, Inc regions.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were invited to participate in an interview or focus group. Providing either (focus group/interview) was intentionally to allow options for participants who felt more comfortable sharing in 1:1 settings, and for those who felt best in a small group. If participants indicated interest, they were directed via hyperlink to a separate Qualtrics form allowing them to include their contact information of choice (email, voice/video phone, text). Two individuals independently sent emails directly expressing interest in participating in an interview and bypassing the survey. Those who indicated interest in participating in an interview OR focus group were contacted via email and provided with the

interview consent form (Appendix E) or focus group consent form (Appendix F) based upon which option they chose. The resource list for crisis and counseling services was provided along with the consent forms to each prospective participant.

Data Collection

Data was collected through the three strategies outlined above: survey, interviews, and focus group. The purpose of taking on these three different elements was to have some quantitative data for the purpose of framing demographic information, but use primarily qualitative data for deeper understanding of “how things are” from the perspective of participants (Hale & Napier, 2014, p.15). The survey started off the work with 46 questions, bringing participants through: inclusion criteria, demographics, experiences with colleagues, consumers, hiring bodies and generalized questions about their professional experience. Within the survey, many of the questions included short answer options, so that participants could contribute additional comments. The end of the survey provided a section to add any final thoughts. Semi-structured interviews were set up with a list of 13 questions that expanded upon the survey. Each interview session was conducted via Zoom, and recorded both with Zoom and Quicktime screen record. Two recordings were made just in case one had technical glitches or did not record properly. Sessions were conducted in a private and locked office to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Post session, video and audio recordings were saved on an external encrypted hard drive until transcripts were made. Once transcripts were completed video recordings were permanently deleted.

Interview questions drew from the framework of the survey and allowed for greater depth of response. For example, while the survey asked questions such as: “Please describe your gender identity” or “Please describe your gender expression,” the interview took it a step further

to inquire “What do you feel like your gender identity and expression mean to you in a professional sense?” Abstraction from the survey, promoted a depth of information coming forth. Semi-structuring the questions also allowed for a more conversational approach to the interviewing process.

The last part of the data collection was the focus group. Prior to the focus group, participants were contacted about time availability and provided the consent forms and crisis/counseling resources. Once participants shared their availability it was determined that there was an overlapping time available and the group time was booked. The day before the session, individual reminder emails were sent with the zoom link to maintain privacy. Participants were asked to use pseudonyms for their zoom name. At the beginning of the focus group participants were read the focus group script (Appendix H), reminded that the session was being recorded and told where the data would be stored. Once the participants agreed, a Zoom and QuickTime recording was started. Recordings were saved to the external harddrive post focus group completion.

The focus group consisted of 12 questions, allowing for each participant to answer and respond to each other as thoughts arose. Like the interview, the focus group expanded upon the survey questions allowing for greater depth in subjective response. The advantage to the focus group was the interactive flow of ideas as participants added to each other or offering dissenting opinions. Four participants all together participated in the focus group and the discussion ran for one hour and a half. Once the focus group was completed, interviews conducted and the survey was closed, the process of analyzing the data began.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, all of the interview and focus group audio files were run through the computer transcription software Otter.ai. Use of transcription software aided in getting a bulk of the audio transcribed more quickly. Otter.ai was the software of choice based on reviews and pricing. Once the transcription was complete, the raw audio data was listened to a second time in order to check transcription accuracy. Otter.ai was able to capture much of the audio and convert to text, however, a number of errors were identified and fixed through the second pass of audio data. Terms such as coda (child of a deaf adult), cis (cisgender), QTPOC (queer and trans people of color) were some examples of words commonly mistranscribed by the software. Contextual information (such as the aforementioned words), overlapping speech, speaker delineation and pragmatic linguistic information was able to be captured more accurately through manual transcription. Mechanical and manual methods of transcription brought both technical and interpretive approaches to the beginning process of data analysis (Bailey, 2008).

The de-identified manual transcription was taken from the Otter.ai software and put into a spreadsheet to organize data for analysis. Original audio was kept to replay for more contextual information during the analysis process. Each interview, focus group transcription as well data collected in the Qualtrics survey was given a tab in the spreadsheet. This allowed for all of the transcribed data to be stored in one place.

A third review of interview and focus group data was conducted by reading through transcripts while listening to the audio files. During this review, notes were written describing the content of each segment of text. The initial notes began the inductive process of identifying and labeling codes. “Inductive coding begins with close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the text. The evaluator then identifies text segments that contain meaningful units and creates a label for a new category to which the text segment is

assigned” (Thomas, 2006, p. 241). Codes created were labeled and assigned a color. Each section of text was highlighted with the corresponding code color. Multiple readings of the transcripts were conducted in order to more comprehensively identify and collect codes. Once codes were identified they were added to a codebook and a tally system was used to identify how many times codes were seen in the data. Each of the transcripts were coded and categorized, the survey data was analyzed, and major themes were then identified. Themes discovered in the data will be described in Chapter 4: Results, Findings and Discussion.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to shed light on an underexplored portion of the sign language interpreting community in the U.S. Researching this population required a multidimensional research process in order to go as deep as possible in the limited amount of time allotted for the conduction of research. By use of the survey, interviews and a focus group, the conversation begins. The next section will look deeper into findings this study uncovered and what prospects there are for the field and future research.

Chapter 4: Results, Findings and Discussion

In this study the experiences of interpreters between, around and beyond gender binaries were investigated. The purpose of this inquiry was to improve practice and non-binary gender competency in the field of interpreting. Using a survey, interviews and a focus group, participants described experiences with colleagues, those using interpreter services, hiring bodies and the general interpreting field.

Demographics

At the close of the survey a total of 37 respondents participated. Of the 37, one participant did not consent and was brought to the end via the Qualtrics skip logic. Of the 36 participants left, 5 participants did not complete the survey in its entirety. The responses of the 5 participants were not included in the data analysis, per survey consent form: “Exiting the survey before it is completed will be considered a withdrawal and all previous responses will be eliminated from the study.” Thirty-one responses were included in the analysis of survey data.

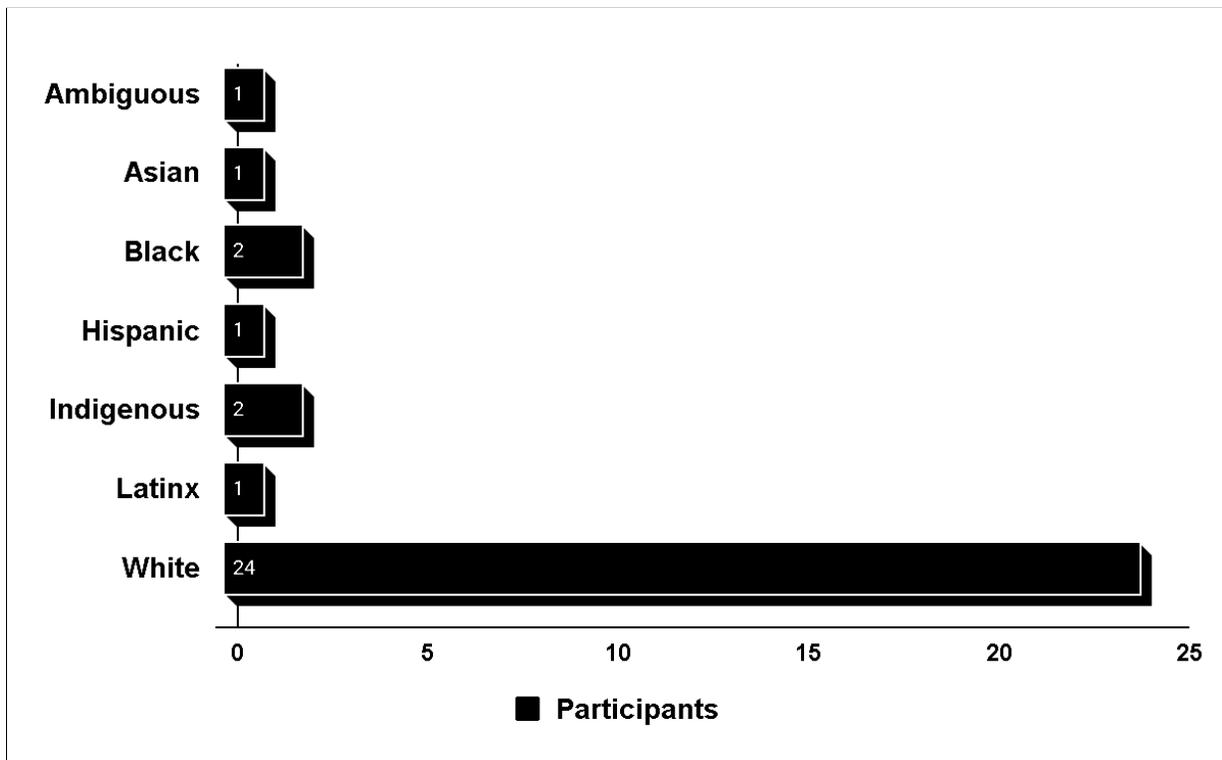
Demographic questions were presented to survey participants after completing inclusion criteria. Demographic information included: age, race, ethnicity, regional location, gender identity, gender expression, pronouns, interpreting credentials, years working as an interpreter, settings worked, and kind of employment interpreters hold. The age distribution of participants ranged between ages 18 and 65; 15 respondents (48%) identified as being between ages 26 and 35, 8 respondents (26%) identified as being between 36 and 45 years of age, the third largest category was 6 respondents (19%) identifying as between 18 and 25 years of age.

The survey asked for fill-in responses to racial and ethnicity demographics. Participants self-identified with a number of different responses for both categories. In regards to race, 24 respondents identified as white or caucasian making up roughly 77% of all respondents (see

figure 1). This statistic aligns with the racial demographic statistics within RID, Inc. membership which identifies roughly 85% of membership as white (RID, 2019). Responses to ethnicity included: American, Ashkenazi Jewish, Asian, Black, Canadian-American, European, Filipinx, Hispanic, Italian, Indigenous, Jewish, Mexican, Pacific Islander, Pilipinx, Western European, and White. Some respondents named multiple ethnicities and races in their personal demographics.

