IL‑NET National T&TA Center Presents…

Disability, Diversity and Intersectionality:

A Q&A Session for CILs and SILCs

September 29, 2020

TIM FUCHS: Welcome, everyone.

I'm going to give about a 10‑second pause to make sure everyone can see and hear us before we start.

Okay.

Well, thanks.

Welcome.

I'm Tim Fuchs with the National Council On Independent Living and I want to welcome you all to our latest IL‑NET teleconference and webinar, diversity, disability and intersectionality, a Q&A session for CILs and SILCs.

Before we start with the content I want to go through some housekeeping and access information for you all.

First, we are running captions in Zoom.

If you don't have those on, you can click Show Subtitle under your closed caption options, and those same captions are running at Streamtext.net.

I'll go ahead and post that in the chat.

It looks Sharon beat me to it.

Thank you, Sharon.

So that Streamtext equal sign NCIL ‑‑ I'm abbreviating that ‑‑ is the right link.

There is a chat feature there.

A lot of you are familiar with that.

I am logged in there and during our Q&A breaks you're welcome to submit your questions or comments on the Streamtext screen if you're focused on the full‑screen captioning, and I will be happy to voice them for you.

We also have interpreters with us today.

We are currently in gallery view, and we are sharing a PowerPoint.

So anybody who is not speaking, any of our presenters not speaking at the moment, have our cameras off to help keep the current speaker and the interpreter front and Center on your screen.

I understand the Zoom 5.0 offers some new options where you can now pin multiple cameras.

So you would be able to pin, say, our two interpreters, David and ha in a, remember you're not seeing Hanna right now.

You might want to play around with that.

That is new like this week.

I have read about it.

I have looked into it.

But I have not had a chance to do anything on the participant side yet.

You all can let us know in the chat if you have any questions about viewing the interpreters or PowerPoint.

You also want to make sure you're inside‑by‑side mode.

Since I am sharing my screen, you should have a message at the top of your screen if you are joined by Zoom that says "You are viewing Tim.

TIM FUCHS: Screen."

Next to that it should say "view options" and when you click on that you will see a dropdown menu.

One is side by side view.

You want to turn that on.

It should have a checkbox next to side‑by‑side view.

If it already has a checkbox it means you're inside‑by‑side view.

That will allow you to adjust the slider there with your cursor or mouse to make the PowerPoint or the speaker, interpreter videos as small as you would like.

So you can drag it back and forth.

Then if you are using dual screens, if you have two monitors, you can also select optimize for dual screens in that same menu.

Right?

So if this is your first time doing this, that's probably a lot.

Make sure you're inside‑by‑side view.

If you have any questions or need help with that, please let us know in the chat.

You do not need to be on Zoom to access this call.

As with all of our presentations, there are call‑in numbers, telephone call‑in numbers, and we will be descriptive of everything that's in our PowerPoint slides and any questions ‑‑ we'll voice or repeat any questions that come in as well to make ‑‑ so that anyone on the phone can participate fully.

We are recording today's call, and we will be posting this to ILRU's website.

Give us about 48 hours to get that up.

And then as you know, this is a Q&A session.

So we're going to have a lot of time for audience questions today.

We'll take them throughout the call.

We do have a lot of great questions from our ‑‑ from the registration process.

You notice when you registered for this, there were some empty fields where you could enter questions and topics you wanted to discuss.

So we're going to start with those.

But you will be able to ask live questions on the call today.

So we'll go through some of the questions that we received early on and then we'll open it up for you all.

There's a bunch of different ways to answer questions.

The goal is to make it as accessible as well.

Let's talk about those if that first of all, if you're on Zoom, that Q&A tab at the bought many your screen in your Zoom menu bar is handy.

Type your question, hit enter, it comes right to us.

We'll take them in the order they come in.

If that Q&A tab is not accessible to you for any reason, or you're not on Zoom, there are some other ways you can ask questions.

First of all, I mentioned already that chat feature at Streamtext.net is an easy way to ask questions if you're connected true Streamtext.

You can email your questions to me.

My email is simple.

It's just tim@ncil.org.

Finally, if you're only on the phone today, you can press \*9 on the phone.

That will show me that you've raised your hand and I can unmute your line.

I want to ask that we save that for folks who are only on the phone and need it as an accommodation.

If you're connected through Zoom and can ask questions on the Q&A tab, I would like to ask you to do that just because if I get backed up with a bunch of folks on Zoom that have their hand raised, it could prevent me from getting to someone whose only option is to press \*9 to raise their hand.

So I would like to saver that as an accommodation for folks who need it.

Then finally, please do fill out the evaluation form.

That link was sent to you in the confirmation email that you received, and we really would like to know what you think of today's presentation and how we might improve our presentations in the future.

Thanks for bearing with me through that.

I know that it takes a while, but I want to make sure that everybody has what they need to participate in the call.

Before we start our discussion questions today, I want to introduce our presenters today and thank them for being with us.

First of all, we have Susan Dooha who is Executive Director of Center for Independence of the Disabled New York in New York City.

We have Stan Holbrook from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Stan is past director of trickle, the Pittsburgh Center for Independent Living, past diversity chair for NCIL, and has been, really, the ‑‑ a key part in the different, disability and intersectionality project that ILRU has been working on.

Finally we have Reyma McCoy McDeid from CICI, Center Iowa Center for Independent Living.

I want to thank you all for being here for agreeing to do this panel.

Thanks, too, to the audience for joining us.

We had a great turnout.

We just promoted this webinar last week and we had over 300 people Reg star.

I see we've already got over 170 people on the line and I'm sure that's going to grow.

It's obvious people are really interested in this content.

Oh, I'm sorry, I was on the wrong slide.

So here we are, some of the things we just talked about, the Q&A tab, evaluation form, your presenters for today here on slide 4.

Then we're going to get into some content here on slide 5.

So these topics that we're going to walk through today are literally the overarching topics that we used in the disability, different and intersectionality project.

