

SPEAKER:

Recording in progress.

JENNY SICHEL:

Hello everybody, we are going to give it a couple seconds to let our audience populate. I am also going to share my screen now. There we go. Looks like there are still people coming in, we will give it another few moments.

OK, I think we can get started with this. Hello everyone, my name is Jenny Sichel, I am operation Director at the National Council on Independent Living. I help coordinate logistics for these events. I wanted to welcome everybody to our latest webinar, serving cross disabilities populations.

Today's presentation is brought to you by the Administration for Community Living at the US Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the IL-NET. IL-NET is operated by ILRU in collaboration with NCIL, April and the University of Montana. To give you a brief on myself, I pronounce her she/her, and I am a white female in a floral shirt right now, with my curly brown hair pulled back into a ponytail.

I want to start with some housekeeping details. Captions are available on this webinar, you can click show shop title in your zoo menu bar to turn them on. We also have captions running at Ai-Media, the URL is too long to read, but we will share it in the chat box as soon as I finish my opening. Ai-Media will allow you to enlarge the font and change the color and contrast of the captioning.

ASL interpreters are present today and should always be visible when we are presenting and gallery view. Please let me know in the chat if you cannot see the ASL interpreters. In addition to ASL, we also have Spanish translation available today. In order to access that, you can go to the zoo bar on your screen, and choose the language that you would like to hear the presentation in.

You do not need to be on zoom video to access this webinar. We will read all slide content and all questions out loud, so that everything will be available to individuals calling in on the phone or who cannot see visual content. Public chat is turned off, but you will be able to chat with the panelists. We ask that you reserve the chat for requests for technical support only. Please do not use it to submit content questions for presenters.

In order to submit content questions. You can actually submit them in three easy ways, one, if you run Zoom, there should be a Q&A tab available. You can click that, and submit your question and will answer through that. You are also welcome to email me your questions at jenny@ncil.org or J E N N Y @NCIL. ORG

If you are only on telephone today or need to voice your message, you may press*9 on the telephone or raise your hand to indicate that you have a question. We do ask that if you are speaking a question you limit the question to no more than 30 seconds.

There will be breaks after each presenter to ask questions, as well as a time at the end to ask any presenter any question. So please hold your questions to those breaks. Finally, we ask you complete our evaluation. We take the so seriously and use everything we learn to improve our future trainings. So throughout the session, and nearing the end, we will put a link to the evaluation in the chat box, and this time we will have two links, one for English evaluations and one for Spanish evaluations.

The evaluation will also open after the webinar closes, so we will be very grateful if you do take just a few moments to complete the evaluation. Now to get into the good stuff... Our presenters today come from a variety of backgrounds and locations.

Starting off we have Sarah Massengale, from Able South Carolina, she is community access specialist, following her we will have Brooke Velarde Hernandez, manager for Deaf services and independent living program at Valley Association for Independent Living or VAIL, and finally we will have Genesis Lezarma, so I will flip through a couple slides here...

What you will learn today, before we can to the presentations, I want you to be sure that you will learn to describe strategies to make resources more accessible for cross disability populations. How to identify best practices for serving and making accommodations for Spanish-speaking individuals with this, specifically those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and how to describe the culture of and best practices to serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

So now I am going to get into Sarah Massengale, Sarah, do you want to take over? Happy to introduce you if you would like.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Happy to take over, thank you Jenny and good afternoon everyone. I am Sarah Massengale, as Jenny said, a community access specialist with Able South Carolina. A CIL based out of Columbia South Carolina. I am a white woman with brown hair with coppery colored highlights. And I use she/her pronouns.

I am off camera today because I am totally blind, so I prefer to make sure that... I am not showing you my ceiling or some such. And make sure that we are focusing on the content I am sharing with you today.

So what we are going to talk about are some strategies for making various kinds of content fully accessible. So keeping in mind that what I'm going to share with you are the basics of varied digital accessibility.

This is a starting point. If you have more questions or would like more information, my contact information will be available, and I'm also happy to answer questions. To start off, bear with me just a moment...

So on the first slide that I have on the screen is a bullet pointed list of several different digital accessibility topics, and we are going to briefly skim through these. Alternative text, alt text, and image descriptions. So it is really important that any images, or graphs, charts, any sort of graphic, that you have in your content, whether it be web, social, document, presentation... Is fully accessible via a text description.

There are two different types of text description, alternative text, or alt text, is added into your content, in a way that only a screen reader can read. Whether that be through the format picture dialogue in Microsoft products, or in your HTML on the web. It is a 2 to 3 sentence description that only describes the essential part of an image.

If that image is not essential, to your content, then what you will do is mark the image decorative, instead of employing alt text, which will keep the screen reader from recognizing it at all. For longer descriptions, if you need to go into more depth, more detail, you are going to write what is called an image description.

It can be as long as a paragraph, and is put into the body of your content. So that everybody can read it, not just a screen reader user.

Meaningful link text... That is the second point on this list. And this refers to, I am sure we have all seen a link labeled click here, learn more, read more... And the issue with these is kind of threefold. Number one, many screen reader users navigate by a list of links only. On large webpages, or in large documents.

And so if we see multiple click here and read more links, then we are not quite sure where we are on the page, where we are in that links list. The other issue gets into ideas of cybersecurity, and knowing where we are on the web, so if you just see click here, read more, you do not know where that link is going to lead you, see you want to be very aware of putting descriptive titles on links that make it very clear what kind of content is going to be in forward and where it is going to lead.

