PACIFIC ADA CENTER
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS:
INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
2/11/21
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>> LEWIS KRAUS: Welcome to the Emergency Management and Preparedness Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Webinar Series. I'm Lewis Kraus from the Pacific ADA Center, your moderator for this series. This webinar is brought to you by the Pacific ADA Center on behalf of the ADA National Network. The ADA National Network is made up of 10 regional center federally funded to provide training, technical assistance and other information as needed on the Americans with Disabilities Act. You can reach your regional ADA Center by dialing 1-800-949, 4232.

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I want to remind everyone that this webinar is being recorded and will be able to be accessed on the ADAPresentations.org website. In the archives section next week. This is the seventh year of this Webinar Series which shares issues and promising practices in emergency management inclusive of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The series topics cover emergency preparedness and disaster response, recovery and mitigation, as well as accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA, and other relevant laws. Upcoming sessions are available at ADApresentations.org under the Schedule tab in the emergency management section. These monthly webinars occur on the second Thursday of the month at 2:30 Eastern, 1:30 Central, 12:30 Mountain and 11:30 a.m. Pacific time. By being here, you are on the list to receive notices for future webinars in this series, and those notices go out two weeks before the next webinar and open the webinar to registration.

You can follow along on the webinar platform with the slides, and if you are not using the webinar platform, you can download a copy of today's PowerPoint presentation at

ADApresentations.org, the web page in the schedule section. At the conclusion of today's presentation, there will be an opportunity for everyone to ask questions. You may submit questions using the chat area within the webinar platform, and the speakers and I will address them at the end of the session. So feel free to submit them as they come to your mind. You may type and submit your questions in the chat area text box as shown on the screen, or if you are using the keystrokes, you can press at and H and enter the text in the chat area. If you are listening by phone and not logged into the webinar, you may ask your questions by emailing them to adatech@adapacific.org. That's adatech@adapacific.org. If you have any technical difficulties in the webinar, you can send a private chat message to the host by typing in the chat window and type your comment in the tech box and enter. And, again, if you are using keyboard, use at-H to access the chat box. You can also email the technical difficulties to adatech@adapacific.org. Or you can call 510-285-5600. Today's ADA National Network is titled "A Closer Look: COVID-19 Accessible Materials for People with Disabilities Project"

COVID-19 has disproportionally affected many groups, including the 16.1 million people in the United States living with a disability. As part of the COVID-19 accessible materials for people with disabilities project, this webinar is focused on strategies and solutions for people with disabilities as they continue to live, learn, work and play during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CDC foundation funded project, along with technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC, supports the Georgia Tech Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation, the CIDI team on creating accessible materials and resources from existing CDC COVID-19 guidance. The specific targeted disability audiences identified as needing these resources are individuals who are blind or have low vision and need Braille, individuals with intellectual and cognitive disabilities needing easy to read language, and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and need ASL.

Additionally resources and helpful guidance has been created for individuals living with mobility disabilities, their caregivers and families. Presenters will share information about this project, including statistics on individuals living with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, history of the project, and realtime resources for you as we collectively work to distribute this vital health information to those who need it most. Today's speakers are Carolyn Phillips. Carolyn is the co-director of CIDI and service education director for Tools for Life. She is recognized in the field of assistive technology and disabilities. She serves as director and principal investigator of Tools for Life, Assistive Technology Act program and co-director of services and education at the center for inclusive design and innovation at Georgia Tech.

Liz Persaud, program and outreach manager, national recognized keynote public speaker and advocate addressing the need to build bridges and solidified the gaps between individuals living with and without disabilities. She serves as program and outreach manager for Tools for Life. Georgia's Assistive Technology Act program and the Pass It On.

Sam Peters is a program specialist at Tools for Life as the program specialist Sam assists in coordinating state leadership activities such as trainings and outreach as well as assisting in overall daily programmatic activities, and this includes trainings for various grants and organizations throughout Georgia and assistive technology labs at state and national conferences. I will now turn it over to the three of you. Carolyn, Liz, and Sam.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Thank you so much. We really do appreciate that excellent introduction, and the opportunity to meet with all of you and to cover this important topic. So thank you, so much, Lewis, and especially for the great work y'all are doing. It's great to be partnering with you on this. My name is Carolyn Phillips and we are indeed going to be talking with you and taking that deeper dive as we explore and let you know about this awesome project that we have been working on with the CDC, Centers for Disease Control Foundation. And the whole focus, much like you were hearing Lewis express and explain, it is about accessibility. It's really about inclusion too. So accessible materials and culturally relevant messages for individuals with disabilities. And I think a lot of y'all understand how important this is and also I really appreciate the CDC and the CDC Foundation for jumping in and supporting and creating this whole project. And so we can move to the next slide.