If you're not familiar with the DDI project, it was a project led by ILRU to look across this country for Centers for Independent Living that really excelled in their work to be inclusive centers.

Right?

That were effective both in employing, being led by and/or serving people who were multiply marginalized, people from different identity groups that are underrepresented in Independent Living, and were doing a good job at that.

So I was lucky enough to be brought on a fairway into the project as we moved from the research into which centers those were and then the webinars and presentations and resources those centers put together, and I came in when we did the on‑site version of this in Atlanta back in 2018 that some of you may have attended ‑‑ excuse me, 2019 that some of you may have attended.

That was an excellent event and we were thinking this year, especially as we talk so much about race and inequity and intersectionality at the NCIL conference how we could continue that work as we saw CILs were very interested in building their capacity and understanding here.

And we thought why don't we ask some of the speakers from the DDI project to do a webinar on this so we can have an open Q&A.

That's where the genesis of this webinar came from.

It's actually in some of the later slides, but we are going to go through some of the resources that are available, because there is a ton of content from the DDI team and from their CILs that is really useful.

So I want you all to know it's not just about today's discussion webinar.

There is a lot of material that you all can borrow from if you want to do a deeper dive into these issues.

So, creating a supportive organizational culture and infrastructure.

Reyma actually I wanted to come to you first for this and just see how, in your CIL's experience, and I know you came in to take over a very different Center than the one that you run now because you had some challenges coming in as a new director, what does it take for a Center for Independent Living that wants to be an equitable, anti‑racist CIL to really do an organizational what ‑‑ the research and planning and overhaul necessary to create a CIL that has a culture and infrastructure that supports equity and intersectionality?

What does that look like?

REYMA McCOY McDEID: This is Reyma.

Thank you, Tim.

That's a great question.

I'm delighted to tackle it here, because I actually just ‑‑ quote‑unquote, celebrated my fifth anniversary at NCIL ‑‑ not NCIL, sorry, CICIL, a few days ago, and as you mentioned, CICIL is a completely different organization now.

I want to preface what I am about to say with the following.

With regard to this subject matter, disability, diversity intersectionality, particularly with regard to intersectionality as it pertains to race, racial marginalization, what I've experienced both as a person that has supported a CIL to do some pretty profound transitioning but also as somebody that provides guidance and support to other CILs that are interested in doing this work is to a certain extent stakeholders feel like this work is a choice.

It's something that can be determined to be either appropriate or inappropriate for a CIL.

I know from my own personal professional experience that that's merely a perception.

This work is not a choice.

The only, quote‑unquote, choice that is a mitigating factor in all of this is when this work gets done, and so, first of all, I applaud CILs and SILCs and other Independent Living stakeholders who have ambitions to this do this kind of work.

That's wonderful.

But more often than not, this work occurs in an IL specific space not because of proactive desire but because of some kind of crisis.

I mention that because that is certainly the case at CICIL.

When I came on board five years ago, CICIL was about to close its doors, and CICIL had ‑‑ was on probation with, at the time, RSA as a transition into ACL, because CICIL was experiencing very egregious challenges with regards to engaging with its current ‑‑ at the time consumer base which was very much marginalized people and engaging with prospective consumers, and then a lot of personnel challenges with regards to representation of racially marginalized people.

And so the ‑‑ initially the work that happened at CICIL as far as engaging in intersectional work was not necessarily voluntarily.

It was we have to do this or else we are not going to exist as a Center for Independent Living anymore.

So I came on board, and so that the imperative shifted we have to do this to we want to do this, and so it's really amazing, because as that vantage point shifted, that's when the work really ‑‑ the momentum really built, and seemingly to outsiders looking in, it seems like ‑‑ it may seem like CICIL transitioned and transformed in a very short period of time.

Case in point, I came on board 2015, and by 2018 we had gotten organization of the year award to distinction from the City of Des Moines, and it was specifically because of the work that we do with regards to systemic advocacy as it pertains to multiply marginalized people who are impacted by disability.

And so that's wonderful, but, you know, the focus and the growing pains that occurred between 2015 and 2018 certainly were palpable.

There were a lot of transitions as far as personnel is concerned, certainly as far as the Board of Directors was concerned.

There was 100% transition both at the staff and the board level.

And at the staff level that transition happened multiple times.

There was ‑‑ in the midst of all of that, there was the imperative that policies, procedures and guidelines and other SOPs, governing documents, et cetera, having time invested in them so that they could be ‑‑ become tools that could support the organization not only in its sustainability but if in it's desire to desire in an intersectional space.

And so what you hear me saying is that in many respects the situation was not ideal because at the very beginning there was a lot of what felt like force behind the shifting that was happening, but at the same time, the upside was that we experienced something that a lot of CILs or SILCs or any organization that is engaging in this work for whatever reason do not experience and that was we got a chance to start over.

We got a chance to just recreate absolutely everything.

And so there wasn't a lot of time that we needed to sort of spend on belaboring around retrofitting or revising or reforming.

We just did everything all over again.

And I so that that's not necessarily an opportunity that many of the listeners that are with us today might be able to pursue, but certainly to a certain extent all of us are feeling like, for a variety of reasons, especially in the past several months, we have an unprecedented opportunity to do a lot of visioning and dreaming around making some significant changes at the microlevel with regards to our SILC or our CIL, and then also at the macrolevel we're all very cognizant of the fact that ‑‑ well, to a certain extent ‑‑ that what we're doing at the ground level in our little corner of the universe is playing into ultimately what is happening with the Independent Living movement on a national/global scale as well.

And I mention that also just to be possibly a focal point for folks that are ‑‑ no matter where they're at in this journey, you know, when you feel like you're sort of in the trenches or feeling exhausted or unsure as far as how to move forward, just keeping in mind that the work that you're doing blends into the work that I'm doing and the work that all of our colleagues are doing to move this whole movement forward and really proactively shift it into what I perceive as being the second wave of the disability rights movement as a whole as it dovetails into disability justice ultimately.