Figure 1

Self-described racial identity of survey participants



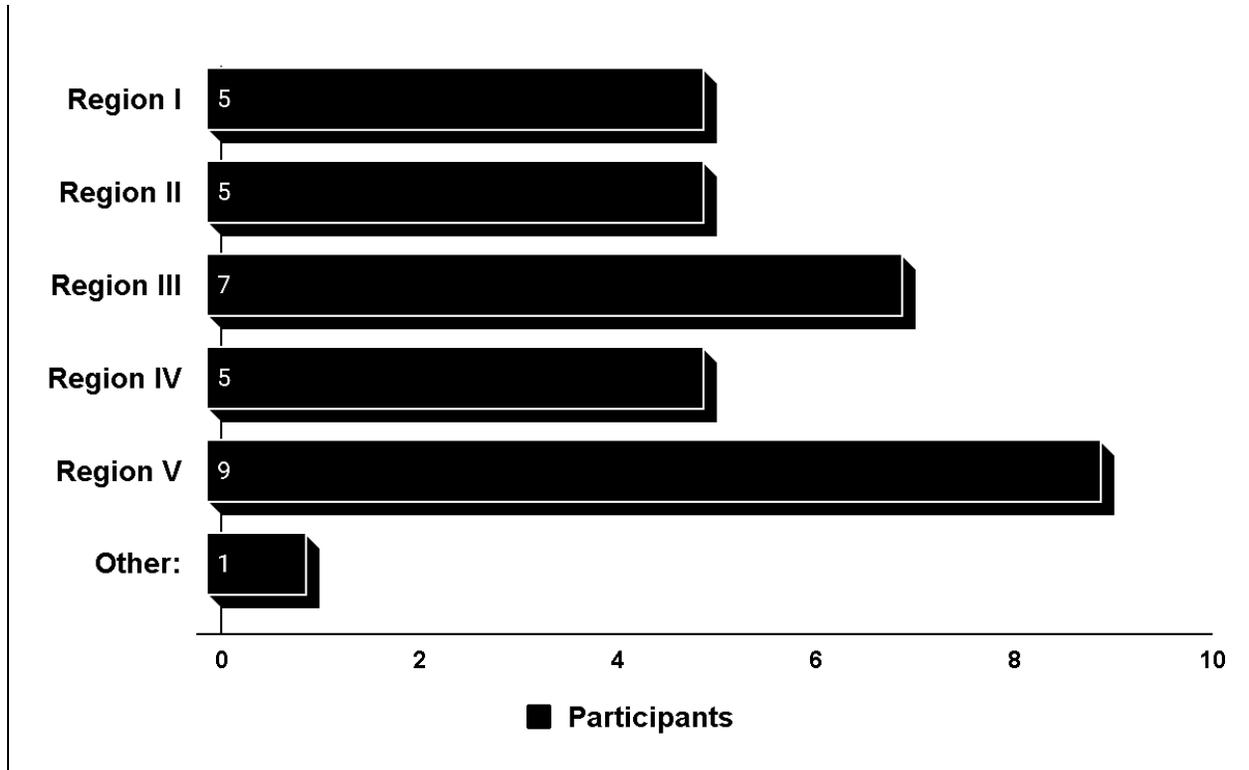
There was not a specific question regarding disability identity however two participants self identified as having a disability and one participant identified as autistic. Location information was kept as broad as possible. Due to the small population size of the study focus, having participants disclose states could have potentially disclosed who the participants were, therefore information on location was split by RID, Inc regions as follows (RID, 2019):

- Region I: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia
- Region II: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland & District of Columbia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia
- Region III: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
- Region IV: Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming
- Region V: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington
- Other: Anyone who may live and work in more than one region area

The responses were evenly distributed between Regions I, II and IV each with 5 individuals) identifying from these areas. The largest percentage of participants identified from Region V (9 participants), followed by 7 from Region III. One participant did not live in a specific region.

Figure 2

Regional distribution of survey participants



The last piece of demographic information asked participants to share information about their gender identity, expression and personal pronouns. A range of identities, expressions and pronouns were provided to allow for quantitative data to be analyzed through Qualtrics. Each question also included a write-in option to ensure that participants had the ability to self-describe if any of the options were insufficient in describing their identity, expression or pronouns. Write-in responses were included in the listing of gender identities in table 1.

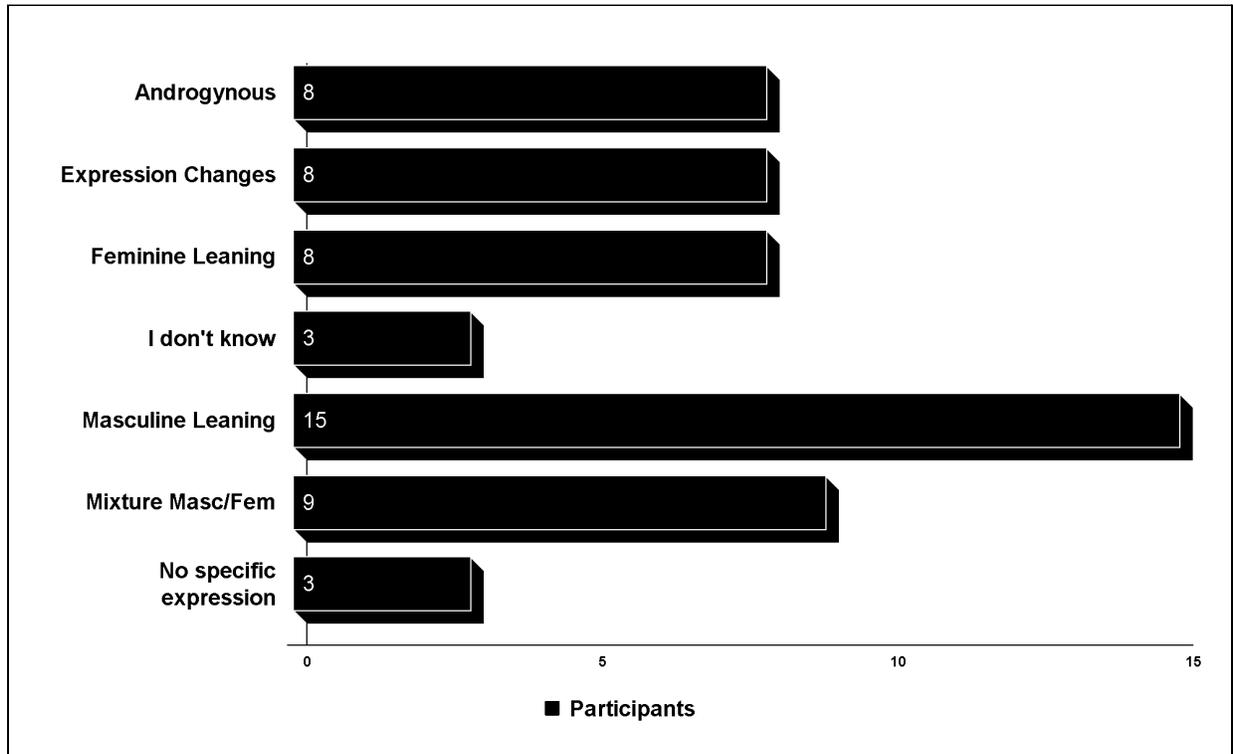
Table 1

Gender identity breakdown of participants

Gender Identity	Count	Percentage
Agender	3	4%
Androgyne	1	1%
Autiqueer	1	1%
Butch	1	1%

Enby	4	6%
Gender Expansive	4	6%
Gender Fluid	8	11%
Gender Neutral	3	4%
Gender Nonconforming	1	1%
Genderless	2	3%
Genderqueer	11	15%
Maverique	1	1%
Neurogender	1	1%
Neuroqueer	1	1%
Nonbinary	16	22%
Nonbinary Transgender	8	11%
Transfeminine	2	3%
Transmasculine	3	4%
Two Spirit	1	1%

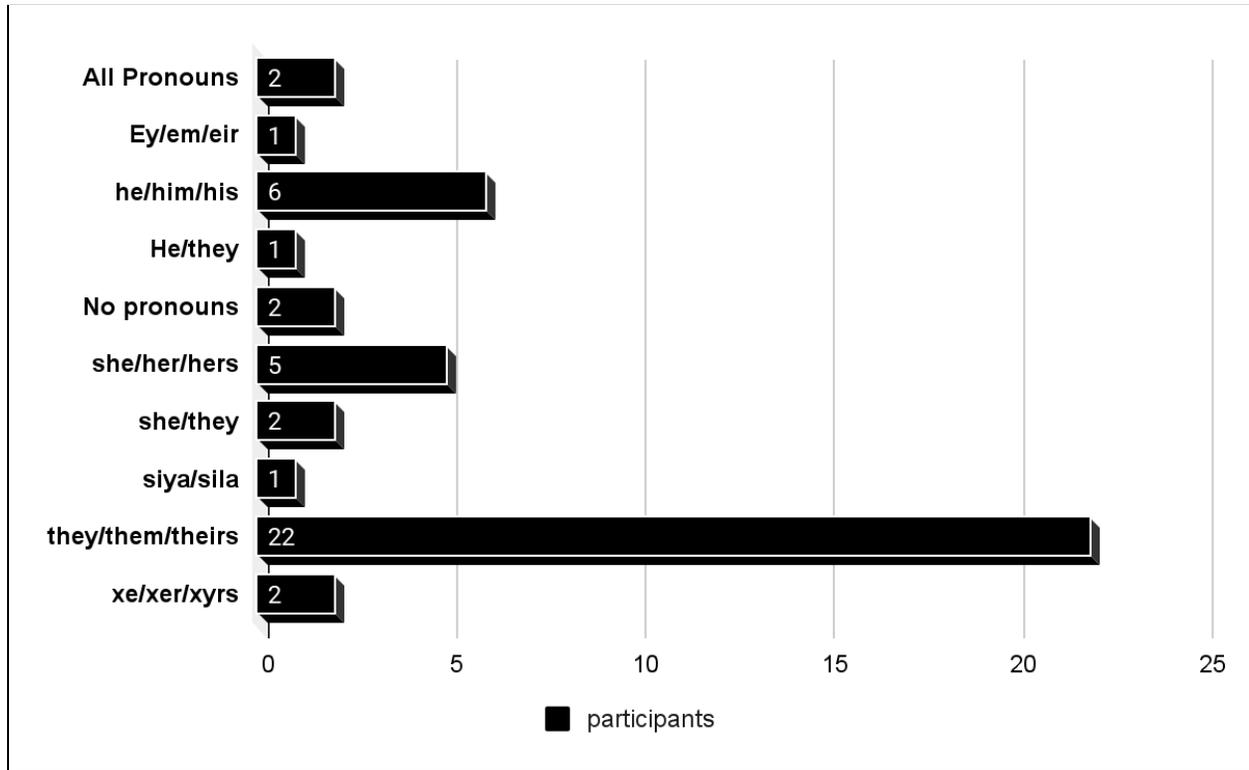
The self-described expression of participant's genders spanned a continuum of gender expression with the highest percentage of participants (28%) identifying as masculine leaning. Expressions: androgynous, feminine leaning, mixture masc/fem and changing gender expressions were fairly divided. Three participants indicated not knowing their expression, and three did not identify with any gender expression.