Correct use of nested headings is point three. What is that mean? Headings on a webpage have very specific ways they are supposed to be used and I think of this like a book. If you think about a book, the title of a book should only ever be heading level I. And that is the same with your document or webpage.

The title of your document or webpage should only ever be heading level I. Individual chapters of your book should only ever be heading level II, which is the same as the big subsections of your document. Those titles are always heading level II.

And then if you have subsections, chapters that are divided into subsections, other types of sections that are further sectioned off, that is when you are going to get into typically headings level III through mostly level V, we typically do not go a lot further than level V.

This exists for a couple different reasons, number one, again back to screen reader users and navigation, because screen reader users can also navigate an entire document or webpage by headings alone. So clearly used headings and clearly titled headings make that process go faster.

It is also important when you are talking about folks who have reading disabilities or cognitive disabilities, because you are providing structure and effective use of the space in your documents and your webpages. So that someone can easily see how the document is sectioned off. Important thing to remember about headings, is that we are doing them in Microsoft products, you want to be very sure in the styles pane in Word, rather than just changing the font or color. Plain language and knowing your audience. This one is probably one of the most important because it pertains to so many different populations.

When you use plain language, what we mean by that is you want to use very clear and conversational language. You want to avoid jargon or technical terms. You want to speak directly to your audience. So, a lot of times we are taught that in formal writing, using 'you' and speaking directly to the order -- reader is frowned upon. But in plain language, it is actually not. You also want to be able to use, you want to be able to use lots of white space and bullet points. Because that makes it much easier for folks to follow the document that you are creating.

And then, keyboard navigation. This mostly pertains to the web. But many people, screen reader users are one of your largest populations. But several other disability populations as well navigate using only the keyboard. And so if you are creating a website that relies a great deal on a mouse, you are creating content that is inaccessible to many different disability populations. And then the last piece that is very important are captions and audio descriptions.

You have both opened and closed captions that are very important for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. And for people, several other disability populations as well as nondisabled people who may not have their sound on for a variety of reasons. Open captions are always present and closed captions can be turned on and off. The preference being, of course, open captions because they are always there. But closed captions of course being a very viable option as well. You also have audio description. Audio description is a separate track in a video that explains what is visually happening on the screen. It is typically put after dialogue or between pieces of dialogue so that nothing is interrupted. But it is to enable a person who is blind or has another visual disability to fully grasp what is happening on the screen.

As I said before, remember these are just the basics. And this is very high-level, and I am sure very fast. So there will be other opportunities for learning. You can feel free to contact me if you would like more information. If I can ask for the next slide.

JENNY SICHEL:

I am just going to put my email into the chat. I am just letting you know that it is going in there and the next slide is yours.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Perfect. Alright. Slide 10. What is on this screen is a slide that says the 'Accessibility Overlay'. Why Are We Talking about It? Accessibility overlays often do not fix accessibility, they break it. Let's talk about this. Let's take a step back and provide some context. What is an accessibility overlay? It is a single line of code that companies claim can be inserted into the back end of your website that fixes all accessibility compliance issues. And we are talking about this even more specifically because accessibility overlay practices, marketing practices are very deceptive.

I have seen situations where these companies have contacted Center for Independent Living and sold them on their product because that is what is thought is needed to make a website accessible. But these overlays are not meant to be a substitute for building things according to Web content accessibility guidelines. They also prey on companies who are really feeling desperate. If a company has gotten a complaint, and they are just terrified of how to fix it and of the cost and time involved in accessibility remediation, so fixing things that have become issues, they will get sort of trapped in by these overlay companies because they are offering a quick fix at a price that feels very acceptable to these companies.

And my motto with this is if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. They certainly do sound too good to be true if you are ever caught in a marketing pitch. Next slide, please.

Let's talk about some other issues that are tied up in these overlays. Overlays also cause some issues from the privacy and security side of things. They use what is called cross site tracking in some cases, meaning that they will put a cookie on a user's computer and that user will see their preferences tracked across sites that use the same overlays. For instance, if a screen reader user has saved in an overlay that they are a screen reader user and visit another site using the same overlay, that overlay will autodetect that they are a screen reader user.

The other problem with this is that this data, of course, is being gathered by use of the cookies. The data about a person being a screen reader user, about the sites they visit, about the overlays that they are being forced to interact with. So what problems does that have the potential to lead to in the long run? Well, we are automatically seeing companies automatically being able to determine our assistive technology. They have the capability of pushing ads and all manner of things related to our assistive technology. There is a possibility from that that these companies are able to deduce our disability.

All in all these overlays can really be a nasty, scary thing. So I will pause here. That concludes what I have available. I will pause here and let's say open it up to questions and discussion if anybody has anything.

JENNY SICHEL:

I have one question already. Before asking that question, I just want to let everybody know that we are working on the Spanish translation. It is a little glitchy right now. Please stick with us on that end, we are troubleshooting as we go here. I believe it is still listenable but please let us know if it is glitchy for you to that we can continue working on that.

Our first question is, what do you do if you have text boxes? Do you add caption for each text box?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

OK, so. Text boxes can be very tricky. If they are in a PowerPoint, and that template for PowerPoint is created excessively, no. You do not need to add captions or alt text to the text boxes because that text in those text boxes is perfectly visible. Now, the key to remember with that is if that PowerPoint is created excessively. And Microsoft does have an accessibility checker that is available to you from the review tab. You can use that to help determine if your PowerPoint is accessible.

If they are in Word, that answer is kind of, it depends.