Because that really is at the core of any kind of conversation as it pertains to intersectionality and disability.

TIM FUCHS: That's great.

Great tips.

Thank you, Reyma.

So I'm curious just looking at some of the questions that came in from the audience that we received ahead of time if we could talk about the ‑‑ I'm going to come to you, Susan, for this ‑‑ when we think about infrastructure, how do we develop the staffing and the policies and procedures that allow us to be more equitable CILs in our work, right, that ‑‑ you know, as we often say about disability issues, right, that every issue is a disability issue.

The reality, right, is that every issue can be a racial issue.

Every policy or procedure that a Center has could exacerbate discrimination, allow or encourage discrimination, or alienation at the least.

So what does it look like to create a Center that is staffed and organized and has the policies and procedures to allow us to be intersectional in our disability advocacy and other work.

SUSAN DOOHA: Yes, we look at the people in our community, and if people are in our community, then that should be reflected within our Independent Living Center.

We should be mirroring the community.

We should be able to be looking at our own data to decide if we're equally effective in serving all groups of people by race, ethnicity, language, gender, and so we do need to depend on looking at the facts, looking at the facts of who's in our community, looking at the demographics of our communities, and looking at our own portrait, self‑portrait, to see how well do we reflect the people that we could be serving and representing and should be.

We absolutely need to think about how do we recruit a Board of Directors that reflects the community as well.

There are.

Priorities that organizations have in selecting directors for an organization.

At CILs we're looking for people with specific skills, with access to resources.

We're looking for people also who bring diversity and different points of view, who reflect a cross section of consumers who participate in our organization and who will bring different perspectives because where you sit is where you stand very often, and we need a board that is in its role as the policy maker determining what our policies are and how we will reflect ‑‑ be reflected in the community, how we work in the community.

The board needs to be doing an inventory of all of our policies, all of our policies need an inventory to look at whether we're not only not discriminatory but we're actively seeking, we're affirmatively seeking to ensure that we are a welcoming organization, that we look like and behave like the very diverse community that we live within.

We want to make sure in our personnel policies that we're reflecting our desire to affirmatively seek out people who are Black, who are Latino, who are Asian‑American, Native American, and we want to be thinking about that and how we handle recruitment, and we want to be thinking about that in terms of our policies on harassment, our policies on staff behavior, and also in our policies on consumer behavior.

We all have ‑‑ at least we do ‑‑ a consumer rights and responsibilities document, and in that document we're very careful to explain that consumers have a lot of rights, and we have an obligation to treat them with respect and dignity,, and we also indicate that they have a responsibility to treat our staff with dignity and with respect.

And in our organization, in our personnel policies and our consumer policies, what we seek to reflect is that we do not accept that our staff will be harassed on the basis of race or ethnicity or language or gender, and that we will not tolerate staff who discriminate against individual consumers based on those characteristics.

We want to be thinking about how do we select the issues that our organization is going to work on?

It isn't just about outreach and individual services; it's looking at what organizations do we partner with?

It's looking at what coalitions do we want to be a part of that are engaging with issues that reflect all of the groups within our community based on race, ethnicity, disability, language, gender.

We want to be thinking about the issues that are affecting diverse communities these days.

So housing is very much an issue.

Healthcare and discrimination in healthcare is a huge issue.

Looking at the police, the correctional system, the court system is very much of concern to us as people with disabilities and to us as people with disabilities who come with other characteristics.

And we need to be looking, and I'll talk about this a little later, but looking specifically at the communities we serve and where are the potential community partners who share concerns that we share about poverty, about housing, about education, employment, and healthcare, transportation, a whole array of issues.

And we all want to see those systems be equitable systems, systems that are inclusive, and that are not discriminatory.

So how can we identify the groups in our communities that will work with us on those issues and form alliances?

How can we look at even our purchasing issues.

Are we looking for minority and women‑owned businesses when we are doing purchasing in the community?

We need to look at what are our plans for outreach.

Have we looked at every neighborhood in the city, every Zip code to identify who is living there?

Investigate who are the people with disabilities in those communities.

What are the resources available?

And then to engage and work in the communities.

Evaluation is key.

And we're constantly evaluating ourselves to try to see whether we're making progress in reaching all communities.

We do mapping of our communities so that we can look at who are the people in the community, and then if you were to overlay where is it that CIDNY is serving people, you would see a match between the people coming to CIDNY and the communities that are black, Latino, Latinx, Asian‑American, and you would then look at our services and try to determine, are we offering the services that the community is seeking?

So those are just a few of the things that you want to look at as an organization to be moving towards being an anti‑racist organization.

So our mission, our values, our plans, our actions, how we apport people who work for us, how we support the consumers who come to us, who we partner with, who are we as a staff, as a board, all of these things are critical.

TIM FUCHS: Thank you, Susan.

Great.

Some of the examples you gave around collaboration, not only who is in your community, they dovetail really well with some of the topics we're going to get into later.

So we'll be able to explore those more.

I want to come to you next, Stan.

Tony is wondering, this is one of our audience questions that we got during the live webinar, Tony is wondering, how do you believe the IL philosophy and the mission and services of CILs assign with the racial equity movement?

How do these two social movements [inaudible] with one another or cooperate to create the change needed to dismantle systemic racism?

Where do they overlap and how can they better collaborate to tackle oppression as a whole?

STAN HOLBROOK: Well, the basic thing I want to say that the IL movement ‑‑ the root of it is the Civil Rights Act, and it was built around equity.

It was built around everyone having the right and access to services ‑‑ equal access to services, everything out there that makes them ‑‑ to give a quality of life that a person would ‑‑ a person would value.

We each have different ideas and views of quality of life.

I also believe that, you know, from a standpoint of just being right, that the IL movement is charged for lending a hand up and making sure that we all have some kind of shot at living this life, and where things fall short is, you know, when we don't look at social determinants of health, you know, because when things are inequitable, then you throw all these other systems off, and some of the systems that we throw off that Susan and Reyma already put out there is, you know, poverty.