Figure 3*Gender expression breakdown of participants*

A multi-answer list of pronoun options was offered to participants to choose from, recognizing that participants may use a number of different pronouns or that pronouns may change. Results indicated a variety of pronouns used by participants with the majority of participants (22) using pronouns: they, them, theirs. A participant also indicated the use of a monosyllabic name rather than neopronoun or singular they, as an alternative for language-disabled folks.

Figure 4.

Participant pronouns



When participants concluded the demographic information, questions were posed on interactions with professional colleagues, consumers, hiring bodies and general interpreting experience. The next section will look into the qualitative breakdown of focus groups and interviews.

Qualitative Findings

In total, 13 survey respondents expressed interest in participating in a focus group (5) or interview (8). The respondents were contacted via their individual communication preference. Of the eight prospective interview participants, six responded to follow up emails. Five individuals set up times to meet, and one canceled due to unforeseen circumstances. A total of four interviews were conducted. Each participant was asked to pick a pseudonym to be used for

transcript and analysis purposes. The participants included individuals under the pseudonyms: Jay, Sam, T and AZ. Interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 60 minutes and were conducted primarily in English.

One focus group, consisting of four individuals was conducted at the beginning of February, 2022. Like the interviews, participants chose pseudonyms to be used for transcript and analysis. Four participants (using pseudonyms) included: Barley, Cosmo, Finn and River. The focus group ran for 1 hour and 36 minutes and was conducted in English. Transcription for the focus group was conducted via software Otter.ai, and personal transcribing to ensure accuracy and appropriate delineation of speakers. After completion of the transcript, the data was analyzed and coded to identify patterns and themes and lead the way towards research findings.

The use of surveys, interviews and focus groups provided a number of venues for participants to share thoughts and experiences related to interpreting. Three major themes emerged within the data: collegial relationships, professionalism vs. personhood, and binaries in interpreting. These themes will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Collegial Relationships

The NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) articulates that interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession (NAD-RID, 2005). Interpreting is a relationship-based, collaborative process that often requires teamwork to deliver services. The CPC does not explicitly define what respect should look like but does outline some illustrative behaviors including civility, cooperation, encouragement and mentorship (NAD-RID, 2005, p. 6).

Findings within the study at hand revealed two diverging main themes with embedded sub-themes. Participants indicated both ways in which they had experienced a lack of collegial

support and instances of collegial solidarity. The next two sections will show what participants reported about collegial relationships.

Lack of Collegial Support

Lack of support appeared as a theme within the greater category of collegial relationships. The data showed the following examples as ways participants identified lack of support from colleagues: misgendering, disparaging remarks, inappropriate questions about transgender/non-binary individuals genitals during work, nonconsensual outing of colleagues gender identities, projecting discomfort, passive/triangulatory discrimination and problematic social media discourse.

Survey data revealed that of the 31 participants, 55% of participants have experienced a colleague telling them that their pronouns were ungrammatical or too hard to use. A majority of participants (61%) have had colleagues make disparaging remarks about their gender or the gender identities/expressions of other people. Roughly 29% of all participants reported having been outed by colleagues without permission at some point in their career.

During the interviews Sam and AZ remarked that they had considered quitting interpreting all together due to colleague dynamics. Sam stated:

By and large, it's been interpreters who have not been accepting, who have been, you know, problematic, who have not wanted me in spaces and who have told me, you know, I had a boss tell me "the deaf community is not comfortable with you" and like, *she* wasn't comfortable. Yeah, it's by and large, been, you know, the interpreting community very much lends itself to cliques, and having like, these categories of power, and that, like social power, and if you don't look like or identify similarly to whoever's in power, that can really impact your access to work and community.

A second participant also experienced an interpreting colleague/mentor projecting their own gendered expectations onto a deaf individual. Jay shared a time when an interpreting mentor advised Jay to "up the femininity" saying "I just don't know if *she* [the deaf person] is

comfortable. Like, do you think she's comfortable when you show up like that [referring to Jay's gender expression]?" These examples illustrate ways that cisgender interpreters obfuscate their own discomfort by making claims about deaf individuals. This mechanism for discrimination deploys audist technique, inappropriately assigning cissexism to deaf individuals. Often, this is generated on deaf individuals' behalf without their knowledge or say in the matter.

Colleague discomfort was not always easy to parse out by participants. Two survey respondents identified not knowing whether or not their disability or their gender expression/identity was the impetus for discrimination. In response to questions about discrimination they had faced one of the two participants responded "It may have been due to my visible disability. Hard to tease out ableism from cissexism." Another survey respondent spoke to the intersections of cissexism and racism as a "transgender interpreter of color" navigating their interpreting training (anonymous).

In the focus group Cosmo and Finn talked about the compounding factors discrimination based on gender identity, age and existence as "newer" interpreters. River (Focus group), Barley (Focus group), and AZ (interview) all noted lack of collegial support extending beyond cissexism to a wider culture in the sign language interpreting profession of perpetuating systems of audism and racism concurrently. These comments connect back to Sam's comment on social power and access to work/community, and the overarching structure of domination as discussed by Collins (2021). Interpreter colleagues have horizontally reproduced systems of oppression operating in larger society against deaf people and each other.

A final aspect revealed in the data about lack of collegial support, was the impact that interpreter social media discourse has had on non-binary interpreters trying to find online communities. RID, Inc (2019) reported a total of 125 interpreters nationwide that identified

somewhere outside of male/female genders. Location information is not provided for these interpreters in RID data, however data in this study shows the 31 participants spread over all five RID regions in the U.S. Social media is one mechanism for interpreters to be able to connect across distances and geographic locations. While social media pages have been set up to try and build networks of support for queer, trans and non-binary interpreters, these pages have not seen a lot of traction. River, Barley and Cosmo stipulated that this is because of the hostility seen in wider interpreter social forums. Barley said:

I feel like the online interpreter community has been awful. My experience of those, I can't think of what the groups are called. But like Communities of Practice, Realities of Interpreting, are a few Facebook groups that have like thousands of members, and they just like, pile on these poor new interpreters asking questions, or experienced interpreters asking questions. So I feel like there isn't a really strong culture of *not* judging each other. I think I've noticed that too, in that non-binary group, aren't people saying anything? But I mean, I think I did one post, but it was kind of whatever, didn't really go super deep. And then I think I'm scared to post more because Facebook has been such an angry place for interpreting.

Cosmo agreed to this adding “That's definitely something I've noticed, that in all of the interpreter Facebook groups that I'm in, we just aren't very nice to each other in this profession. It can be so hard to be like a new interpreter and try to work with other interpreters. Which is not always the case, but often, we just tend to be so judgmental.” River agreed to the previous sentiments in their statements adding a concluding thought to the conversation saying, “we've been having these problems since I started my ITP in 98. Like, why haven't we figured out how to not eat our young? Like, it's awful that we're still doing it.”

Lack of support for transgender and non-binary interpreters, illustrates one aspect of a larger problem operating in the field of sign language interpreting. Binary constructions within the field have created attitudes of us/them, cliques, discriminatory and exclusionary behaviors among colleagues. Data has shown that lack of collegial support continues to occur within the profession, however, it is not the end of the story for transgender and non-binary interpreters and

their relationships with one another and cisgender peers. The next section will discuss what the data has revealed about collegial solidarity and communities of support that operate in the field.

Collegial Solidarity

Data results of the survey showed that while interpreters who don't conform to gender binaries still experience discrimination and hostility in the field, communities of support also operate daily in the field. All survey participants (100%) reported feeling supported by a colleague (in regards to their gender) at some point in their career. Having even one supportive peer can make a difference in the lives of gender diverse individuals (James, et al., 2016). Discussions in interviews and focus groups revealed that the largest mechanism of solidarity happens inside networks of queer and transgender interpreter colleagues and mentors. The second aspect of solidarity came from cisgender peers who showed up for their trans/non-binary colleagues in one of the following ways: pronoun correction, conversations with hiring bodies on documentation practices and gendered job placements.

Community building has historically been a tool for resilience in queer and trans populations (Conlin, S. E., et. al, 2019; Hall, 2020). Barley, Finn, Cosmo and River all discussed Queer/Trans/non-binary colleagues as important networks of support. Cosmo shared "I have only had one mentor, she was cis, but she was a queer interpreter. She had a lot of connections to non-binary interpreters when I was working with her. And that was really great that she connected me with people already in the field that were non-binary. And I was really grateful for that." AZ shared gratitude for Black and queer interpreter mentorship. Sam spoke about queer and trans interpreters of color as a support network and a large reason he/they stayed in the field. During the focus group River shared "I don't think I would have come out at work as soon as I did, had I not seen somebody else at work, come out and know that our team was a safe place to come out to." Finn added points about mentorship, and being able to post-process interpreting

situations with transgender and non-binary teammates, specifically when instances of cissexism arose within interpreting contexts. Sam also noted the helpfulness of being able to post-process a cissexist interpreting situation with his/their direct supervisor, a queer woman: “it was nice to tell someone that got it.” Having interpreting colleagues within queer and transgender communities has been a way to build solidarity networks. As more queer/trans/non-binary interpreters come up in the field these networks continue to grow and expand in reach.

The second mechanism of collegial support found in the data was cisgender colleagues that acted in solidarity with transgender/gender diverse interpreters. Data revealed actions of support such as: building relationships and creating open/safe(r) spaces for identity disclosure, intervening with agencies to improve documentation practices, rectifying gender-specific job errors, and correcting pronouns when misgendering occurred.

In their interview, T spoke about building relationships and trust with certain interpreters that expressed support for their gender expression and identity. Those colleagues used their power within interpreting agencies to make sure paperwork/contracts had appropriately gendered language before getting sent out. Davidson’s (2016) work finds that transgender individual express official documentation practices pertaining to gender options as a concern in the workplace. Solidarity within the workplace looks like cisgender interpreters using their power to make sure documents being sent out to interpreters do not erase the existence of those who are transgender and non-binary. Further, T described a colleague within an agency stepping in to rectify an improperly assigned, gender-specific job that didn’t correspond with their gender identity. Lastly, they spoke to trust building and pronoun usage “My colleagues that I team with everyday know me on a personal level. They’re going to respect me if I step out of the room, and still use my proper pronouns, and are going to correct people if I’m not there to do it.”

