

Celebrate National American Sign Language Day

Source: <https://happydays365.org/asl-day/national-asl-day-april-15/>

National ASL Day is celebrated on **April 15** of every year. National ASL Day celebrates and **honors American Sign Language**. ASL is a natural language that serves as the **main sign language of Deaf groups** in the U.S and much of Anglophone Canada. Apart from North America, ASL and various other ASL-based creoles are used by different countries across the world including most of West Africa and Southeast Asia. American Sign Language (ASL) is serving as a lingua franca, as ASL is extensively learned as a 2nd language. American Sign Language (ASL) is very much related to French Sign Language (LSF).

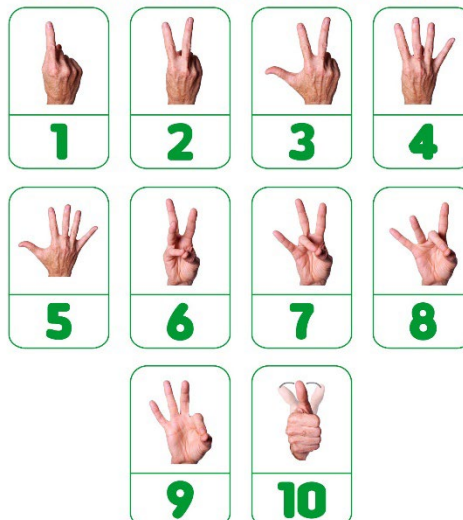
History of National ASL Day

ASL was born at American School for the Deaf on April 15, 1817. It brought together Native American Signs, Old French Sign Language, various village sign languages, Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, and home sign systems; American Sign Language was developed in these circumstances of language contact. Its predecessors influenced ASL but were different from all of them. It has been said that American Sign Language is a creole language of French Sign Language (LSF), even though ASL exhibits features untypical of creole languages, like agglutinative morphology. In spite of its extensive use, no exact count of American Sign Language users has been taken, but approximately American ASL users vary from 250,000 to 500,000 persons, including some kids of deaf adults. ASL users face disgrace due to beliefs in the supremacy of spoken language to sign language, constituted by the fact that ASL is frequently glossed in English because of the absence of a standard writing system. ASL signs have a variety of phonemic components like the movement of the torso, face, and also hands. American Sign Language is not a type of pantomime, but the iconic sign does play a more significant role in ASL than in oral languages.

The ASL Alphabet



SIGN LANGUAGE NUMBERS



April 2022 Calendar

*Celebrate Diversity Month
National Minority Health Month*

- 2 – New Year (Hindu)
- 2 – World Autism Day
- 3-9 – National Public Health Week (US)
- 6 – National Walking Day (US)
- 10 – Palm Sunday (Western Christian)
- 16-23 – Pesach (Judaism)
- 15 – American Sign Language Day (US)
- 17 – Easter (Western Christian)
- 17-23 – National Volunteer Week (US)
- 22 – Earth Day (International)
- 21 – First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
- 24 – Easter (Orthodox Christian)
- 24-30 – World Immunization Week
- 30 – World Healing Day
- 30 – Adopt a Shelter Pet Day (US)

Vicarious Trauma and Professional Interpreter

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-trauma/201308/vicarious-trauma-and-the-professional-interpreter>
by Robert T. Muller, PhD.

Imagine yourself in a situation where it is entirely your responsibility to ensure that someone else's voice is heard. Perhaps, that person is a refugee seeking legal aid, or a woman moving into a domestic abuse shelter, or maybe a young girl sitting in a police station describing her recent sexual assault. You are not the lawyer, social worker or detective investigating the case. Rather, you are the interpreter and it is your job to make sure the person gets the help needed.

Studies have shown that nearly all language interpreters experience some symptoms of vicarious trauma, burnout, compassion fatigue, or increased stress as a result of their repeated exposure to traumatic information and stories.

Vicarious trauma can be best understood as the absorbing of another person's trauma, the transformation of the helper's inner sense of identity and experience. It is what happens to your physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual health in response to someone else's traumatic history. Vicarious trauma can affect your perception of the world around you and can result in serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and addiction if untreated. Interpreters seem to experience vicarious trauma differently than other professionals providing aid since they do more than witness the trauma; they channel it.

The Trauma & Mental Health Report recently had the opportunity to speak with Simona, a Czech and Slovak language interpreter who works mainly with Czech, Slovak and Roma refugees and newly immigrated individuals; Simona spoke about her experiences as an interpreter.

Q: Can you describe your role and responsibilities as an interpreter?

A: As an interpreter we have our own code of ethics. I have to interpret meaning for meaning, everything that is said with accuracy and fidelity. There has to be confidentiality on my part which means I cannot share anything with anyone other than those I work with. I have to remain impartial and objective, and cannot show bias or preference for anything regarding the case. Simply put, I am not there. I do not have an opinion; I merely act as a channel for each side.

Q: What is an average day like for you?

A: I work with all kinds of service providers: Children's Aid Society, parole and probation officers, lawyers, police, hospitals, schools, courts, victim witness services, settlement workers, community workers, public health and home visitors, addictions workers, insurance companies, refugee shelters, shelters for women and children, emigration, social benefits tribunal and more. An average day usually consists of two in-person interpreting assignments and a number of assignments over the phone. Most of the time I'm interpreting problems that are more extreme than the average person experiences because, considering the service providers I work with, there is usually a problem if the client needs their assistance.

Q: Have you come into contact with vicarious trauma?

A: I first heard about it during my interpreter's training. We were warned that there will be times when the job would be extremely difficult and that we may come into contact with traumatic situations that will affect us emotionally and physically. It was explained that journalists, humanitarian workers and health care providers can experience vicarious trauma because of what they witness every day. The difference is that I interpret both sides and I have to experience the feelings of those two sides. So, for example, if the doctor says something really painful to a patient, I am the one relaying the information; so to these people who don't understand English, I am the one delivering the news. But I am also the one who interprets the reaction and the pain of the patient to the doctor. Sometimes people get so frustrated that they curse and yell and I have to say it the same way, with the same feelings, because I must interpret meaning for meaning.

It's difficult to have to speak in this manner to a service provider, but it's not me who is talking. Again, however, in the first person I feel the emotion. Because you are constantly saying "I, I, I," you start associating with the story much more than if you were just reading or hearing about it, and you unwittingly start to absorb the trauma as if it were your own.

Q: Have your experiences affected any other parts of your life?

A: Yes. Sometimes I get angry. I get angry that my friends and others take things for granted and don't see how difficult life is for so many. And I can't exactly explain it to them because of confidentiality. At home, sometimes I don't feel like talking for the whole evening because I'm still processing what happened.

After a particularly hard assignment, it's really difficult for me to read the newspaper or watch the news because I have a feeling that there is so much pain and negativity in the world, it can be hard to bear sometimes. I need some time and space before I can get back to my regular life.