Heights housing.

You know, it's good health.

It's education.

It's access to doctors.

And so the IL movement has always been positioned as one of justice, and if it's truly one of justice, then that includes all people.

That includes all races.

That includes all disabilities.

I've seen conflict between seen disabilities and unseen disabilities within centers.

So I believe that if we look at the fundamental reason why the IL movement was created, and that was created to give a choice to what I feel I need as a person with a disability to obtain a quality of life and access to everything out here, you know from even being able to walk down the street, you know, and have curb cuts, to being able to be eligible for work on the basis of my intellect versus how I look, on the basis of my ability versus what you think is a disability, then that gives us a very good foundation at looking at the same should be for race.

The same should be for justice.

And they say anti‑racial.

I'm going to say unity.

But it is anti‑racial, but we want us all to have this shot, and for the IL movement to do that, they are fundamentally in position to move this way.

Even though it's going to take some time to get there.

You heard some good stuff about organizational infrastructure and values and things of that nature, but I believe the onus is on the Executive Director of each Center to move this forward.

Because leadership either rises or falls, and if the leaders take hold of this and grab on to this, say, like Reyma did, no matter what the situation is, it's going to be hard or not, I believe we can use the fundamentals of the IL movement, equitable independence, you know, we hold these truths to be self‑evident.

Everybody has inalienable rights and serve ‑‑ that's what we did to start the IL move., and it's that basis that we move forward in becoming an anti‑racist organization, and I don't believe there is no choice.

It's something centers have to do.

My last point, because the minority is becoming the majority.

So in about 20 years, is your Center going to be able to adequately, effectively serve the population that's there?

Because they are now majority and not minority.

TIM FUCHS: Great.

Thank you, Stan.

Good points.

I want to move on to ‑‑ we could spend 90 minutes on this topic alone, but just looking at the clock, I want to move on to the next slide 6 where we have establishing relationships and collaborations to reach diverse populations.

I wanted to say a couple things about this first before we Poe pose our first question.

One is I mentioned at the beginning of the webinar each of these topics were the headline topics, the overarching topics, for the disability, diversity and intersectionality project, and each of them were their own stand alone webinars and also the overarching topic areas for the on‑location training that we did.

And I mention that because, again, we're going to go through the DDI resources at the end of the webinar, but you can ‑‑ just so you know, as you organize your thoughts around this, you can actually go back and watch the webinars of each of these individual topics.

So ‑‑ I'm going to come back to you for this, Reyma, in just a second, but the relationships and collaborations piece is so important because you can have a really great intersectional Center for Independent Living but it's really unlikely you're going to be able to do fully intersectional work on your own, right?

And that's true regardless of where you are in this process.

I'm sure you all know in your advocacy work that it really does take a network, a coalition of organizations that are working on similar issues, and I think that's true here, too.

And so I'm curious about your experience and recommendations, Reyma, how you have built relationships and collaborations in Des Moines and in the state of Iowa and maybe even nationally for CICIL to allow you all to be an intersectional organization that is able to both give and receive support as you all do work for equality and accessibility.

REYMA McCOY McDEID: Yeah, that's a heck of a question.

I'll speak through a personal vantage point and speak from a more general vantage point, which is informed from the conversations I've had with various Independent Living stakeholders throughout the country as I engage in anti‑racism training in conversations and that kind of thing.

First and foremost, I'm kind of a unicorn in Independent Living.

I'm a black, gay, autistic lady, and so as ‑‑ when I came into my role at CICIL, I was met with a board that talked to me about all the struggles that it had with regards to outreach and engaging with marginalized pop legs and the organizations in our service area that work specifically with racially marginalized people or red by racially marginalized folks and the folks that they were struggling to connect with were my friends.

And so I didn't experience that barrier.

And I mentioned that because it's important for us to be strategic when we're looking to fill leadership decision‑making positions in whatever capacity.

I ‑‑ I think this is a really great opportunity to shift our thinking.

When we're thinking about diversifying a Board of Directors or hiring a racially marginalized director of policy or whatever, typically what I encounter with regards to those conversations are decision‑makers who are white and are very focused on bringing somebody on board that is a different color.

That's sort of the be all and end all.

The thing is, typically, more often than not, if a person ‑‑ a racially marginalized person is brought on board, they're going to be qualified, they're going to be wonderful in every traditional capacity, but there's something that we bring to the table that we need to talk about more, and that's the fact that we more often than not are very organically connected into groups and communities that are engaged in working with the populations that Independent Living historically has struggled to connect with.

And so that's a wonderful advantage that we bring with us as we come into our roles, as board members, executive directors, whatever.

Very important.

Please keep that in mind.

Really round out your understanding of the importance of bringing diverse people into decision‑making roles.

It's not just a superficial let's bring a brown or black person on so that we have somebody that can kind of make sure that our website looks like it's more racially heterogonous than homogeneous.

So there's that.

Also, what I personally have encountered and to a certain extent have seen as far as patterns are concerned with other Centers for Independent Living, or just Independent Living‑type entities throughout the country, is the following... with regards to the establishing relationship piece and collaboration ‑‑ collaborating piece, in my own position, part of that work was connecting with people that as organization or as individuals that had very negative experiences with pre‑Reyma CICIL, experiences that definitely were rude in racism.

And so ‑‑ rooted in racism.

And so an important piece of my relationship building with my sibling providers here in my service area in Central Iowa was doing a lot of apologizing, because it wasn't enough for me to just be, oh, well, CICIL is led by a black lady, so let's all celebrate that and send all the brown and black folks who are disabled CICIL's way.

Certainly it got my foot in the door with regards to a lot of my sibling providers, but they wanted to ‑‑ providers, but they wanted to hear specifically what was shifting and what had changed at CICIL to ensure that anybody they referred to us at best would not be harmed, but also equally importantly would be provided with excellent services, would feel heard, would actually be able to experience peer support, which is one of our five core services.