In the survey data, 81% of participants reported that colleagues corrected misgendering errors, whether errors were made by themselves or other individuals. Pronouns are a basic part of respecting transgender and non-binary interpreters, as basic as respecting an individual's name. While not all non-binary individuals have connections to specific pronouns or feel they are important, participants noted pronoun correction as *one* fundamental mechanism of collegial support. Sam specifically shared a recent experience where colleagues used their power to correct misgendering that occurred via email correspondence:

I had two people in this group, both advocate and be like, you know, this is not okay. And I really didn't have to do anything. I mean, I read the emails, but I didn't have to, like, they kind of took the reins and said we are going to do this work for you. So that was pretty cool (Sam).

Collegial solidarity occurs through queer/trans/non-binary interpreter community generation, and cisgender interpreter peers that use their power to stand with and show up for queer/trans/non-binary peers. Queer/Trans/non-binary interpreters must have cis-comrades and accomplices working alongside them to improve gender expansive competency and interpreting practice.

Professionalism and Personhood

Interpreters are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is professional in accordance with the NAD-RID code of professional conduct (CPC). The CPC states that "Interpreters are expected to present themselves appropriately in demeanor and appearance." (NAD-RID, 2005, p.5) Constructions of professional demeanor and appearance are molded by white, abled, neurotypical, straight and cisgender standards. An expectation within the professional realm is that demeanor and appearance standards must be complied with and unquestioned. Personhood has historically been dissuaded from the interpreter in favor of social chameleoning to the setting by way of performing socially constructed professionalism. So what

happens if your identity does not look like those social constructions? Within the focus group, participants examined the ways in which professionalism feels like a mechanism by which interpreters can include or exclude one another based on conformity to the dominant structure.

I think in interpreting space professionalism is a particularly kind of like, knotted topic. And I don't, I don't totally know why that is, I think part of it is because so many interpreters are insecure. I think that's sort of like a core element of ASL interpreters. I don't know if it's true for spoken language interpreters too. But ASL interpreters in general seem to doubt their work and their abilities more than like any other humans I've met. I think there are reasons for that, in terms of how interpreting education works. Most of us start interpreting before we're really qualified. And, you know, we're like working with a community that's oppressed and used to such terrible service and is rightfully furious at us. So like, there are all these layers to like, why we don't feel like we're good at our job. But then professionalism, I feel like then takes on this like, added thing. Because like, because there's such insecurity. So then kind of outward professionalism ends up meaning more in interpreting. I'm just kind of spitballing but it's, I think there's something there. (Barley)

All of the focus group participants agreed with the ways in which prioritizing the concept professionalism has become its own rigid category. River and AZ both noted this remnant from a machine model of interpreting. While the field continues to grapple with new models of interpreting, all participants noted the ways in which the personhood of interpreters brings essential components to the job. Two trajectories found in the data under professionalism and personhood will be discussed in the next sections: Queering interpreter professionalism and interpreter identity.

Queering Interpreter Professionalism

The construction of the professional interpreter has evolved within the larger system of U.S. professionalism as noted above. Within the interviews and focus group discussions, participants discussed the dissonance of professionalism and Queer, Trans and non-binary identities. Finn spoke both to the coded-whiteness of professionalism, as well as stating:

The term professionalism has always been for me anti-queer, you know what I mean? Like, there's always been just this feeling like, I have to be in the 'straight space', which, like, I know, intellectually, that doesn't have to be true. So for me, it's more like, well,

how do I bring my full queer self, my full nonbinary self into a professional world? Where it's my nonbinary professional, not this, like, coded or like, and so I have that like, internal judge going *is this is this right enough?* But I also feel like my queerness is constantly stifled by professionalism. And I've always felt that way.

AZ spoke to times they felt the pressure conform to professional expectations of fashion and cosmetics, adhering to binaries in specific areas where they have worked. Ehlich (2020) found that 19% of participants in her study expressed a sense that there is an unwritten dress code in the profession (p.40). Jay named the pressure of showing up in a professional context and the discussion of signature pronouns in a “red” state. T identified dissonance being a non-binary interpreter in a profession that doesn't recognize dimensions of gender:

On a professional level, I definitely have your standard trans masculine dress. I definitely don't have a masculine build. I don't have a masculine face. I don't have masculine hair. I don't have all the other things, so it doesn't matter how I dress it's still *she* this, the interpreter *her*. It doesn't really ever feel good on a personal level, because it's one of those things like crap, I'm still passing. Like, I'm passing as this *something* I don't want to pass as so, then, being in a professional setting, it doesn't allow you always the ability to correct or fix or do anything like that. So it's something that you have to continue with on that three hour job or, you know, whatever. So, yeah, it's not always feeling great.

Largely, messaging in the field (as reported by participants) is that the professional interpreter must adhere to male or female social expressions. Non-binary queer interpreters are expected to conform to the gender imposed upon them by surrounding interlocutors. Further the sense of professionalism creates ambivalence around disclosing transness or queerness. Barley noted this expectation to be especially true in VRS work in navigating gender attribution, findings that align with Donovan's (2019) work. As a consideration for grappling with professionalism, non-binary queerness, River questioned “how do I dress in a way that honors how I feel and who I am, but is also going to be acceptable in both, you know, the hearing society of where we're working and deaf eyes?”

The concept of “queering the interpreting profession” arose as a code initially within the focus group. Concepts falling into this code were found also in interview data. Predominant points on queering the profession are identified in Table 2.

Table 2

Queering the profession

Queering the Profession	Discussion in Data	Participant(s)
QTN ⁵ people in positions of power in the profession	When QTN people are able to access positions of power, use power to build diverse and inclusive spaces.	Jay, Sam,
Embracing QTN gender expression through attire and pronouns in interpreting work.	Moving beyond expectations of male/female attire, recognizing gender fluidity in professional dress, and honoring pronouns.	River, Finn, T,
Fluidity with language and pronoun use in ASL-English voicing.	The use of singular “they” (and third-person pronouns outside of he/she) is an acceptable and grammatical option when voicing where a gender has not been disclosed.	River T
Expanding beyond male/female gender binaries in interpreting training.	Recognize QTN identities in interpreting curriculum. Honor QTN ELK.	Cosmo, T, Finn,
Class consciousness in interpreting	Recognition of financial inequity in the field as pertaining to access to the profession, professional attire, and barriers classism creates in the field.	Barley
Continuing Education	More workshops on QTN identities and expanding beyond binary thinking in the field.	T
Intersectional Understanding of QTN	QTN is not a monolith. deaf, blind, Black, Brown, neurodivergent, fat, disabled, and interpreters of all ages have QTN identities.	T, Sam, Finn, Barley
QTN interpreters in QTN spaces	Scheduling considerations that question prioritizing interpreting credentials over interpreter lived wisdom and extralinguistic knowledge (to be discussed further in coming sections)	Cosmo, Finn, Barley, Sam
Build Collegial Solidarity and	(as discussed in previous section)	AZ, Barley,

⁵ QTN is used just for the purposes of Table 2 as an acronym for queer/trans/non-binary.

Queering the Profession	Discussion in Data	Participant(s)
Comradeship across the board		Cosmo, Finn, Jay, River, Sam, T
Deconstructing other binaries (hierarchies) in the field	(To be further discussed in coming section)	AZ, Barley, Cosmo, Finn, Jay, River, Sam, T

Steps towards queering interpreting cannot be limited to specific boxes to check, like whether or not pronouns are used and respected, or simply adding ‘non-binary’ as a third gender option. Barley noted that a problem with mainstreaming queerness is that the overarching structure is still binary, and thus, cisgender structures will continue to just look for a checklist of things to do or not do without considering nuance and fluidity. Knowing an individual's pronouns does not mean you understand the depth of their gender experience. A human gender identity label is a fraction of that person’s gender. Sam and Barley both named the risks of cishet systems ending this work with pronouns and a third gender option. “When you check the box at your doctor's office, you don't check female or check male and then the doctor is like “great, I know all I need to know about you.” “Right? That tells you nothing about me. I'm just telling you how to address me, that's it, you know nothing about me” (Sam). Pronouns and identity labels are a small piece of the puzzle. Queering interpreting requires relationship building, and paying attention to more about deaf and interpreting communities than labels alone. Interpreting beyond binaries is an evolving and fluid process. It requires Black, queer, disabled, deaf, Brown, blind, Indigenous, fat, neurodivergent, transgender and gender expansive individuals at the helm of interpreting education, interpreting agency decision making, continuing education and national discourse.

The next section will expand further upon queering interpreting through the embracing of interpreters as human beings with identities, and discussion in the data as pertains to interpreter extralinguistic knowledge ⁶(ELK).

Interpreter Identity and ELK

Historic ideology within the field of interpreting is that the interpreter must not bring their selfhood to the work. The best kind of interpreter is the interpreter that can disappear. Disappearing is equated with neutrality. Credentialing in the field (and thus impacts on state licensure policies) reinforces this, through certification that accounts only for general knowledge of language and interpreting skill, and no other aspects of what an interpreter might bring to the table through their lived experience and identity. Perspectives in the field have only begun to change in understanding the interpreter as a human being in the interpreting space with lived knowledge and expertise.

Non-binary and transgender individuals have a knowledge base that can bring fluidity and creativity to the work (Barker & Iantaffi; 2019, Moulin de Souza & Parker; 2020). Interpreters who are naturally inclined away from binaries bring needed perspectives to the field in general, and are the *most* appropriate fit in non-binary and trans interpreting spaces. Within the focus group, participants discussed the concept of ELK as a vital part of interpreting. Sam, Finn, Jay, and T all noted ELK as the most fitting component of interpreting work in queer/trans/non-binary spaces.

That's the right thing, right, have the appropriate people to do the work, keep the space safe. I think about support groups, right? And as like queer and trans folks, so much of our information has to come from our peers, because the world is ignorant, our doctors are ignorant. [Pause] You know, our families are ignorant, our peers are ignorant, our co-workers are ignorant. Um, and so we really have to rely on getting information from each other. And deaf folks are at an even more of a disadvantage, because so much of it

⁶ Extra-linguistic knowledge (Gile, 1995) refers to knowledge an interpreter has outside of language alone. This could be knowledge built by experience, education or lived wisdom.

isn't accessible, whether that be you know, I can sit, I remember, you know, when I first started, like, Tumblr was the only place you could go for like, trans anything. And now like, Tumblr is gone, which is terrible. But like, all of that was in English, which is a very accessible language for me, but not very accessible for a lot of deaf folks, you know, um, and then you have YouTube, there's all of these YouTube videos, that just now started being captioned. Tik Tok just started captioning, Instagram just started captioning, like, all this stuff is really recent. And so because of that, folks realize even more in these spaces, that they could go there because that was all they had. And so the idea of them, it's very important to me that they get that information correctly, in a non traumatic way. And the way to reduce that is like having someone there who also gets it, who knows the science, who knows the topic, who knows what it's like, so that there's still get the benefit of like, this is [a space where] we're all trans, this information is coming to you from a trans person, through a trans person, like every aspect of it is someone who gets some part of this experience who would be in the room. He belongs in the room with you, and I think that that's just really important (Sam).