And as we get started, we wanted to give a big shout-out and a big thank you to our funder, the CDC Foundation. The Webinar Series that we have done that is all focused on accessibility and culturally relevant messages, it's made possible due to the funding from the CDC Foundation, along with technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is right here in Atlanta, where we are. We'll move to the next slide. And Lewis, when I heard you talking about our center here at Georgia Tech, you know, we are indeed within the College of Design, and the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation. If any of you are in the Atlanta area, I extend the offer all the time, it's definitely worth seeing once we have moved beyond COVID-19 and the pandemic. There's a lot of really cool work that is happening here. And that work really, once again, focused on inclusion, accessibility, making -- you know, we're right here in Atlanta, which is absolutely where civil rights -- a lot of the Civil Rights Movement has taken off, and that is absolutely a part of the work that we do. And so looking at accessibility consulting, looking both at the built environment, but, you know, what does the virtual environment look like too? And thinking about information, communication technology, ICT, and it also goes all the way back to looking at how UX, user experience, when we're thinking about design, what does that look like? So accessibility consulting is what we do. We also specialize in STEM-related -- so science, technology, engineering, math -- related Braille services. There are literally students all over the country a lot and the whole Pacific area that are receiving Braille that is actually produced right here in our offices, and where we specialize in that. We also provide captioning and described audio services, and also help when it comes to consulting, when it comes to services, especially assistive technology and accessibility, working with folks who are deaf and who have hearing-related disabilities. Extremely important that we are being as inclusive as possible, and you'll hear throughout, you know, I am one of those folks that benefits from captioning. I am -- right now I have my

captioning up on the screen because I need it, because of my auditory processing. And I also am one of those folks that benefits from electronic text, right? So making sure that I can, you know, access text and have it read out loud. So I use assistive technology every day, and so I'm thrilled that we at CIDI have this talented team of eText producers, ones again that are producing electronic text for folks all over the country, and even internationally. And we also have an extremely talented team of certified assistive technology specialists and professionals with a wide range of skills. And so we are celebrating 30 years with our Tools for Life program this year. We have been around for a long time, and as I said, we're thrilled to be with you today. So we can move to the next slide. And what we're going to talk about here is, you know, what are we going to be going over with you today. This session, you know, this CDC Foundation funded project, along with technical assistance from the CDC, it supports the Georgia Tech CIDI team on creating accessible materials and resources from existing, vetted CDC COVID-19 guidance. And that's a very important piece here. We will be sharing information about the project, including statistics on individuals living with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. We're going to share with you some of the history of the project and realtime resources force you as we collectively work to distribute this vital information. And we really do need your help, want your help in getting the word out. We've got these great resources and we want to make sure that everyone is aware of it. Liz, anything you want to add?

>> LIZ PERSAUD: No, I think we can jump to the next slide, which goes over our learning objectives, and then we'll jump into the meat of the presentation today. So we just have some quick learning objectives because we always want to give you all a direction of where we're headed, but after the webinar you will be able to identify two ways that people with disabilities have been disproportionally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. You also will be able to list three targeted disability-specific audiences that will be receiving the accessible materials through this project. And lastly you'll be able to name the accessible resources that are available through the COVID-19 accessible materials for people with disabilities project. We'll move to the next slide. So we're going to spend the next little bit of time talking about the background and purpose of the project. Obviously what we're providing dove a little deeper into who needs these resources, how we're reaching our target audiences and really and truly how you all can help us. There's a whole piece of the project that we'll get to a in a little bit that is all about dissemination. We need help pushing the information out there and making sure everyone receives them and knows that these are -- these materials are accessible and available. And then obviously Q&A, any questions that you have. Next slide.