Because peer support at CICIL prior to my coming on board consisted of white staff members meeting with racially marginalized disabled people who wanted to talk about their disability experience, and you can't be black and disabled and not talk about that intersection because they very much inform each other.

But as CICIL people who were black and Brown and disabled were coming in and wanted to talk about that, and what they were hearing, it was either inferred or directly articulated, we are only going to talk about disability.

You can talk about that race stuff.

We're not going to have that conversation because that's divisive.

We are only here for disability.

That is our silo.

Please keep that other riffraff out of here.

And so that ‑‑ I mean, if you want to do the antithesis of building a relationship with marginally disabled racial people, demand we only focus on our disability and not about how race mitigates our experience.

I had to do a lot of apologizing.

My guess is we have folks with us this afternoon that what I've just articulated resonates.

Like, yeah, that's actually happened at my CIL.

Or that definitely sounds like something that would happen in Independent Living in my respective state.

And so what you hear me saying ultimately is, and if this isn't relevant to you, then, no need to listen, but to a certain extent, given the work that we have to do as a movement with regards to addressing why there are so many issues around racial inclusivity in the movement and in Centers for Independent Living, we have to consider the fact that in the past unintentionally perhaps we have caused harm to marginally disabled people.

That could be a factor and why we are struggling with regards to our, quote‑unquote, outreach efforts.

And if that's the case, what unpacking do we need to do around ensuring that humbling ourselves by apologizing or that kind of thing ‑‑ you know, what do we need to do to address what that looks like as far as establishing or reestablishing relationships and collaborations with our sibling providers in our respective service areas so that we can ultimately reach diverse populations?

TIM FUCHS: Great.

Thank you, Reyma.

Susan, I want to come to you next, and some of the questions that we received ahead of time on this were really good, and so I'm wondering, what have you all done at CIDNY to reach out and create working relationships with other groups like Black Lives Matters, other organizations in New York City that work across a very diverse population to tackle oppression kind of from that larger systemic level, getting away from the silos that Reyma gave in a few examples and doing that work.

So, what does that journey look like for you all at CIDNY, what are some of the organizations you've found good partners in, and for the folks joining today that are ‑‑ in the earlier stages of this trying to understand, what are some first steps that you all took in your mind to create those relationships?

SUSAN DOOHA: Well, as Reyma says, there is something to be said for having an organization that is made up of the people that we need to be engaging with.

There is something to be said for reflecting in our staff and our peers who we are and what we mean.

In my staff, I have 70 staff.

I have staff who are Latina, and gay, and also have mental health disabilities or other disabilities, and that helps tremendously as we are represented in the community and we put forth a spokesperson in the community.

People of color who are speaking not just from the perspective of disability but speaking from their own experiences, as men and women, and other genders who are very much appreciative of hour their statuses intersect.

So that's critical just to really say that that's important.

The commitment on the part of our agency is very, very longstanding, and since I've been there, which is more than 20 years now, we've been very deliberately seeking out community partners by looking at what are the issues that people are bringing to us.

If you are a black woman with a disability and you're working at CIDNY or you come to CIDNY for support for your goals what are the things that are driving you?

What are you experiencing?

And then identifying the systemic issues that are reflected in that.

So looking at, for example, the experience of eviction and how it falls disproportionately on communities of color.

And also that those communities are also communities where there are high numbers, with a high prevalence of people with disability.

Looking at where are the groups who are getting together to talk, all of the groups together, about how to work on these issues, how to bring their experiences forth, how to influence policymakers, how to make change, and in these years we've done this on housing, current example is working to prevent eviction for people who are poor and that includes people who are racially, ethnically diverse, it includes people with disabilities, and people who are at that intersection particularly.

And we find ourselves working with a group of other organizations that have the same concern, and we have opportunities to listen to them, because listening is key.

And thinking about how can we engage together on the issues that matter to us all.

Looking, for example, at healthcare in New York City.

We have a very discriminatory healthcare system in New York City when it comes to race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation.

We have very ‑‑ very bad history and a very bad current picture.

So finding the groups that represent communities of color and that represent low income communities and working together with them.

For example, the commission on the public's health system in New York City has been a defender every public health coverage, has been a defender of insuring that health providers are not discriminating on the base of race and ethnicity and are not benefiting unjustly by receiving funds that are intended to support those groups, those organizations, those hospitals that are serving people who are Black, who is Latinx, Asian‑American and also poor and also have disabilities.

We have been working on health coverage broadly, on the Affordable Care Act issues and its provisions of nondiscrimination.

The Affordable Care Act has a very, very important clause called section 1557 which states very firmly and was interpreted by a previous administration as really requiring affirmative steps to eradicate discrimination.

And so we worked with groups.

Medicaid Matters, for example, or also healthcare for all New York City, to join together with groups like make the road by walking, which represents very diverse communities.

And also the New York immigration coalition.

We've had working relationships with them on healthcare for very, very long time because we agree that we need to talk about race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and although we may often be the ones who are raising the disability questions, we have come into communities where we have together built a level of trust where we have to listen and so do the other members of the coalition about the intersection of race, language, ethnicity and disability.

So it's an important dialogue, and this is happening on a lot of issues in the city.

We join together with groups in the city that I think are very local, but that we're working on releasing people from jails who simply were there because they could not afford bail.

They were not convicted of any violent crimes or predatory crimes, and that they would come to court, they could come to court, but they just couldn't afford to make bail, and there was a project we were working on with groups, particularly representing African Americans in New York City, to address helping people get out and then helping people deal with issues that they faced on reentering into the community.

A lot of different issues.

We've been very profoundly concerned in New York City with COVID‑19, and we've joined together on an advisory body for the department of health and mental hygiene in New York City to ensure that issues of race, ethnicity, language and disability are raised regarding every single aspect of the effort to identify who is affected, to bring resources to the communities most affected, to ensure that people are not being left behind, that communities that have fewer resources are not being left behind but are, in fact, being prioritized.