Finn, Barley and Jay described ELK as bringing their lived experience into the work, both in interpreting and scheduling. Jay shared how trans and queer presenters expressed a sense of relief when Jay was the assigned interpreter, knowing what Jay as a person brought to the space. Barely talked about interpreting at a queer presentation with a certified straight interpreter and the necessitation of ELK in being able to effectively interpret. Barley shared having a level of competency in a space that the straight/cisgender interpreter who had more credentials at the time, but no ELK in relationships to the queer/trans experience. Finn discussed the limitations of having strict licensure laws and the ways in which legislation does not account for the ELK of interpreters in being the best match for jobs. In each of these examples the identity and lived experience of the interpreter is a necessary part of linguistic access.

It is important to note that while trans/non-binary interpreters bring ELK to trans/non-binary spaces, participants discussed perspectives brought to work in general. Sam noted this saying “ I think all of the identities and intersections that I bring are always going to be a benefit to the space or at least a benefit to my work. Even if it's not at the forefront, it's still always gonna bring something.” Part of what transgender and non-binary individuals bring to the

work is an understanding of nuance and flexibility (Barker & Iantaffi, 2019). This very concept is the last main theme identified in the research: binaries in interpreting.

Binaries In Interpreting

The binary of male/female is a fundamental binary that governs all aspects of society. Binary thinking (or either/or thinking) leads to binary constructions, which are key tenets to white supremacy culture (Jones & Okun, 2001). Like gender itself, these binate categories are socially constructed, and reproduce ideologies embedded in the overarching matrix of domination (Collins, 2021). The presence of binary constructions and thinking are present within the interpreting profession. Data revealed a number of binaries within the profession that were discussed as limiting flexibility in the field: certified/uncertified, qualified/unqualified, educational interpreter/community interpreter, ITP/Non-ITP interpreter, coda/non-coda, fluent/nonfluent. In each of these examples participants noted how binaries create us/them categories within the interpreting community, designating hierarchies alongside. The scope of this paper cannot delve comprehensively into each of these examples, however focus will be given to the most widely discussed binary construction: certified/uncertified. Other mentioned binary constructions leave room for inquiry in future interpreting research.

Certified and qualified are words used in policies determining what interpreters are deemed appropriate for certain work. Sam, Finn, Barley, and River all spoke to certification and qualification as fundamental binary constructions within the field. Sam stated “I think the one of the biggest binaries in the interpreting field has to be certified and non certified and how they should be equal to qualified and not qualified or *good* and *bad*. Like, I would love for the field to let go of that [idea of] skilled and not skilled, as if, as if it's this linear definition.” River provided

aligning sentiments in questioning whether or not RID, Inc. certification was truly a mark of qualification.

The hierarchy of certified/non certified has real impacts on assigning interpreters with work, specifically as states take on certification as a method for gate-keeping practitioners. Participants agreed that certification does not always equate to the best match for a job. Sam shared an experience where they were pulled from a job regarding content on queer and trans People of Color. Due to the power wielded by a white cisgender certified interpreter determining that Sam was 'unqualified,' Sam was pulled from the job. This, despite the fact that Sam had ELK. Deaf individuals also stating better access to the information with Sam as the interpreter due to clarity of the message coming from someone with lived knowledge. The interpreter that held the power in the moment to make scheduling decisions prioritized certification over ELK. Similarly, Finn shared a situation where a job placement required certified interpreters. The nature of the job was queer/trans content and because there were no certified queer/trans interpreters locally available, the job was filled with two straight white cis women. Barley wrapped up the binary discussion on certified/qualified/uncertified/unqualified saying:

I think there's a very strong binary with certified, but, there's also kind of a binary with qualified, and it is so just like, context dependent. Someone who's really strong in one area may be really weak in another. So I mean, if we're like to go into queer interpreting, like, I think we would see it as a more like, multifaceted, diverse, complicated thing, where it's not like, you know, they're good interpreters and bad interpreters and it's clear who those people are.

Interpreting is a multifaceted, diverse, and complicated thing. Hierarchies lead to monolithic thinking on groups of individuals. Hierarchies also favor the demographic of individuals who design and reproduce them. Certification is a hierarchy within the field of interpreting and has been codified into interpreting policies and laws across the U.S. Certification affords special power within the national RID, Inc structure allowing only certified

members of RID to vote on issues pertaining to evaluations, certifications, and standards/ethics (RID, 2020, p. 2). Assigning rank to sign language interpreters based on certification draws a line between who is *in* and who is *out*, without looking at nuance and key elements of what a practitioner brings to the table. Participants within this research critique certification as a glaring binary in the field.

Wrap-up

Interpreting beyond the binary reveals the necessity of expanding beyond commonly held attitudes, standards and ideologies within the field of interpreting. Participants within this study show possibilities for collegial solidarity with trans/non-binary interpreters, prospects for queering the field, and questioning established hierarchies. With results and findings revealed, the next section of the paper will bring the research to conclusion and discuss limitations, suggestions and prospects for future study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals outside of gender binaries with the intention of identifying tools to improve practice and competency in the field of sign language interpreting. The collection of stories, data and knowledge from participants in this research began the work of answering the research question at hand. Through interviews, a focus group and survey, participants brought forward three main themes: collegial relationships, interpreter personhood and binaries in interpreting.

First and foremost, gender expansive practice can come through the building of intercollegial solidarity. This looks like building communities of queer/trans/non-binary interpreters and cisgender accomplices. Intercollegial solidarity means building authentic professional relationships that uplift one another and improve our work. Queer/trans/non-binary communities have long been collective, relying on each other for information, support and care (Hall, 2020). Relationships must expand across a multiplicity of identities, building intersectional connections and depth of empirical wisdom. Interpreters cannot improve when we don't feel safe, we cannot grow where we don't feel loved; this goes for all interpreters. Collegial solidarity is one important mechanism to improve gender expansive practice and competency in the field. It will improve the work of all interpreters and services delivered to interlocutors.

The second component of gender expansiveness is welcoming personhood as an integral component of the professional interpreter. Transgender and Non-binary: disabled, neurodivergent, Queer, deaf, and interpreters of the Global Majority, bring intersectional wisdom to the work. If the field itself continues to demand a narrow understanding of professionalism (as upholding white, cishet and ableist standards) the profession will continue to be limited by binary thinking.

As a final consideration to improving competency and gender expansive practice, considerations must expand beyond the gender binary alone. If binaries are constructed, they can be deconstructed to distribute power among interlocutors and practitioners alike. Gender is a matrix, linguistic fluency is a spectrum (Sam). Certifications are labels and do not quantify the wealth of knowledge an interpreter may bring to the table (Barley, Finn). Binaries smother creative and innovative thought. Moving beyond binaries (gender or otherwise) and problematizing the resulting hierarchical structures in the field will be mandatory for our collective survival. This work can bring needed healing to the profession.

Recommendations

The research described in this paper opens a window towards a queerer, more fluid interpreting profession. The process of improving gender competency and queering interpreting is continuous. Recommendations as brought forth by the data involve the following:

1. Recognition that correct pronoun use is the beginning of the discussion and a small piece of the puzzle. Respecting a person's personal pronoun is synonymous with respecting a person's name. It does not mean that the work of honoring someone's personhood is complete. Use pronouns, honor when someone expresses that they are important and continue building relationships.
2. Understand that non-binary is not a universal term to describe individuals outside of male/female. When asking for a person's gender, non-binary should not be used as the *only* other option besides male/female; allow for people to self-identify their gender if they so chose. Remember that transgender and non-binary individuals do not owe cisgender people their identity labels. Cissexism continues to hurt us, and we do not always trust when people identify a space as 'safe.' Build safety by building relationships and taking

the time to learn from gender diverse practitioners, and apply what is learned to collective spaces.

3. Create gender and pronoun inclusive documentation in agencies for interpreters and interpreter users. For agencies that make placements based on gender (e.g. annual physical appointments where interpreter users prefer a certain gender) recognize and honor non-binary genders as part of placement considerations.
4. Problematize hierarchical arrangement of interpreters based upon binary and socially constructed labels. Credentials are not limited to what tests, assessments or certifications a practitioner has. An interpreter's credentials include their personhood, extralinguistic knowledge, and lived wisdom.
5. Recognize that combating cissexism in the field must occur simultaneously alongside combating racism, ableism, sexism, classism, sizeism, linguicism, ageism, sanism, healthism, and ethnocentrism. These systems exist in state licensing, credentialing, in the fabric of interpreter training,
- 6.

The number six is intentionally left blank to leave the door open for recommendations in research to come acknowledging that this work is merely the start to the discussion.

A Note to Other White Hearing Non-Binary Interpreters

As stated in number five in the above recommendation, we cannot work against cissexism without working against racism, ableism, sexism, classism, sizeism, linguicism, ageism, sanism, healthism, ethnocentrism and all other forms of oppression. That work starts at home. We must do the work internally, in our bodies, minds and spirits, to understand how these systems operate in us. We must recognize that the trauma inflicted by supremacy hurts all of us.

A comrade who is fighting ableism or racism may not yet understand their cissexism, just like we may not understand how racism or ableism operates within us. We must remember that all matrices of oppression are tied to the same force of supremacy and body essentialism (Collins, 1990). We cannot uproot essentialism by employing supremacist tactics such as: conquest activism (Mitchell, 2018), oppression olympics (Daring et al., 2013), or perfectionist ideologies (Jones & Okun, 2001). Daring et al., (2013) notes “It’s important to make sure that while we struggle, we do our best to not re-create what we are struggling against” (p. 37). Our liberation is bound to the liberation of all.

Limitations and Prospects for Future Research

The largest limitation to this research was the timeline. The entire research process had to be completed in under four months, therefore limiting each step of the process (recruitment, data collection, data analysis and write up) to roughly one month each. This underscores that while the study is a step in understanding interpreting beyond the binary, it is by no means comprehensive in it’s understanding of the nuance and variance within the non-binary experience.

A second limitation was in the survey demographics. Participants were asked if they identify as a deaf or hearing interpreter, they were not asked specifically how they identify. This presents an issue when looking at the intersections of non-binary and ddeaf identities, not knowing conclusively who in the study identified as ddeaf, hearing or somewhere on the matrix around and between. The interviews and focus groups in this survey were conducted in English, as the participants all identified as hearing English users. It must be questioned whether or not the recruitment materials reached non-binary deaf interpreters, and/or what barriers to the study design prohibited participation or interest. In the initial design of the study I had contemplated taking a deeper look at the experiences of non-binary individuals that use interpreting services. I

was advised to focus on the experience of interpreters specifically rather than the larger stakeholder community, due to limitations in time and the additional power inherent in my identity as a hearing interpreter and researcher. Prospects for future research include: focus on transgender and gender expansive deaf experiences.