JENNY SICHEL:

Hold on, one second. I am sorry, I just heard someone pop on. And I think it was one of our translators, but I think they are now back in there. Yes. We are good, continue.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

OK, perfect. Crystal said it was a PowerPoint targeted question. Perfect, Crystal. If you need more assistance on that please feel free to reach out to me and I will be glad to help you.

JENNY SICHEL:

OK, our next question. OK, we are having a little bit of audio challenges here. Can you just speak a little bit, or I can speak a little bit. Can everybody hear me right now, please put in the chat if you cannot hear me? OK, great. You speak really quickly, Sandra, I am going to mute you.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Is everybody hearing me OK as well? Just making sure.

JENNY SICHEL:

Great. I believe that should solve everything, it is a little soft but you are good. OK, great. That should solve things. Let's continue. These put in the chat if you are having trouble. I do think that the Spanish translation, there is still a second female voice talking in the background. I am going to go unmute and if everybody could just let me know if you hear another female voice as well, that would be great. So, Sarah. I am going to ask you a question then go unmute.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Sounds good.

JENNY SICHEL:

What is the most inclusive accessible document sharing platform?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

That is a very tricky question, folks. And I will admit that it is one I am still learning on as well. Preferentially on my end, I give preference to either one drive because it is built in with all the native Microsoft product and so the accessibility is built in. Or dropbox. But the trick to remember is that collaborating with a screen reader user can be tricky and the reason is that a lot of times as screen

reader users web editors and browser based platforms are not our friends in the document sharing world.

Many of us will download the desktop clients and utilize those. And so there is a little bit of a saving issue between the desktop client and the web client. So that is going to be really the case with most collaborative platforms that you use. One Drive does seem to handle this most smoothly and that is why I tend to give preferential treatment to it. My best answer to you would be One Drive is preferred.

JENNY SICHEL:

OK, great. And I know that we are kind of working on that, yet. -- Yes. The Spanish translation, I believe Eduardo we heard you quickly. I want to make sure before we proceed that the Spanish translation is working. It sounds like it is working better. If anyone has any more trouble with the Spanish translation, please put it into the chat for us so that we can make sure that everybody can understand what is going on. OK. I think we have time right now for one more question. And it looks like we have a speaking question from Beth. So, Beth, I am going to allow you to talk. If you can keep your question to less than 30 seconds, that would be great. You are just going to have to unmute yourself as well.

SPEAKER:

I am sorry, I do not know how that happened. But I did not have a question. Sorry.

JENNY SICHEL:

Lovely chatting!

SPEAKER:

Very good information.

JENNY SICHEL:

Last question for you, Sarah, before we go on. OK, what are some examples of good companies that can help with web access ability?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

So we at Able South Carolina do web accessibility auditing and would be happy to help folks, other companies that do it, WABNIM (?) also does some great accessibility auditing, -- web aim, and has fabulous accessibility resources, as does DQ systems and DQ University. Those are my go to sources.

JENNY SICHEL:

Great, thank you so much Sarah. For all of that content, I think that was great, and there are some more questions for you later, but we will hold off because we want to give Brooke some time to present. Brooke, I am going to turn your camera on... There you go. When you get a chance, Brooke I will have you turn your camera on. Perfect.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Just give me one moment, let me get set up. You can hear Brooke speaking to the sign language interpreter. OK! I just had to regroup where my zoom wasn't my presentation. OK, I am ready.

So you want me to introduce myself? Before I start? Or just get right into it?

JENNY SICHEL:

Let's have you do a quick introduction.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Sure, not a problem. Hello everyone, my name is Brooke, and my last name is Hernandez, my son name looks like this if you can see me on your camera. I was born and raised in Edinburg Texas, where the Rio Grande area is, in the valley, the Rio Grande Valley, if you can see right at the bottom of the border, right at the border of Mexico.

And let's see here... I did graduate with my BA degree, and I focused, I was in a rehabilitation program. And I just went to the UTRGV, and I am a present student in grad school, it is taking me some time, but I will graduate, because I do work at VAIL. For independent living, it is a center there, work there full-time, so kind of juggling all of it. I do also have four children! I have so many hats I wear all day long. I don't even know where my time is for enjoyment personally, but I try to take it for when it comes.

With that said, that is a little bit about myself, I will go into my presentation now. As you can see on the screen, Deaf culture in our GV,--RGV, I would say in South Texas area, here in this specific part of the United States, there is high percentage of Mexican individuals. And the culture here in this area is so different, and we have Deaf culture, we have American culture, and then we have Deaf Mexican culture on top of it.

So it is a very unique area to provide service to, there is Mexican culture, we have certain celebrations, certain foods we eat, we have ways we dance, we have costumes for those dances, and the way we dress. And then there is the Deaf culture aspect which is a little bit different than just the Mexican culture which I was just describing.

I will say, with Deaf culture, it is interesting, Deaf people like to chat it up and sign language with each other for a long time. I would say hearing culture, that means people who do not sign, that hear and speak, people talk a little bit here and there, but then you are on your way. But a deaf person, even if you do not know one another, that conversation can go on and on, you cannot get your hands down to stop talking.

Next thing you know, the time flew by! They can be there for a good four hours, and she did not realize the time flew by. So there is a little difference there, we will talk about that with Deaf culture. And also, I contact, to be able to see the person you are communicating with, is so important. If you look away the Deaf person cannot understand you. Hearing people that do not sign, you can be studying, eating, you do not have to look at the person, someone behind you in the living room is talking, you can talk to one another in that way. You do not have to make sure you visually see each other. Somebody could

be in another room and to each other!