And together we raise issues that cut across race, ethnicity and disability that are truly affecting us all, and we appreciate each other others as we raise these issues because we understand that we are all really experiencing the pandemic, but some communities more than others, and that's true of racially ethnically diverse groups, it's true of people with disabilities.

So we need to come together to address those issues.

And these have been very, very positive experiences.

You know, I think there are many more.

TIM FUCHS: Sorry, Susan.

I fumbled to get to my mute as I was sending a chat message to someone.

Thank you very much.

Great examples.

I'm so glad you talked about ‑‑ well, they were all good examples, but I'm so glad you talked about the work you've done on COVID, too, because I know that was something a lot of people were curious about and the questions that we received ahead of the webinar, and just so I don't know how deeply we're going to be able to get into the obvious and really tragic intersections of racism and COVID.

We do have some more content on that.

I know we talked about it quite a bit at NCIL's conference, but just to be honest, I don't know how much time we're going to have to get into that today.

So I'm glad you at least touched on it.

I'm going to come to Stan next and I am going to go to slide 7 and it kills me to move on because I want to continue these conversations, and there's so much more we could talk about, obviously, with collaboration, but, again, if you want to dive deeper, we've got the past webinars that you can go back and watch free of charge on ILRU's website.

Stan I'm wondering from your experience at TRICL in Pittsburgh what you all did to create an organization that was welcoming and supportive.

This slide says for diverse populations ‑‑ but really so that people with disabilities that have other marginalized identities, whether they're people of color, people who are LGBTQ, would come into the Center to receive services and feel like this is an organization that understood them and wanted to work with.

What are concepts you created to ‑‑ to create that at TRICL.

>> One of the things we did was a ‑‑ we had a pretty diverse staff.

We were careful with who was at the front desk.

You know, we wanted someone that was welcoming, someone that the passion to care, and we wanted to be ‑‑ wanted people to be at home.

So we had several information pamphlets on the front desk, a lot of them were linguistically competent.

We had different stuff that were geared toward African Americans, stuff geared toward Asians, you know.

So you could read there.

That was heavily our population other than the main population where they know that we cared about them and they were welcome to get services.

I think another big thing is, and it dovetails on the last slide, when it comes to building trust and relationships outside of the Center, I believe some of that welcoming stuff we did happened on the outside.

So we were careful who we sent out to engage the community.

We were careful to make sure they were knowledgeable about our services and particularly how we're fighting similar fights as the other organizations out there we're trying to connect with.

So we did that.

We've set up several focus groups or advocacy groups where the consumers ran the group about things they needed, how they wanted to advance quality of life, and not only gave them a sense of leadership, which they were supposed ‑‑ and they were peer to peer, but it also, you know, gave them a responsibility to look out for fellow consumers that were there.

We set up several networking events with other groups within the Pittsburgh area that have different cultures, and we kind of tried to make it our business to let them know where we're coming from and the culture we're trying to establish at TRICL versus what is the cultural needs of the folks we are looking at so we could be more well informed when we go out into the community.

And I think welcoming also not only on the outside but our stakeholders, our staff, our staff, it was very important that our staff felt like they had a role there and they weren't discriminated against.

So that's where we integrate, you know, not only our values for the organization but the other thing we do is, as Reyma did, we go through our policies and procedures an and legacise as an organization what we're going to do from hiring to discipline to promotion to looking at management and trying to make it equitable for folks to be able to be promoted, and people see people of diverse nature all throughout the organization at every level.

And I'm not going to say it was easy, but we looked at every policy and procedure and ‑‑ unlike Reyma, they started all over.

We were kind of like fixing policies to represent the values we were trying to move as an organization.

And the other thing that's very important is to evaluate your consumers.

Have them evaluate you.

Are they getting what they need?

You know, what things are they not getting?

What problems are they having?

And then addressing those problems immediately.

I think the last thing is your action plan.

You know, you're going to look at diversity is always a piece of it and how we are advancing it.

And so when you do your planning, you know, there are concrete steps that we need to take to ensure that we are welcoming and, you know, some of the obvious things there ‑‑ to have in your vestibule, just to have things ‑‑ we had people with disabilities of all colors and things that they've done for the history of the IL movement, and that was just a small thing, but I think that that helps the welcoming because there are a lot of diverse people that made a significant contribution to the IL movement and disability movement.

TIM FUCHS: Absolutely.

We've not done a good job of telling that story, and that's something ‑‑ that's something that actually came up in one of the questions, too.

I loved this.

We don't have time to spend a lot of time on it but someone said, we have got to address the writing and research of the true disability stories that ‑‑ I'm paraphrasing ‑‑ to dig up ‑‑ now I'm not paraphrasing ‑‑ dig up the wonderful and equally heroic stories of disabled advocates of color whose contributions need tune unearthed and acknowledged.

I thought that was really great.

Reyma, I'm going to come to you for the next one here, and, again, just in light of the facts that we only have 20 minutes left together, I would really like ‑‑ I like the question that Tony posed in the Q&A about how to have difficult conversations around race with your staff, and I want ‑‑ and make sure that folks are not further traumatized by that and that it's a safe place for those discussions.

I want to broaden that, really, because if ‑‑ and I know you do a lot of implicit bias training with CILs specifically, and I'm curious of your thoughts, because if centers are going to do a good job of this, there is certainly going to be some training and conversations and planning that have to happen to do this well, in my humble opinion.

So I am I curious if you could give just an abbreviated version of what training options are out there and how to do that effectively with your staff if you really want a meaningful shift in your organization.

REYMA McCOY McDEID: This is Reyma.

I'm loving the questions and the dialogue today, and I say that being mindful of the fact that we have 19 minutes together left.

So I want to be as succinct and economical as possible in my response.

So my guess is that all of us have at one time or another experienced a, quote‑unquote, race and equity training, if not in our capacity as professionals in 'tiles, in some other capacity.