So what are we providing? There is a lot going on with this project. And as Lewis Kraus was giving the overview and as Carolyn was talking, there are very specific audiences that we are working with to provide outreach of these accessible materials. So when it comes to the scope of this project and the materials we are providing, we are providing a technique for developing ASL American Sign Language video scripts that uses native ASL. And this is all for more effective communication with individuals who

are deaf. We also are providing easy access to Braille, embossed or digital, for refreshable Braille displays. We also are focused on simplified text. So this is text that is simplified below the standard plain language guidelines. And then we're also doing web accessibility and best practices beyond Section 508 compliance. I think most of us on here that are familiar with ADA accessibility accommodations, we know what Section 508 accomplishes, but our practices, especially when it comes to web accessibility, making sure that anyone out there using assistive technology, that is maybe using a screen reader or other aspects to access these materials. We want to go above and beyond. So we are implementing the best practices beyond Section 508. And lastly it's all about education and training, resources to support the dissemination of these products and really just getting it into the hands of folks that need it most. Next slide.

Sam, do you want to cover some of the specific audiences?

>> SAM PETERS: Absolutely. We have targeted specific audiences for this project, and so those audiences include deaf or hard of hearing users of ASL. So those would be the videos that Liz just talked about are for. People who are blind or vision impaired and use Braille. So we do have those, either embossed Braille or the digital Braille. Individuals with extremely limited literacy skills. So we're going to go into a little bit more in-depth on how those resources were created and we're calling them "easy to read resources." So we'll go a little more in-depth in those in a few minutes. Also individuals with mobility issues that limit access to information. We're also looking at families, caregivers, and various healthcare providers who may benefit from the enhanced modes of messaging, and lastly individuals who may have a combination of these disabilities and some of the message formats that may be used by multiple audiences. So these are just our target audiences. We definitely have had people request our resources from public health departments. There's been airports who have requested some of our resources. We have had a broad range of people who are wanting these and helping us get that information out there. You can go to the next slide.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: All right, and I'm excited -- thank you so much, Sam and Liz, and providing some of that foundational information. This is just additional information. When it comes to understanding how the project, you know, what is the background and how it really -- kind of the spirit behind it. COVID-19 absolutely, I think all of us are aware of this, has disproportionally affected many groups, including the 61 million folks in the United States living with a disability. While the COVID-19 guidance on the CDC website is accessible for some people with disabilities as required by Section 508 of the Rehab Act, you know, for example, those using assistive technology devices, you know, it has closed captions on videos, etc., the content is needed in alternative formats such as simplified text, Braille, and American Sign Language in some of the videos. So taking that next step in looking at successful practice in alignment also with Section 508. It's also important that COVID-19 guidelines are not only accessible to people with disabilities but also consider the cultural challenges that folks with disabilities face while trying to follow some of these guidelines. And that has been part of the foundational piece that we have been working with and really building upon in order to successfully

get to word out and make sure that we are being inclusive, respectful, and as accessible as possible. And we'll move to the next slide.

So, as we're talking about, you know, how do we make sure that we're meeting people where they are, and really going beyond accessibility guidelines. You know, all individuals with or without disabilities, we all have our own preferred learning modes. And offering products in a variety of formats, it really does provide greater access for everyone. So going beyond accessibility considerations to address those preferences, it introduces some products with a wide range of benefits. And we're seeing that manifest. For example, those may include videos with some practical information on cleaning surfaces and computers, and mobile devices to avoid disease transmission, also include how to sanitize durable medical equipment. And/or how to use touchless strategies for grocery shopping. And we'll move to the next slide.

So one of the things that I -- one of the many things I was excited about with this project is that folks are listening and actively wanting input. And we literally asked folks from throughout the United States for input, and we appreciate I'm sure some of the folks that we communicated with are actually on this webinar with us. And so we appreciate everyone participating as we conducted needs assessments and also message testing. So we did -- CIDI conducted needs assessments with individuals with disabilities as well as organizations that work with folks with disabilities to inform this project. So the end product, really it's things that y'all help create, which is incredibly important and I think that's part of why it's been such a success. The adapted materials have also been message testing. So it's not just saying, hey, what do you need, but after the products have been, you know, developed, it's going into the field and message test those with targeted audience to ensure that it's accurate in translation and culturally relevant to folks with disabilities. The way that, you know, really has made a difference, you know, we were looking at Braille, for example, and thinking about how do we actually get Braille, printed Braille, embossed Braille, out into the community where people are that need it. Not everybody has access to, you know, WiFi or broadband. And so... but we need to make sure everybody has the message. We heard amazing feedback, important feedback from our colleagues and friends and community you know, partners, but also individuals who are deaf with a big D, and use ASL, you know, as mode of communication, one of the most beautiful languages out there. And so we were able to incorporate that feedback into the needs assessment and into the message testing. And that, once again, like Braille, it created a better product, right? And then we also have done some really cool work that you're going to hear about in a second when it comes to minimizing the complexity of text. And that's truly innovative work that we were able to work, get information and then create documents that are understandable on so many levels for so many people. So it's a very exciting opportunity. And we'll talk even more about that. I'm going to turn it back over to Sam. Sam...