But people need to be in the same room, right in front of each other, say you are cooking, you have to put it on hold if someone wants to come and chat with you. You have to put your hands down, the spatula down, your hands up, as you can imagine the differences.

Let me see what else I want to touch upon, it is funny I think, let's say hearing culture, when you go to eat something, you cannot talk and eat at the same time, right? I am sure we could all agree on that! It seems like it would be more on the roadside, I am sure you can see me, hearing people are covering their mouth, trying to eat and talk at the same time.

But people can eat and chat it up and not miss a beat at the same time which I think is a really cool unique part of Deaf culture. So you can see the difference there. What else did I want to touch on in this part?

Sure, you know, with hearing people, do not point at that person, that is rude, you cannot point! But deaf people, we can! It is not rude, you can see me in your screen, hey that is them right there, look! It is not being rude, which it could be perceived in hearing culture, someone could say, what is your name? And trying to get an idea, what are you talking about? You point to the person, it is not rude in our culture to point.

It is like maybe that person right there was asking me about I don't know a car for example. Just something very simple like that. So you can see the funny differences just between hearing culture and culture-- Deaf culture.

What also would like to say... Something else, how a hearing person might get a deaf person's attention, you might not know how, because you cannot say "hey you!" Right? One thing you could do,, you see where I am on my shoulder? It is a light tap on the shoulder, it is not like this, not rough, not a push, because my goodness! Do not throw a ball at a deaf person to get their attention! It is a nice quiet touch on one of the shoulders.

Or what you could do if you want to get a deaf person's attention, say there is a wood floor, it has a vibration, you know something where you have that vibration, kind of like a snowboard or something, you can imagine there's a little vibration, you can actually stamp on the wood floor, the vibration will get the deaf person and they can look up and go, you want my attention? Or with the lights.

You conflict the lights on and off, come into a room, flicked them on and off and then a deaf person will look around, and know that someone wants their attention. It is not like a disco ball! Not like a club scene, that could be offensive and hard to watch. Just a flick up and down, maybe once or twice, maybe with your hands up in the air to get the person's attention. And that will work.

So with that said, just kind of understanding that Deaf culture, pretty much is universal in that way. Deaf culture definitely has, inside of just general captive culture, you have Mexican Deaf culture, you have Asian Deaf culture, you have African Deaf culture, you name it, each culture and community has

their way of doing things.

So let me get on my list here...

So VAIL, the independent center that I work for, we provide services specifically to, will they do vary across disabilities, I will say our main focus is for the deaf individuals, deaf blind people, and hard of hearing people. And we provide independent living skills trainings, you know, time management, budgeting, how to manage one's money, those kinds of things.

Cleanliness, showering, hygiene, what else do we do... How to use the bus, we do provide transportation, maybe they are going to work, they need to go to a doctor's appointment that kind of thing.

What else... So yes, also vocational job-training services. We will help individuals maybe look for a job, help them look online for a job, how to apply, fill out some paperwork, develop a resume, cover letter, those sorts of things, and we do refer them to other agencies as well, which is one of the things we help for vocational services, like a job placement, a specialty location, employment, those kinds of things are all included in what we do.

What else is there that I would like to share... Regarding the transportation, so maybe a person wants to get a drivers license for example. We do help them, we go through the whole process with them, help them study for the exam, take the exam, we do send them to drivers education class. We actually help them learn to drive and practice, for the test. So we are there through the whole process, we also teach how to ride a bus. The public transportation in general. We will go with them, shadow with them.

The different routes that are available, we will say this is how you follow a road, this is what time they come, and what else to be due... For Deaf individuals here in the state of Texas, we do provide free vouchers for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, specifically they have to live in Texas, we would help them get an iPad, different devices, iPhone, you name it, a Samsung, and those are some services that we get them connected with.

Let me show you something, there are so many different things that we do I do not know if you can see this, it is hard to see, a little blurry, but what it is, how would you... It is an alarm clock. It has a vibration. And it also has a light, it helps you wake up. If you have to wake up, some people think you have an alarm and you can hear it but a Deaf person needs a vibration. If there is a baby crying, for myself, I am a mom of four children, my goodness.

I do not have any hearing family members, your baby is crying! Oh my goodness, 10 minutes left? We have to get going! So many services.

Best practices, maybe this would be a nice take away for everybody, if you are working with the Deaf community or an agency that is in independent living center, I really encourage you to hire a peer, if you have a Deaf person, a peer individual who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing, that really Ali-- already knows your client, identifies as a Deaf person, they can identify where is this person coming from

language was, what are their needs, so I really encourage you to hire an actual Deaf and Hard of Hearing person, someone fluent in sign, that could really provide that service for direct service.

You sit down with a deaf person, have a discussion with somebody, set up goals, and then really, you know sometimes, you can set up a 15 minute appointment, 10 minutes, if it is usually 15 or 10, add-on at least 15 or 30 extra minutes because the process, if you have an interpreter, the timing of house sign language, and Deaf people communicate, you always need a little more time than you think. Sometimes the schedules get conflicted, and such, so always add on extra time if you do have a Deaf person for intake.

And I really encourage everyone to set up an event, any events that you have, Deaf bowling, go to the event that is near you, Deaf awareness event, there is Deaf awareness month, just like a lot of other months have certain months, and we do have a plan, I will give you an example, it is hard to see! I know, it is all blurred out, bummer. But I think it is on the PowerPoint, Community Education Deaf Awareness Day, and Deaf Awareness Month is September, so the whole month of September, keep that in mind.