Perhaps it was on a Tuesday afternoon, two hours or something, and somebody swoops in and uses a lot of buzz words, maybe shows a compelling video or DVD or something like that, and talks about diversity and inclusion in very abstract ways, and then they disappear and everybody sort of looks at each other and it's, like, I don't know what the heck just happened but we definitely all experienced a diversity/inclusion training so we could check off that box and just go our merry ways.

You know, I mention that because oftentimes when I mention the importance of doing trainings I can tell in the response of the individual that they are playing back that diversity and inclusion training they participated in 20 years ago and they're thinking, well, yeah, that's not going to be a productive use of my or my colleague's name.

And so as you are looking to engage in some kind of professional development, being mindful of the fact that if that's not what you ‑‑ if that's not what you want and if you really, truly want to have a productive training, transformative conversation around this subject matter, the reality is that at least for the duration of that conversation/training, if not outside of that environment, there's going to be a lot of uncomfortable moments, and that is okay.

You know, just because somebody, particularly a person that is white, just because a white person is uncomfortable with the subject matter doesn't mean that the facilitator is wrong or that the curriculum is incorrect.

More than likely that feeling of uncomfortability beneath that with some unpacking what you'll find is that you're feeling uncomfortable because you're being pointed in the right direction.

The fact of the matter is this, these conversations sort of do‑si‑do around ‑‑ and are kind of ‑‑ we're talking about symptoms, the core issue, not just with regards to independent living, but society is that all of our systems are rooted in ‑‑ this is going to sound very provocative to some of you, but I want to maximize our time together, folks ‑‑ the systems that is Independent Living, take a breath together, is rooted in white supremacy.

Okay?

White supremacy is not just about burning crosses or KKK or that kind of thing.

Systemic racism is actually driven by a manifestation of racism that's more covert.

The casual throwing of resume with a name like Tyrone Smith on it into the recycle bin, which is an action that's rooted in implicit bias, that is more of a driving force in systemic racism than the burning cross is.

Certainly in professional environments.

We know enough to know that allowing for people to use the N word is professional environments is absolutely inappropriate.

Department of Labor will be all over us.

Things get a lot more nebulous when we talk about the more subtle stuff, stuff that's going to fly under the radar as far as does this constitute harassment, as far as the Department of Labor is concerned.

That is where the work needs to be done and that feels very uncomfortable for some us.

>>> It also feels very cathartic for some of us as well who have been waiting to have this conversation for a long time.

And so with regards to the discomfort, I want to put that out there.

You know, prioritizing the comfort of people who are not racially marginalized is not going to create the effective training and ultimately the paradigm shifting that needs to occur in the Independent Living movement with regards to psychological safety, I'll say this, and then I'll stop talking, the fact of the matter is that with regards to consumers, prospective and actual consumers, psychological safety needs to be prioritized as well.

Another inconvenient truth is that many of us who are racially marginalized in whatever capacity have been the participant or recipient of some semblance of human service, social work, Independent Living Center, whatever, as a result of seeking out and attempting to participate in that service, it has caused racial trauma for us.

And my racial trauma I mean basically some semblance of posttraumatic stress disorder, and so we carry that with us, and if we are in situations where we really have no choice, we have to participate in social or human services in order to gain access to a vital resource that we are barriers to gaining access to, we have to continue to participate in a system that we feel that we have experienced harm as a result of tapping into it.

And so not only are we going into ‑‑ walking into our Center for Independent Living with the lived experience of being marginalized because we have a disability, but we're also walking into that Center for Independent Living with racial trauma as a direct result of engaging in human services in the first place.

That needs to be prioritized as we are engaging in these conversations.

Now, obviously, you know, implicit bias training or that kind of thing is going to involve a Board of Directors or staff or executive‑level folks or whatever.

It's not typically going to involve consumers of service.

All the more reason for us to go into those trainings or conversations with the imperative and the ‑‑ and thought around who is coming into ‑‑ who is walking into the doors of our Center for Independent Living and how can we make sure we are keeping them in mind as we are engaging in these conversations.

You know, doing what we can to proactively ensure those of us who are the least marginalized are not prioritized as far as these conversations are concerned so we can maximize our time together and ensure that the systemic barriers to true intersectional inclusion are finally confronted and faced and addressed so that, again, that second wave of the independent ‑‑ or maybe it's the third wave, I don't want to sound naive since I have only been involved in this stuff for five years, but the next wave of Independent Living really, truly is inclusive and intersectional.

TIM FUCHS: Awesome.

Thank you, Reyma.

A great answer.

Thank you for walking through that and great job giving a good synopsis of a complex topic.

I just like to ask you all, if you'll allow me, that if you were uncomfortable with any of that to please pull that thread.

Right?

That is where this begins, and if these topics and these ‑‑ and this content feels new to you, and especially if you're in a leadership position, we really do ask you to explore the series and start to work through this, maybe on a personal level first, but think about how you might be able to transform your Center.

In the interest of time, I'm going to kind of combine some of these last few topics areas.

Susan, I'm going to come to you next.

I think two of these do dovetail well.

Right?

We've got these next couple slides that talk about utilizing data and community mapping.

I know that's something you have some great experience and great resources to share, but I want to ask you to kind of combine your answer around how CIDNY did community mapping to learn how diverse was your service area?

Who was there ‑‑ who were you serving, who were you missing?

Where did you need to do outreach?

With this slide 6 around the outreach topic.

So as an organization in the very diverse area of New York City, and I mean diversity in all of its different manifestations, right, because that's the reality of New York, how did you all do that work?

What kind of support did you receive as a CIL to map your communities and figure out who was there and then what outreach work did that highlight for you all as you looked especially to find the consumers that you had been missing maybe as an organization.

SUSAN DOOHA: I would love to.

First I want to start with why do we do this?

We do it to identify and serve all people in an equally effective way.

We do it to improve our understanding of our community's needs.

And in all of its diversity.

And we do it to better reflect in terms of what we offer people and also the issues that we work on.