A third limitation was the large number of white and transmasculine identified interpreters. Data within the study indicated higher percentages of individuals who identify as white, non-binary, masculine-leaning and use they, them, theirs pronouns. This facet begs the question of inaccessibility to non-white, transfeminine and non-binary femme practitioners. Future research could explore transmisogyny and further inquire about masculine-bias within the field (expanding further on Jones [2017] study). Inquiry in the future could be conducted more deeply into the intersections of gender identity and race in the field.

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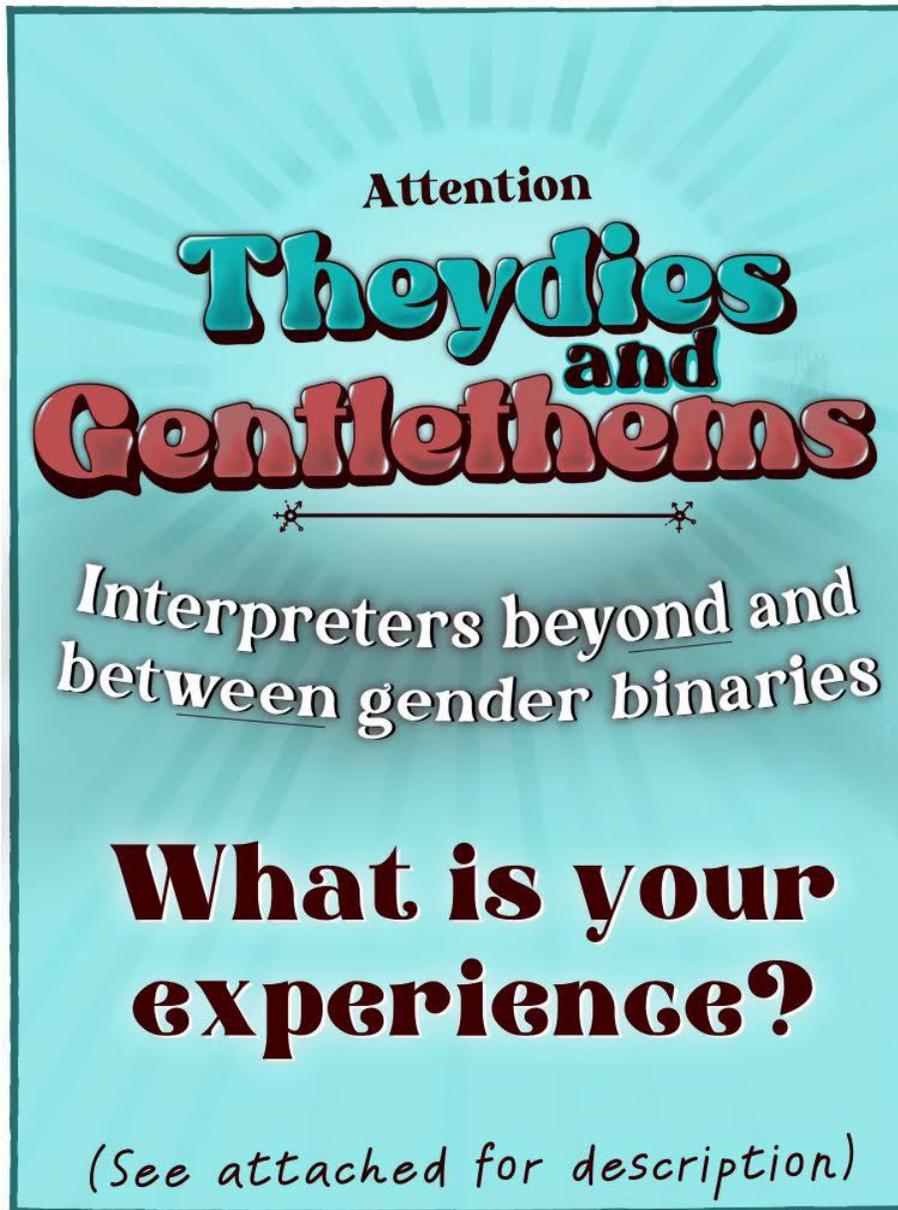
Appendix A
Survey Recruitment Flyer

Group 1: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: BLeGIT chapter emails to regional representatives

Group 2: Facebook Page: BLeGIT* Queer Member Section of RID Interpreters

Group 3: Facebook Page: ASL Interpreters - Queer Space

[IMG Description: Teal flyer with black border, saying “Attention Theydies & Gentlethems: Interpreters Beyond and Between Gender Binaries, What is your experience? (See attached for description)"]



Appendix B

Survey Recruitment

Group 1: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: BLeGIT chapter emails to regional representatives

Group 2: Facebook Page: BLeGIT* Queer Member Section of RID Interpreters

Group 3: Facebook Page: ASL Interpreters - Queer Space

Hello! My name is Tristen Hellewell and I am a sign language interpreter living and working in Southern Maine. I also study as a graduate student in the Master of Art in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program at St. Catherine University. Currently, I am conducting thesis research on the experiences of non-binary sign language interpreters working in the United States and am requesting your participation in a short survey. As a non binary person who has worked as an interpreter for ten years, I realize that the experience of us non binary folk is both unique and under-explored in the field. While there has been some research on the greater LGBTQ community, conversations specifically around the experiences of non-binary interpreters has not been a focus of research to date. This has prompted the need for this study.

Through this survey, I will be collecting information from fellow interpreters who fall outside, around and between the male/female binaries about their experiences in their interpreting work. This applies to any Deaf or hearing interpreter 18 years of age or older who may identify as one of the following: Agender, Aliagender, androgyne, aporagender, bigender, demi-gender, enby, gender-expansive, genderfluid, genderflux, genderless, gender non-conforming, gender queer, gray gender, intergender, maverique, multi-gender, neutrois, non-binary, non-binary intersex, non-binary transgender, novigender, pangender, polygender, third gender, tri-gender, two spirit or other non male/female genders. The questions of this survey will focus on experiences with colleagues, those using interpreting services and with agencies. You will also be given the option to participate in a confidential interview with myself or a focus group with myself and other non-binary interpreters in the U.S.

The survey itself will take less than 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous and cannot be traced back to you. You will also be given the option to join in a 1:1 interview OR a focus group at the end of the survey. If you indicate interest, you will be directed to a separate survey where you can share your contact information. I am the principal investigator of this study. The research advisor for this study is Dr. Justin Small (jmsmall508@stkate.edu) If you have any questions or comments about this study, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at tehellewell075@stkate.edu I will collect responses until March 30th, 2022 and after that date, the survey will be closed.

If you agree to participate, simply click on this to begin!

http://stkate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0eyk7FOt7SvOOLc.

Thank you in advance for your participation and insights. Feel free to share with non binary interpreters who may be interested in participating!

Tristen Hellewell EIPA, NIC

Appendix C

1:1 Interview OR Focus Group Interest Email

Dear [INSERT SPECIFIC NAME HERE]

I am reaching out to you because you have recently participated in the survey for the research study:

Interpreting Beyond the Binary: An Exploration into the Experience of American Sign Language Interpreters beyond and between female/male binaries. After completing the survey you shared your contact information and expressed interest in participating in either a 1:1 interview *or* a focus group to further discuss your experiences as an interpreter outside the gender binary. Your perspective is welcome and I would love to get the chance to know more of your experience! Participation will be for either an interview OR a focus group.

If you are still interested in participating in a 1:1 interview please see the attached interview documentation and select a preferred meeting time using this link: [INSERT LINK HERE]

If you are interested in participating in a focus group please see the attached consent documentation for focus group participation and select best meeting times using this link: [INSERT LINK HERE]

Participation is completely voluntary. For any further questions feel free to reach out to myself Tristen Hellewell (tehellewell075@stkate.edu) and/or my research advisor Dr. Justin Small (jmsmall508@stkate.edu).

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Tristen Hellewell EIPA, NIC

Appendix D

Survey Consent

Interpreting Beyond the Binary: An Exploration into the Experience of American Sign Language Interpreters beyond and between female/male binaries.

Thank you so much for your interest in this survey! My name is Tristen Hellewell and I am the researcher conducting this study. As an interpreter working over the last decade in educational, medical, industrial and now legal settings, I have become aware about the unique position I am in as a Non-Binary individual. This has prompted the curiosity into the experiences of other Non-Binary interpreters working out there in the United States.

This is where I would love your perspective! This survey will be open to any interpreter who falls outside, around and between the Male/Female binaries this includes (but is not limited to) interpreters who identify as: agender, Aliagender, androgyne, aporagender, bigender, demi-gender, enby, gender-expansive, genderfluid, genderflux, genderless, gender non-conforming, gender queer, gray gender, intergender, maverique, multi-gender, neutrois, non-binary, non-binary intersex, non-binary transgender, novigender, pangender, polygender, third gender, tri-gender, two spirit or another non male/female gender. The questions will begin with demographic information and lead into topics about your experience in the interpreting field. Focus will be on job placement, interactions with your hiring body, experiences with colleagues as well as with those accessing your interpreting services.

The survey should take less than 30 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and there is no compensation available for completion of the survey. Your responses will be anonymous unless you choose to share your contact information for interest in an interview or participation in a focus group. Your contact information will be kept confidential and only used for the purposes of reaching out regarding interviews or focus groups.

The questions included in the survey may cover some sensitive and personal information that could be triggering for some who have had negative experiences. If you decide to stop at any time you may do so. Exiting the survey before it is completed will be considered a withdrawal and all previous responses will be eliminated from the study. Attached to this survey is a list of crisis care and counseling resources. Please click this link [LINK] to download a PDF of crisis and counseling resources. If you come across questions you do not wish to answer, you may skip them and as long as you click to the end of the survey those responses will be captured. If you have any questions about this survey or the research please contact me, Tristen Hellewell (tehellewell075@stkate.edu) or research advisor, Dr. Justin Small (jmsmall508@stkate.edu). By responding to questions in this survey you are giving your consent for your anonymous responses to be used for future research and publications.

Please indicate below your consent to participate.

Thank you!
Tristen Hellewell

I consent to be in this survey: yes/no

Appendix E

Interview Informed Consent

Interpreting Beyond the Binary: An Exploration into the Experience of American Sign Language Interpreters beyond and between female/male binaries.