Remember it, and I encourage you, wherever you are living, whatever state, meet some Deaf people, go to their events! It is really good for hearing people to learn American sign language. It is really good for you and it is great for the D/Deaf Community the more people that know our language. What else? How many more minutes do I have, Jenny? I just want to keep talking and keep talking. See, I need a little extra time here. Do I have five minutes? What do I see in the chat? Five more minutes. OK.

Let me share a little bit. Deaf, deaf blind, Hard of Hearing individuals. Statistically speaking, here in Texas I want to make sure I use the right language. The state of Texas has a very high percentage of Deaf population. -- Deaf population. Let me see if I can get my numbers. The reason being, we have a really great education system for Deaf people in Texas. We have a lot of organizations and nonprofits like VAIL and we are here to provide high quality service to the Deaf community. Also, there are a lot of churches for the Deaf community and there are many Deaf events. We have -- Deaf events. We have a strong draw for people to live here. We also have deaf blind in Texas. We would say about over 3.8 million just in the state of Texas, which is a huge number. In the United States, and they are all here in Texas. I think that is all.

I do hope you glean some information for me as a Deaf presenter and I think it is time for question-and-answer.

JENNY SICHEL:

You got it. I was just about to let you know that it is time for Q&A. If anybody has any questions for Brooke feel free to put them in the Q&A box and we do have one question. You listed a lot of different activities. What is your favorite activity?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

All my goodness, I like to do everything. Mostly I will say I love the Deaf awareness day. I am not sure -- death awareness day. I am not sure if that's where you're going with this but you get to meet so

many friendly faces, hearing people that are learning and have a lot of questions for the community. I look forward to that every year. That would be my favorite activity.

JENNY SICHEL:

Cool. We have another question.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Also, just so you know, anyone can email me. Jenny, please provide my email if anybody has questions. Agencies can ask me questions if you are like, how do I even get started to incorporate deaf people in our services. If you want training, best practices to set up an event. You name it. Please let me know, and I can help you and guide you to the right location or we can provide the training itself. Jenny does have my email address and she can share it with everybody.

JENNY SICHEL:

It is actually on the last slide of our slides. Everybody will receive the slides if you have not already. And that will have all of our presenters contact information on it. We have one more question for you. We have time for one more question at least now. One question for you is, in different countries the signed linkages are different. How do you deal when the sign language is are not the same?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

The answer is yes, interesting. There is a thing called universal sign language. There are some similarities around the world. But a formal language, you can say yes, no. You can get some concept around, each country does have their own silent wood. Let me give you an example. -- Their own sign Allegra. This is the sign for Mexico. Here in ASL, in ASL we sign it like this. We signed mom like this. Understand, LSM they do mom like this. Sort of similar. The reason being is I learned basic LSM but the reason it comes from is because many deaf blind individuals are coming from Mexico and that is how they sign it. They moved here and still use their own language. At VAIL services, we provide a lot of services to many Mexican deaf people.

It is more gestures, we come to a more similar universal limit. I will give you another example. Bathroom. Mexican sign language, this is how you sign Spanish sign language. For bathroom. Very different signs, you can see the difference and at times different.? It sounds different.

JENNY SICHEL:

Can you do mom one more time? I am going to visually describe it for our listeners that are not able to see you signing. Do mom in American sign liquid. -- American sign language.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

You can see I have my five fingers here and the thumb comes to your chin area. OK, we got it. You got the thumb right next to your chin in the middle. And then dad is the same handshake. You have five fingers, mom with the thumb down near the chin. And mail down at the top. The whole gender thing going on, women tend to be down because in the olden days, the bonnet and women with the lips, that is where the sign comes from. Man, you know, they have to And That and the hat. Signs come from a gendered place.

JENNY SICHEL:

Really quickly, can you do it in Mexican sign language?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Sure, sure. It is interesting. That is ASL that I was describing the gender differences. I really cannot speak other regions of the world, where the signs come from. Mexicans I like which goes like this. It is three fingers, Marjorie. --madre and it comes with on M Padre is the same. Mom and dad are in the same area on the chin, I am not really sure, you know, if it is a gender thing. This right here, they say agua, water. We signed water three singles near the lips -- three fingers near the lips. They sign it like asking a question.

JENNY SICHEL:

Thank you so much, Brooke.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

I enjoy the so much.

JENNY SICHEL:

I am going to take you off camera and am going to have Genesis come on and join us. Genesis, do you want to introduce yourself?

GENESIS GARCIA LEZAMA:

Hello, thank you so much! Thank you for organizing this. It is a great opportunity for everyone to learn. I remember when I started working at VAIL and my boss said, hey you need to do this training at ILRU and I learned so much. I am so glad now to be a speaker, presenters of -- presented.

I am a Hispanic young lady. My pronouns are she her and ella. I grew up in Mexico, I lived there for 13 years and decided to do my bachelors degree in exercise science and then I found out that science is not my thing. It is talking. So I am doing my Masters in rehab counseling and I am graduating this semester.

What I do at VAIL, I am the peer and transition services code. I train on vocational and independent living skills. What I am going to be talking today is about servicing individuals with IDD in the Spanish-speaking population. I want to highlight the programs we have here at VAIL that serve that population and keep some recommendations when you are working with Spanish-speaking population.

On the slides showing, we have the VAIL logo. And we also have the South Texas region map. So there is a (speaks alternative language) counties here we serve Haldol go and start County areas and we have one that serves the other counties. We split the work. As you can see, like Burke said, we are right -- like Brooke said we are right across the border so the majority of our consumers will be from Mexico and be Spanish-speaking.