What are the kinds of things that we should be taking up.

We got started when we were introduced to researchers at the University of New Hampshire, and these are researchers on disability, and we asked them to provide us with data on New York City, broken down by county, or what we call borough, and also by Zip code so that we could look neighborhood by neighborhood at who is living in each neighborhood.

How are people with disabilities who are black faring in terms of poverty indicators.

How are people who are Latina faring in terms of educational outcomes?

What are the disparities in all of these areas that are so key to domains of well‑being, health, education, transportation, employment, poverty all of these areas needed to be examined are all people with disabilities situated in the same way and where are there people where we need to do outreach, we need to plan specifically to identify neighborhoods where the diversity is the greatest and to identify organizations within the community or serving the communities that we can work with?

We did this by asking them to prepare data for us, and they prepared this fantastic data on all these indicators I've described, and I wish I could show you, but if you look at some of the other material on disability and race and ethnicity intersectionality you will see it.

We looked specifically for data that would help us target resources to black, Hispanic, Latinx and Asian‑American communities in the city.

And we began doing this after, I guess, Hurricane Sandy back in 2013.

And we developed, you can't really see it here, I'm so sorry, but we developed maps of every neighborhood and every Zip code in our communities to look at who lives here and then to look at who are we serving and in what zip codes are we serving people?

So before going into a community, looking at who lives in the community, what are the issues of the people living in the community, what are the issues of people with disabilities living in the community who are racially and ethnically diverse, and we identified zip codes by looking at who do we serve as against the communities where there's a high prevalence of people who are racially/ethnically diverse, who speak languages other than English as their first or primary language and have disabilities, and we identified neighborhoods that we needed to select in order to go in and work there, and we've used this data also to affect our policy activities.

Subways, subway accessibility, homeless shelter accessibility, housing discrimination.

Just a few of the issues we've been able to work with community groups on.

The data itself that we have been using is available from the American community survey of the U.S. census.

You can get either one‑year estimates or five‑year estimates, and I prefer the five‑year estimates, of data about disability, race, ethnicity, geography, and you can break it down in very granular ways.

So you can look at what Zip code and look up the Zip code, what is the racial and ethnic composition of the Zip code, and you can look at what organizations are working with people in that Zip code that we need to learn from and work with.

You can break the data down to blocks, to census tracts, to Zip code area, state legislative districts, and it allows you to be very, very clear about where you need to go and what you need to do.

We do this every few years, and we look at creating a report about what are the issues facing our communities and always unpacking the bag.

What are educational outcomes for people with disabilities who are black.

What are educational outcomes for people who are people who are Latinx and trying to be very precise about the issues we take up and how those issues affect each community.

And we use it to do outreach.

We use it to identify programs that we need to be more engaged with.

For example, housing is a top issue that we all share, and looking at financing for housing, keeping people in housing and preventing eviction, helping people find housing was one of the top issues, and it was a top issue for people with disabilities who are black, people with disabilities who are Latinx and Asian‑Americans.

So we use the data as a way to surface the disparities in our communities so that we could focus specifically on those disparities by where we chose to work, by what we chose to offer and what we chose to take up as systemic issues.

TIM FUCHS: Susan ‑‑

SUSAN DOOHA: The University of New Hampshire is not the only one.

There are other universities around the country making data available for independent living centers and I highly recommend finding out about your own community.

TIM FUCHS: Hey, Susan, I'm going to have to stop you there.

I hate to do it.

But, again, time is the enemy.

I can't believe we've practically used up our 90 minutes.

I have logged this conversation.

I will take this sting out of having to end a little bit by going quickly here to slide 11 and 12.

I talked about some of this, so I'm going to move through this quickly.

This is a description here on slide 11.

You all have these slides, remember in the confirmation email.

I will let you look through this if you want to read it more carefully.

But it was a research project to see which CILs were doing this work well, and then of the 38 that were nominated, nine were selected.

So remember it's not just Stan and Susan and Reyma's CILs.

There were six other centers that were a part of this.

But we couldn't have them all on the panel today.

But here's really the meat of what I want to talk about on slide 12, because this on slide 12 is where you can find the direct links to the past presentations that we've done so that you can delve deeper into these topics.

And, remember, in addition to the individual webinars that we did on these topics, we also did a two‑and‑a‑half day on‑location training, and you can view those materials and videos of that training as well.

So there really is ‑‑ there are hours and hours of content here on each of these individual topic areas that we've teased at today so that you can look further into them.

The other thing I like to plug about the project is this is an ongoing training and technical assistance project.

So if you have additional questions about this, please let me know.

I gave my email earlier.

It's just tim@ncil.org.

And you can let me know what other resources or support you'd like and I'll connect you with people that can support you in that.

So please do take advantage if you have ongoing requests for support in your work on race, intersectionality, equity, disability justice, please reach out and let me know and we can send you additional resources.

And, unfortunately, we're out of time for additional questions.

I know we got through a lot of ones we had received ahead of time.

So, but, again, if there's additional things you want to explore, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

This is the link to the evaluation form.

I do want to ask for you to fill it out.

I would love to know what you thought of today's presentation.

This is not a live link.

You can copy and paste it to your browser, of course, but when I close the webinar, this evaluation form will actually show up on your screen.

So when I close the Zoom webinar, this eval will come up, and I would really appreciate if you took just a minute to fill it out.

Always helpful, I love the numerical scores, but it's helpful if you can offer some words of support for ‑‑ something to back up the numbers, why did you feel that way.

That's always so helpful.

With that, at 4:33 on the East Coast, I'm sorry, I have to close, Stan, Susan, Reyma, I can't thank you enough.

Just outstanding conversation as always.

Excellent examples.

To our audience thanks for joining us.

I was so happy to see such a huge turnout.

And I hope to hear from you as you continue this work.

I would be happy to help point you to other resources or if you have questions about the existing DDI content we have online.

Have a great afternoon everybody.

Bye‑bye.