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is an exploration of the experiences of Non-Binary Interpreters and their experiences working in the field. Tristen Evah Hellewell, a Masters of Arts Candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN will be conducting this study. The research advisor for this study is Dr. Justin Small. In the following sections, you will find answers to commonly asked questions about participation in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why are the researchers doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Non-Binary individuals in the field of Sign Language Interpreting. This study is important because it will shed light on an under-studied part of the population, and give visibility to non-binary interpreter users and practitioners. This will ultimately be to improve interpreting agency practice when providing interpreting services to Non-Binary individuals, and when hiring or contracting with Non-Binary practitioners. Four to eight individuals are expected to be involved in 1:1 interviews.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have self identified as 18 or older, as a gender other than binary male/female and are currently working as an American Sign Language Interpreter in the United States.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

Participate in a 1:1 recorded interview about your personal experience with working as an interpreter who is neither male nor female. This interview will ask questions about experiences with sign language interpreting agencies, consumers and colleagues. This interview will be conducted virtually over zoom and will take up to 1 hour. Questions can be provided to you before the interview upon request .

In total, the study will take no more than one hour to complete, including the interview and consent documents.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify Tristen Evah Hellewell and you will be removed. You may completely withdraw until the date of April 15th, 2022 after which data will be retained for the study. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

Due to the small population size of non-binary american sign language interpreters in the United States, there is some risk that participants could be identified. This risk is mitigated by using pseudonyms and not disclosing locations of participants (instead identifying general U.S. regions). In the write up of data, demographic variables will not be associated with specific responses.

Additional risks associated with this study include the sharing of sensitive or personal information that could bring up painful or triggering memories. In recognition of this risk, this consent form includes a document with a list of crisis care and counseling resources. Please see attached form for resources.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

In learning the personal experiences of Non-Binary individuals, development of better understandings could lead to suggestions for gender expansive practice in the field of interpreting.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be recorded with video and transcribed into written english. After the transcriptions are complete, your name will be removed from the data. All data will be kept on a secure hddrive accessible by password. Tristen Evah Hellewell will be the only individual with access to the data on the hard drive. The research will be completed by May 1st, 2022 and all original reports and identifying information will be destroyed no later than December 1st 2022.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications. You will be asked for a pseudonym for any uses of quotes in research publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, Tristen Evah Hellewell will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Could my information be used for future research?

Only de-identified data would possibly be used for future research.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study the Tristen Evah Hellewell learns about new findings that might determine your willingness to continue participating in the study, they will inform you within 24 hours of finding the information.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact Tristen Evah Hellewell at tehellewell075@stkate.edu or (207) 272-3430. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the research advisor contact: Dr. Justin Small (jmsmall508@stkate.edu). If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be videotaped and audio recorded.

My signature indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered and I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher

_____ Date: _____

Appendix F

Focus Group Informed Consent

Interpreting Beyond the Binary: An Exploration into the Experience of American Sign Language Interpreters beyond and between female/male binaries.

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is an exploration of the experiences of Non-Binary Interpreters and their experiences working in the field. Tristen Evah Hellewell, a Masters of Arts Candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN will be conducting this study. The research advisor for this study is Dr. Justin Small at St. Catherine University.

As part of this study, you will be placed in a group of 4-6 individuals. The facilitator of this group will be Tristen Hellewell, the primary researcher of this study. They will ask you several questions while facilitating the discussion. This focus group will be video-recorded and will be transcribed. Your responses will remain confidential, and no names will be included in the final report. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym. You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group, and you may stop at any time during the course of the study. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to focus group questions. The goal is to collect varying viewpoints and would like for everyone to contribute their thoughts. Out of respect, please refrain from interrupting others. However, feel free to be honest even when your responses counter those of other group members.

In the following sections, you will find answers to commonly asked questions about participation in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why are the researchers doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Non-Binary individuals in the field of Sign Language Interpreting. This study is important because it will shed light on an under-studied part of the population, and give visibility to non-binary interpreter users and practitioners. This will ultimately be to improve interpreting agency practice when providing interpreting services to Non-Binary individuals, and when hiring or contracting with Non-Binary practitioners. Four to six individuals will be invited to participate in this focus group

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have self identified as 18 or older, as a gender other than binary male/female and are currently working as an American Sign Language Interpreter in the United States.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to join in a focus group about your personal experience in the Sign Language Interpreting world. This group will be conducted virtually over zoom with other individuals who have agreed to participate. The focus group will take 1- 1.5 hours.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify Tristen Evah Hellewell and you will be removed. You may completely withdraw until the date of April 15th, 2022 after which data will be retained for the study. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

Due to the small population size of non-binary american sign language interpreters in the United States, there is some risk that participants could be identified. This risk is mitigated by using pseudonyms and not disclosing locations of participants (instead identifying general U.S. regions). In the write up of data, demographic variables will not be associated with specific responses.

Participation in a focus group includes risk of other participants potentially sharing information outside of the group. This risk is addressed by asking each focus group participant to keep the other participants and all focus group discussion confidential. Below, this consent form requires that focus group participants sign a statement of confidentiality before joining the focus group.

Additional risks associated with this study include the sharing of sensitive or personal information that could bring up painful or triggering memories. In recognition of this risk, this consent form includes a document with a list of crisis care and counseling resources. Please see attached form for resources should they be helpful.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

In learning the personal experiences of Non-Binary individuals, development of better understandings could lead to suggestions for gender expansive practice in the field of interpreting.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be recorded with video and transcribed into written english. After the transcriptions are complete, your name will be removed from the data. All data will be kept on a secure hard drive accessible by password. Tristen Evah Hellewell and their faculty advisor will be the only individuals with access to the data in this study. The research will be completed by May 1st, 2022 and all original reports and identifying information will be destroyed no later than December 1st 2022.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications. Participants will be asked for a pseudonym for any uses of quotes in research publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, Tristen Evah Hellewell will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content discussed during the study.

Could my information be used for future research?

Only de-identified data would possibly be used for future research.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study the Tristen Evah Hellewell learns about new findings that might determine your willingness to continue participating in the study, they will inform you within 24 hours of finding the information.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact Tristen Evah Hellewell at tehellewell075@stkate.edu or (207) 272-3430. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the research advisor, please contact: Dr. Justin Small (jmsmall508@stkate.edu). If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be videotaped.

My signature indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered and I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher

_____ Date: _____

Statement of Confidentiality:

I agree to respect the privacy of other focus group members and will not disclose names, information of other participants or any other content discussed during the study.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Appendix G

Survey Questions

Inclusion/Exclusion Questions:

Q1: Are you currently working as a Hearing or Deaf American Sign Language Interpreter in the United States?

yes

no

If no then skip to end of survey

Q2: Do you identify as a gender outside of the Male/Female binary?

yes

no

If no then skip to end of survey

Q3: How old are you?

Under 18 years,

18-25 years

26-35 years

36-45 years

46-55 years

56-65 years

65+ years

If under 18 skip to end of survey

Demographic Questions:

These questions will ask specific questions about you, your identity, location and broad details about your interpreting work.

Q4 Please describe your gender identity:

Agender

Aliagender

Androgyne

Aporagender

Bigender

Demi-gender

Enby

Genderless

Gender expansive

Gender fluid

Gender Neutral

Gender outlaw

Gender queer

Gray Gender

Intergender

Maverique

Multi-gender

Neutrois

Non-Binary
 Non-Binary Intersex
 Non-Binary Transgender
 Novi-gender
 Omnigender
 Pangender
 Polygender
 Third-gender
 Trigender
 Two-Spirit
 Other please fill in your own identity if not provided option:

Q5 Please describe your gender expression:

masculine
 feminine
 androgynous
 My gender expression changes
 I don't identify with any specific gender expression
 other

Q6 What is your ethnicity:

Fill in _____

Q7 What is your race:

Fill in _____

Q8 What are your personal gender pronouns?

They/Them/Theirs
 Zie/Zim/Zis
 Xe/Xer/Xyrs
 yo/yos
 Sie/Hir
 Ey/em/Eir
 Elle/Elles/Se
 Ae/Aer/Aers
 Fae/Faer/Faers
 Ve/Vis/Virs
 tey/teirs
 per/pers
 ze/zie/hir
 she/her/hers
 he/him/his
 I prefer people use my name only, not pronouns
 Other (write in):

Q9 Which Region Do you live in?

Region I (*Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia*)

Region II (*Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland & District of Columbia (Potomac Chapter), Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia*)

Region III (*Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin*)

Region IV (*Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming*)

Region V (*Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington*)

Other:

Q10 What interpreting credentials do you hold?

RID Certification
 NAD Certification
 EIPA
 BEI
 Core CHI
 State Licensure
 None of the Above
 Other: _____

Q11 How many years have you been working as an interpreter?

0-4 years
 5 - 9 years
 10 -14 years
 15 - 19 years
 20 + years

Q12 Which settings of interpreting have you worked?

Educational/Technical
 Religious
 Mental Health
 Medical
 Performing Arts
 Business/Government
 Legal
 Video Relay Interpreting
 Video Relay Service
 Other

Q13 How are you employed as a sign language interpreter?

Freelance interpreter
 a. Primarily gets work independently
 b. Primarily gets work through Sign Language Interpreting agencies
 Staff interpreter of a non-interpreting agency or business
 Staff interpreter of an interpreting agency
 VRS Interpreter
 Other:

Questions about Non-Binary Work Experience

The remaining questions will ask you specifically about your experience working in the field. These questions will surround your experiences before, during and after interpreting assignments as well as interactions with employers, clients and colleagues.

Questions about experiences with Colleagues:

Q14-15 Please answer the following questions about disclosing your gender identity:

14. How comfortable do you feel disclosing your gender identity to interpreter colleagues?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neutral/undecided
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Unsafe

15. How comfortable do you feel sharing your personal gender pronouns with colleagues?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neutral/undecided
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Unsafe

Q16 Are your pronouns respected and used by your interpreting colleagues/peers:

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q17 - 22 Please answer the following questions about interactions with colleagues:

17. Have you ever been asked to answer personal or medical questions about your gender identity, body or gender expression by interpreter colleagues?

- Yes
- No
- I don't remember

18. Have your colleagues ever told you that your personal pronouns are ungrammatical, or too hard to remember or use?

- Yes
- No
- I don't remember

19. Have your colleagues ever made disparaging comments or remarks about your gender or the gender identities/expressions of other people to you?