I am so excited, I feel like I am going 10,000 mph. But yes, here I am showing a list of all the programs

that we offer at VAIL. Some that I would really like to highlight is the mobility management because in our region, a lot of people do not own vehicles, they need to use public transportation. And so my coworker, she trains our consumers to navigate their communities to be able to be independent and go to their work, make appointments at school on their own. I think that is a great program.

And then we also have support groups, class program and public health education. And you can review the slides later on. I know we are limited on time. Yeah, so here are my next slides. I have three points on recommendations to serve Spanish-speaking or Hispanic individuals with IDD. Like making accommodations or what things you can do and also serving young adults with IDD. OK. Something I want to relay is the use of technology. Taking advantage of our technology and kind of like what we have here, using captions, having interpretation available all of that is great. It is a great utilization of technology.

But when you might not have, like Spanish-speaking staff, what you can do is use Google translate if you have materials. Let's say your flyers, brochures, paperwork. Maybe you do not have anyone that can translate those documents for you you can use Google translate. Just to help you out, if you need something right away. Of course, Google translate sometimes does not translate hundred percent accurately. But I think it is a great tool that you can use for now. When you need to say something right away and you do not know how to say it. You type it in English and then it translates to you in Spanish.

Also, there are apps that you can use. Some apps are for free, some you might have to pay. But there are also really good translations. One app that I use when I was learning English was dual lingo -- Duo lingo. It is free at first. You can start learning the language. You can start learning Spanish. It is nice because you start learning basic things, right? That way you can start at least knowing how to say some things and expressing yourself and communicating with your consumers and that helps build rapport. When your consumer feels like, they are making an effort to communicate with me, to help me, it feels nice. Rapport is very important and you want them to feel welcome, like you are giving that extra for them.

Another thing I wanted to recommend, having the initiative to attend Spanish classes, to learn a new language. And going out in your community and finding out if there are may be free classes, another thing, for example here in the Valley, we have region one. It is mainly for Spanish-speaking that want to learn English. But maybe there is also other resources, for those who want to learn Spanish.

And maybe you can recommend your staff or find out if around your community there are some Spanish classes. And then also here at VAIL, we are always trying to come up with new staff development classes, I do not think Brooke mentioned it, but she was giving us ASL classes, so we can learn ASL.

I talked to Doctor (Name) and she said maybe we can have some Spanish classes for our staff, and maybe we can also promote it to the rest of the CILs around the country, around US. And we can teach you some Spanish, so you can communicate with your consumers. And yes, continue developing.

Not just as career development, but also for personal development, it is something you can add to your curriculum. And then the last points that I wanted to recommend or highlight, the importance of diversity and inclusion.

To hire someone with basic knowledge in Spanish. So you have someone who is able to help you out, you have a Spanish speaking consumer, and also knowing about multicultural differences, and having your staff attend multicultural and diversity training. Kind of like what Brooke was mentioning, some ASL is different in different areas of the country. Same thing with our Spanish. Some phrases are different from here in South Texas, and then from Mexico, Venezuela, I am from Venezuela... And my family speaks condition-- completely different Spanish than my friends in Mexico.

Columbia, Cuba... There are different expressions. And how maybe they approach... How you might approach a consumer from Mexico, then another one from Cuba, they might have some cultural differences, even if they speak... They both speak Spanish. So yes, having some multicultural and diversity training would be interesting. Kind of like what Brooke was saying, for the Deaf community, it is important that you are looking at them, right? And that you are facing them. To have good communication.

But for some other cultures, may be eye contact is not that appropriate. Especially with an authority figure. If they are telling you something and you are looking directly at them, they could feel threatened or something, like they are being punished. So that is also important to understand, to have some multicultural and diversity training.

So those are my points, and I think on the next slide I highlight some of my programs, we have the POWELL program where we train individuals with IDD to become peer support specialists. --PAL program, to become self advocates for themselves and their per-- peers. We have transition services, when they are still in high school they learn the skills so they can be prepared for life out of high school, or for when they finish their 18+ program, and it is, what do I do now? So they can be prepared.

This encourages them to go apply for jobs, to continue the education, or maybe do some volunteering, or some type of activity. And I think that will be all, did I have another slide after TNT? Transition services... What was the one before? OK that's it. And of course all of this, all of my materials are translated in Spanish. I have my coworkers, they always come and say "how do you say this in Spanish?" And I help them out. It is fun. So yes. Questions?

JENNY SICHEL:

So if everybody can put the questions into the Q&A section, that would be great. If you have any questions for Genesis. I do not see any questions just yet, I have a question though. How challenging was it for you... You are now bilingual, how challenging was it for you to first learn English but then be able to speak to your clientele in English versus Spanish? Was that really challenging to come in? Just asking because I only speak English myself. And I think it would be really challenging for me to learn Spanish and speak to clientele in Spanish. So maybe just give an idea of for everyone about that.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

I think at first when I moved, I was very self... What do you call that, self-aware. I have an accent, can people understand what I am trying to say? So at first it was very challenging, it was hard. And then I was lucky you are blessed to surround myself with people who would tell me just speak it. Because if you do not practice it, your pronunciation is never going to improve, your accent is still going to be very strong.

After 10 years of living in the US, I still have a very strong accent. But I gained that confidence. And that is my... Good question, my advice is who cares if your pronunciation is not that good, at least you are trying! I want to see you are trying, I want to see you put that effort, because if you are never trying, how are you going to learn? How are you going to improve, right? You know what I'm saying?

JENNY SICHEL:

Yes, I totally understand that. Do you find it... I guess that answers it. That was my one question. Go ahead.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

I see someone put Google translate is good, however sometimes translator is not something we can trust. That is what I mentioned earlier. You can use it if you have nobody else to ask, how do you say this? And you can also say as a disclaimer. If you are talking to a consumer, I used Google translation to make this interpretation. Just be aware of it. Or something like that.

But if you can pay for interpretation or translation services, you know, do it, because really having that Spanish documents, flyers, information, it is very important. So yes.

JENNY SICHEL:

Yes, I absolutely second that, because I think that, I mean for us, it was crucial that we did this in both English and Spanish.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

I commend you for that. I was so impressed, you said we will have Spanish right ear in the same screen. It is kind of like for the Deaf population to have a translator right there in the main screen, not on the side or something. This is amazing. Having that. It is good job.

JENNY SICHEL:

In a way, it is another language, like ASL, another way to communicate, to all populations. In different populations, not all populations, but different populations.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

Yes, lastly, real quick, something that Sarah and Brooke touched on, on website accessibility, VAIL, we have our accessible website, and it allows you to have different languages. When you have the cruiser, you can pick which language you want to use. I think that is something super neat that we incorporated, and maybe your CILs can also do.

To have the different... I just went to VAIL and it says the... I am sorry for that.

JENNY SICHEL:

Of course you say something and then it is not working.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

It is not working.

JENNY SICHEL:

We do have one more question for you, and then general questions, but what do you think of language line or one of those phone services?

GENESIS GARCIA LEZARMA:

Um.. I'm not familiar with that.

JENNY SICHEL:

So Robin, I will ask you to sort of give more information as to what language line is. In either the chat or the Q&A section. And while they are doing that, I am going to say thank you Genesis for your presentation, and we will get into a couple questions for our panelists.

So if you feel like you can answer the question, as a panelist, or a directed at you, please turn on your camera, and go ahead and answer the question. And before we get into that, I want to just remember, or just remind people, to fill out our evaluation.

It is so crucial, yes my colleagues knew exactly what I was going to say and put it in the chat immediately, as I was saying it, beautiful. So thank you everyone for that, and all of our presenters. We are going to get into some questions now.

I am actually going to get started with Sarah, we have some questions for you. One question that is from Sammy, asks how do we accommodate people with screen readers in a zoom event while also accommodating our consumers who need the checkbox to communicate?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Repeat that for me please, Jenny.

JENNY SICHEL:

How do we accommodate people with screen readers in a zoom event, while also accommodating our consumers who need the checkbox to communicate?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

That is a really tricky situation. So to give you an example... The reason I had asked Jenny and her coworkers if they would turn off the chat box is because as a screen reader user, I am presenting at the moment, if you do not have a screen reader user that is presented, it is not as much of an issue,

just keeping in mind that may be minimizing chat is preferred if possible, so for instance, everyone introducing themselves in the chat is really cool, but can also be really disruptive.

So keeping in mind, using that chat to ask questions only, or ask for tech support, things like that. Just to be minimal and intentional about how you use it.

JENNY SICHEL:

I think that is a really good suggestion, actually. To also make it accessible to those using a screen reader. Thank you, Sarah. My next question will go to Genesis. Robin elaborated on the question. So it sounds like Language Line is for talking with consumers who speak any language. You speaking one language and it goes out in another language is my guess at understanding what it is.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZAMA:

I saw it, I think you are right that they have translation over the phone. That way you can communicate in real time. I am guessing. I have never had that. I had never heard of it. But I heard of the one where you have a tablet and it is like a video thing and there is a person in the video translating in real time. Listening and seeing. It sounds like a great thing, I guess I will need to research and explore to say I like it or I do not like it. But it sounds a good thing.

JENNY SICHEL:

Cool, it does sound really interesting. Stay on, I have one more question for you. Kendra asks, how many people speak Spanish at your CIL?

GENESIS GARCIA LEZAMA:

I guess the majority. Even fluently or basic knowledge. I am proud to say that here, everyone feels like a family. We are trying to learn ASL, trying to learn Spanish. It is just nice. I guess we are like 26 or 30 more or less of staff. I would say everyone has very basic language of Spanish. Yes.

JENNY SICHEL:

Cool! Thank you. My next question is going to be for Brooke. Brooke, I am going to bring you onto the screen. So my question for you is, do you generally take all consumers were primarily those who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing when you work with consumers?

SPEAKER:

I missed part of the question.

JENNY SICHEL:

When you work with consumers, do you only work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers or everyone?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

I have the question now, I had to pin my other interpreter quickly. My experience at VAIL, we do help deaf and hard of hearing absolutely for many years. I will say we do provide services for individuals with various disabilities. They might have down syndrome, they might be in a wheelchair, they might

have autism. One of my coworkers assigned. They are hearing, not Deaf. But they are fluent in sign. We bring in that person and they serve as an interpreter in some ways. So that other individuals can receive services from VAIL. But when I said those individuals goals are met, I would say, maybe a year or so later. Some of those individuals are hearing, I have seen them, they might be in a wheelchair. They say we want to be in touch with you again. Understand the staff here at VAIL that are hearing do try to help those individuals that are not Deaf. But sometimes they come to me, they prefer me. It is sweet.