- Yes
- No

I don't remember

20. Have you ever felt supported by your colleagues in regards to your pronouns, gender identity or expression?

Yes

No

I don't remember

21. Have your colleagues ever self corrected or corrected others on your pronouns?

Yes

No

I don't remember

22. Have you ever been outed by colleagues without your permission?

Yes

No

I don't know

23. How knowledgeable do you feel the interpreting community in your area is about non-binary genders?

Very knowledgeable

Somewhat knowledgeable

Barely knowledgeable

Not at all knowledgeable

Other:

Questions about experiences with hiring bodies (Agencies, VRS companies, Schools):

Q24-29

24. Do you feel comfortable sharing your personal pronouns with agencies/businesses that hire you?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Depends on the Situation

Fill in:

25. Are your pronouns respected and used by agencies/businesses that hire you?

Always

Frequently

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Other:

26. Do the agencies/businesses that hire you have options for your pronouns/ gender identity in their documentation paperwork or practices?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Depends on the Situation

Not Applicable

Fill in:

27. Has your agency ever sent you to a gender-specific job that *did not* correspond with your gender identity?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

28. Has your agency ever sent you to a gender-specific job that did correspond to your gender identity?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

29. If issues related to your gender identity or presentation come up in a professional context, do you have someone you can talk to about it in your agency/business?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Fill in:

Q30 How safe do you feel presenting your gender identity/expression in your interpreting agency/business?

Very safe

Somewhat safe

Somewhat unsafe

Very unsafe

Other:

Not applicable

Q31 Have you ever been asked by an employer/agency/business to hide, not disclose or incorrectly represent your gender identity/expression?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Fill in:

Q32 If your employer/agency/business has an office that you are expected to work in physically, is there a bathroom that corresponds to your gender or a single stall bathroom?

Yes

No

N/A

Q33 Have you ever been removed from, fired, laid off or cut from a schedule that you suspect was due to your gender identity or expression?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Prefer not to say

Questions about experiences with hearing/Deaf consumers**Q34 Have you ever been asked what your gender is by a Deaf or hearing consumer?**

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Other:

Q35 Have you ever been misgendered by a consumer?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Other:

Q36 Have you been asked personal or medical questions about your gender identity, body or gender expression by consumers?

Yes

No

I don't remember

Q37 Do you feel comfortable sharing your personal gender pronouns with consumers?

Yes

No

Depends

other

Q38 Have you ever been outed by a consumer?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

other

Q39 Have you ever had a consumer request a different interpreter than you because of your gender identity or expression?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

other

Q40 Have you ever had a consumer request you specifically because of your gender expression or identity?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

other

Q41 Have you ever had a consumer make derogatory statements towards/about you or other non-binary people in your presence?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

Add any additional comments about it:

General Questions about interpreting as a Non-Binary person

Q42 Have you ever had to interpret someone referring to you and using the wrong pronouns?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

Q43 While you were interpreting for them, has a consumer ever outed your gender identity?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

Q44 Have you ever had to interpret cis-sexist or anti-transgender/anti-non binary content or discourse?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

Q45 Have you ever felt unsafe in one of the following ways leading up to, during or directly after an interpreting assignment?

Physically Unsafe

Psychologically Unsafe

Q46 Have you ever had a gender affirming experience while leading up to, during or directly after an interpreting assignment?

Yes

No

I don't know

I don't remember

If yes feel free to share:

Q47 Would you be interested in participating in a focus group or 1:1 interview to talk more about your experience?

yes

no

If yes will bring a separate survey where they will be asked to provide best contact information for Tristen Hellewell to contact them directly. This will preserve anonymity of data in the survey .

Q48 Is there any other information or experiences that you would like to share about interpreting beyond the binary?

Appendix G

1:1 Interview Questions

How long have you been working as an interpreter? What settings do you typically work in?

How do you currently identify your gender identity?

- a. What pronouns do you use?
- b. How would you describe your gender expression?
- c. What do you feel like your gender identity and expression mean to you in a professional sense?

How do you think others perceive your gender identity?

- a. How do hearing people generally perceive your gender identity?
- b. How do Deaf people generally perceive your gender identity?
- c. How do the people that hire you generally perceive your gender identity?
- d. Do you feel your gender identity or expression has ever been an advantage in your work? Talk about why if yes?

Have you ever been treated differently due to your gender identity during an interpreting assignment?

- a. What happened?
- b. How did you handle the situation?
- c. Were you able to talk about it the moment it happened?
- d. Did you have a place to post-process after the assignment?

Have you ever had to field personal questions about your gender or body during an interpreting assignment?

- a. Have you been asked by colleagues to share information about your gender identity or presentation?
- b. Have you been asked by those using interpreting services (Deaf or Hearing clients) to share information about your gender identity or presentation?
- c. Have you ever been asked personal medical questions at work related to your gender or gender affirming care?

Is there a time that you believe your gender identity or presentation had a positive impact on a job? Or where your gender identity/expression was instrumental in the success of that job? What happened?

Is there a time that you felt like your gender identity or presentation had a negative impact on the job? What happened?

Will you share a time where you had to interpret derogatory content related to Transgender or Non-binary issues? What happened or what was said? How has this affected you? Were you able to find support after the assignment?

What do you feel like you would like cisgender or binary gendered interpreters should know about the experience of being a non-binary interpreter?

Can you share thoughts on how the non-binary experience could positively impact the interpreting world?

How could getting beyond gender binaries in our field improve the practice of interpreting?

Is there anything more anyone would like to share?

Please feel free to share the survey link with other non-binary interpreters you know.

Appendix H

Focus Group Introduction/Script:

Welcome to this focus group! Thank you all for taking the time to join in and talk about your experiences interpreting beyond the binary. My name is Tristen Hellewell and I am the primary researcher for this study. You have all participated in the survey and have completed the consent form to participate in this study. Before we get started I want to just go over a couple of intentions for this space. Firstly, the information in this study will be used to guide more gender expansive practice in the field. Each of us come with different backgrounds, experiences and levels of safety in our respective communities. For your safety and the safety of the other participants please keep the discussion and names of other participants confidential. While I can not guarantee the confidentiality of this space, we can collectively agree to keep the content of this discussion here, and respect the privacy of each other's stories. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that will be asked, each person has their unique experience. Please share your story even if it differs or contrasts with someone else's. This focus group will be recorded via zoom recording and quicktime recording as a backup. The files will be stored on an external drive and all identifying information will be deleted once the transcripts have been created. For confidentiality purposes I will ask you all during this focus group to rename yourselves (in the zoom window) with the pseudonyms you would like me to use for you for this study. If at any point you do not wish to continue in the focus group you can leave the zoom and email me to remove your responses to this study. At this point I want to check in to see if there are any questions? (take time to answer questions)
If there are no more questions, let's begin!

Focus Group Questions

Please share your gender identity and pronouns for use in this focus group.

Tell me about the kind of interpreting work that you do? What settings do you primarily work in?

Have there ever been questions that come up in those settings by colleagues or consumers about your gender identity, pronoun use or even more sensitive questions about your gender?

Are you open with colleagues/consumers about your gender identity and pronouns? Why or why not?

Has there ever been a time during an interpreting job that you have been misgendered (and supposed to interpret that misgendering)?

How do you handle this as an interpreter?

Tell me about times during interpreting work that you have been correctly gendered? What is that like?

Do you notice any impacts on your work when you are interpreting when you are correctly gendered vs. incorrectly gendered? Or even impacts after the job, in the way that you post process or think about the work after?

Has there ever been a time that you felt uncomfortable or even unsafe navigating an interpreting assignment because of your gender identity/ presentation?

What has been your experience with mentorship in the profession as a non binary interpreter?

How do you see binaries or binary thinking present in the interpreting field? What examples of different binaries do you see in the profession?

How do you think the experience of being a non-binary interpreter inform binaries beyond gender?

What do you feel like you would like cisgender or binary gendered interpreters should know about the experience of being a non-binary interpreter?

As a whole, how do you feel the interpreting world understands the experiences of non-binary interpreters? What kind of things do you wish you could see in the interpreting field as relates to gender expansive interpreting practice? Anything else to share?

Appendix I

Crisis and Counseling Resources

Crisis Care:

Resource	Website	Description	Contact	Cost Associated
THRIVE (Thriving Harnesses Respect, Inclusion, and Vested Empathy)	https://thrivelifeline.org/index.html	Thrive is a volunteer run, trans-led, <u>text based</u> support for folks in crisis.	Text “THRIVE” to 1-313-662-8209	Cell phone carrier rates apply
Trans LifeLine	https://translifeline.org/	Trans Lifeline is a Trans-led and operated non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis.	Call Hotline: (877) 565-8860	Cell phone carrier rates apply

Counseling Resources or Longer Term Resources:

SAIGE Society for Sexual, Affectual, Intersex, and Gender expansive Identities	https://saigecounseling.org/	Counselors and Related Professionals Serving Sexual, Affectual, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Communities (new website: more information to come)	https://saigecounseling.org/contact/	No specific costs associated
AGLP (The Association of LGBTQ+ Psychiatrists)	https://aglp.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=74	Online referral system to find LGBTQ+ psychiatrists	215-222-2800	Cost associated with mental health care.
Psychology Today	https://www.psychologytoday.com/us	A website for finding counselors in your area. Search engine can specify LGBQ or Transgender competent providers.	Contacts will be listed on individual Therapist pages	Cost listed on individual therapists information. Therapists also list which insurance carriers are accepted.

Appendix J

Email Recruitment: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: BLeGIT chapter emails to regional representatives

Email heading: **ATTN: CALL FOR NON-BINARY INTERPRETERS**

Dear BLeGIT Chapter Representatives,

Hello! My name is Tristen Hellewell and I am a sign language interpreter living and working in Southern Maine. I also study as a graduate student in the Master of Art in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program at St. Catherine University. Currently, I am conducting thesis research on the experiences of non-binary sign language interpreters working in the United States and am recruiting participants for my study. As a non binary person who has worked as an interpreter for ten years, I realize that the experience of binary folk is both unique and under-explored in the field. While there has been some research on the greater LGBTQ community, conversations specifically around the experiences of non-binary interpreters has not been a focus of research to date. This has prompted the need for this study.

I will be collecting information from fellow interpreters who fall outside, around and between the male/female binaries about their experiences in their interpreting work. This applies to any Deaf or hearing interpreter 18 years of age or older who may identify as one of the following: Agender, Aliagender, androgyne, aporagender, bigender, demi-gender, enby, gender-expansive, genderfluid, genderflux, genderless, gender non-conforming, gender queer, gray gender, intergender, maverique, multi-gender, neutrois, non-binary, non-binary intersex, non-binary transgender, novigender, pangender, polygender, third gender, tri-gender, two spirit or other non male/female genders. The questions of this survey will focus on experiences with colleagues, those using interpreting services and with agencies. Participants will also be given the option to participate in a confidential interview with myself or a focus group with myself and other non-binary interpreters in the U.S.

Would you be willing to share this study with members in your chapter and/or non-binary interpreter connections you may have in the field? I have attached recruitment materials for sharing.

Thank you in advance for sharing this study with your members!

Tristen Hellewell EIPA, NIC