So yes, the staff here at VAIL is amazing. We are here to help each other, the Deaf and the hearing community. But I am the manager specifically for Deaf individuals here. I would say all over, there is a big focus for us. We need to stay focused on the deaf and hard of hearing because the communication needs, a lot of times doctors will deny getting an interpreter for them. The struggles here in the Valley area, there is a lot. There are a lot of people do not want to hire deaf people. Putting my energy into that, that is why my focus is so heavy there. Even though I do like providing services for people who are not Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

JENNY SICHEL:

Great, thank you.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Thank you for asking.

JENNY SICHEL:

Actually, Sarah, I am going to have you on the next question. I will stop your video, Brooke. I have two questions for you Sarah.

TARA RAGHAVAN:

OK.

JENNY SICHEL:

--

SARAH MASSENGALE:

OK.

JENNY SICHEL:

Can you talk about the importance of a accessibility policy and talk about the term visual impaired.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Absolutely. Accessibility policy is huge. This is something that we are constantly working on at Able as well. Remember that as Center for Independent Living, behavior modeling is key. We do not want to put out any public facing content or evening -- even any internal content that is not accessible. We do not want to be inaccessible to anyone. Learning your digital accessibility for cross disability populations and then putting in writing what your expectations are for your staff, for internal and public

facing content and how to make that accessible is super important.

And then to address the visually impaired peace, an attendee asked a question about working with blind and visually impaired folks. And use the term visually impaired. I want to chat about that very briefly. That is the common practice term for most communities. And that is a medical model based term. For many blind people, that term is considered OK. But for others, it is actually considered somewhat offensive and visually disabled is the preferred term. So what we at Able say is someone who is blind, low vision or has a visual disability.

JENNY SICHEL:

Thank you for the clarification. I think it is so important for everybody to understand that sort of thing. And why it can be offensive to some people. I think that is great.

SARAH MASSENGALE:

My pleasure.

JENNY SICHEL:

My next question, and we have about eight minutes to go. But my next question is for either, well, any of you. I think it is directed at Brooke. When providing captioning for resume meetings, how important is it to know who is speaking?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Jenny, this is Sarah. May I speak to that briefly?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

I just got on camera, Sarah do you want me to answer it?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

You are the authority here, I will let you take it and if I have any other thoughts from accessibility best practice, do you mind if I chime in once you have finished?

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Absolutely, sure. I am sorry, I missed the question. Could you repeat that for me? Jenny? Anyone? Who actually asked the question? Can you hear the interpreter OK?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

The question was about captioning during zoom meetings and how important it is to know who is speaking.

BROOKE VELARDE-HERNANDEZ:

Thank you so much, I appreciate repeating the question. Got it. It is a very good question. I would say with zoom during a meeting, I would recommend I really prefer in person, face-to-face. It is always best, it is my first choice as a deaf person compared to zoom and virtual. Obviously, all the reasons. Technology, we use the connection, all the things that can happen. With zoom, you can always see

where the sign... So I do not really use zoom to be honest with you. I am so sorry, I am not sure. I caught the question, so maybe... We are clarifying the question. Thank you so much. For the interpreting process. Sure, I get it. Absolutely.

It is important to know who is speaking because as a deaf person you are not relying on the sound of a person's voice. Sometimes there are pages and pages you have on your screen and then someone is speaking and they are off-camera. But now I totally get where you are coming from with that question. So yes, as a deaf individual I can speak for myself. It is really hard especially on the zoom platform. Yes, I would like to know who is speaking. That would be great. Thank you.

JENNY SICHEL:

Perfect. I'm going to stop your video, Brooke. Thank you. Sarah, did you want to add anything?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

I was just going to add that what Brooke is saying is absolutely right on with accessibility best practice. It is that you do want to see that in captions. For someone who is blind, you also want to vocalize that. When I address Jenny a second ago, you notice I said Jenny, this is Sarah. That is actually considered good accessibility practice as well because a blind person may not recognize someone's voice right off the bat.

JENNY SICHEL:

Great, thank you. This is Jenny. Thank you, Sarah. Putting in best practices in use. I think we have time for one or two more questions. We have a question here. Sarah, this one is for you. What are some best practices for creating an accessible newsletter? Is it better to use .docx or .pdf -- PDF

SARAH MASSENGALE:

It is always better to use .docx and the reason for that is that PDF comes with so many different things that we could literally spend an entire webinar talking about. The thing to remember is that with newsletters, there is this tendency in a very visual world to make it want to look pretty. And that is very important and that is fabulous. What I will caution against is a lot of people like to use tables to lay things out and that is not something that we want to do for accessibility best practice. Tables, remember, are exclusively for data. Just keeping that in mind. And then .docx -- doc X always and forever.

JENNY SICHEL:

I love it. Can we make that into a T-shirt, Sarah?

SARAH MASSENGALE:

Yes.

JENNY SICHEL:

We probably have time for final words from any of our presenters. Would anyone like to chime in and mention anything else? Genesis, ICU. -- I see you.

GENESIS GARCIA LEZAMA:

We need more spaces like this to learn about other cultures and providing services to others with other types of disabilities and things like that. Right now I was laughing because one of my coworkers ran up to me when I was trying to do my visual description that I did not finish it because I panic. I just wanted to say that Hispanic woman with brown skin, brown hair etc. Wearing a white shirt.

JENNY SICHEL:

Love it, love it. Thank you so much to all of our presenters. And we do have all of the emails in the slideshow that we will send to everybody. We will send it in word document format in both English and Spanish and we will also send you the actual PowerPoint as a PDF. So we have all of the bases covered for that. Final reminder, if you can fill out the evaluation link. Thank you everyone again. I hope that you will have a great rest of your week! Thanks all.

Live captioning by Ai-Media