We'll move to the next slide.

>> SAM PETERS: We can go to the next slide. So here we wanted to quickly show you all where you can find our easy to read documents on the CDC website as well as

where the ASL videos will be. So if you go to the CDC.gov /coronavirus, you will find up at the top right corner the link for ASL videos, and there are some currently there, but the ones we're creating will be added soon. And you also will see the easy to read resources. And so you can find those there. We're really excited that these are available on the CDC website. You can go to the next slide.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Thank you, Sam. And when we're talking about how do we actually improve the ASL videos, and once again, it came right back to working with a lot of y'all and making sure that folks understand that you know, we've got to, one, make sure that we have videos that are in ASL, for all kinds of topics, but specifically for this one. And also understanding that ASL is a primary language. As I said, it's a beautiful language, one of my favorite languages. It's not a translation of English. And that's one of the issues that some folks that we have seen in the past you know, they just translated directly, you know, into English. For individuals who are deaf, they use it, it's their primary language. Videos need to be in native ASL, and also we are working with the CDC on a modified process to develop video scripts that are Native ASL. It's really innovative and it's been great working through that process. ASL users also need easily identifiable videos. Need to know that the videos are even out here. And messaging about CDC guidance through channels that they use frequently. These are some of the many findings that we were able to get through the interviews, the needs assessment and also through the message testing, and very excited with some of the end products that are coming out. And we can move to the next slide. So, making Braille easy, easily available, and making it in -- so that we can get information both digitally and embossed was extremely important, is extremely important. So we have created Braille-ready files. There are so many folks -- and this has been so exciting to see, how many people now have refreshable Braille displays, and a lot of people just want to have documents that are ready for them when they show up. And so that's what we have been able to do in the Braille aspects of this project, making sure that documents were remediated for accessibility, and that they're available for download to refreshable Braille displays without, you know, any real issues there. So please help us get the word out and download those documents. We also are very happy that we were able to get these embossed Braille, you know, COVID-19 materials out. They are available through our extensive network of partners and just like Sam is showing you, you can go to our website and she will talk to you in more detail about how all that works. And they're available by individual requests, as we said, through the CIDI microsite. So we do want to make sure that everybody is aware of how to get these materials you know, the digital ones, you can just download real quick, and then, of course, embossed, we've been able to get that out very quickly also. We have had literally, you know, thousand us of documents that we're getting out within the community and it's exciting to see, not just the need but also how much people are benefitting from that. So that's great. And we will move to the next slide.

And this is another exciting part of our project where we are taking text, as you can imagine, these guidance documents, they are produced by folks who are very

well-versed, and we see this, of course, in engineering or any number of other fields, epidemiologists, that there are terms that are on, you know, college reading level or definitely high school reading level. So making sure that we're able to keep the meaning of the text and simplify it so that folks can indeed understand what we're trying to convey and that there's actionable ways that folks can act after they read the materials. So simplified text, our colleagues Dr. Karen Erikson and Dr. Lori Geist and their team at the Center for Disability and Literacy within the School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina, they partnered with us and have done all kinds of great work when it comes to developing this -- the guidelines for simplifying text and minimizing text complexity. Simplified text is needed for those with limited literacy scales from a variety after causes, and really we see any number of reasons why people would benefit from that. I am one of those folks that benefit from that, because of my learning disabilities, my dyslexia. This requires simplification. A lot of people, they go to plain language guidelines and they're like, oh, we solved it. But truly, a lot of the plain language documents can still be -- when we test them, it could still come in at 12th grade, 10th grade, college reading levels. So plain language gets us a certain distance but it does get us all the way. So this way that we're adapting and simplifying and making all of these texts minimized, the con tenant or below third-grade level is what we're looking at. So when we're simplifying, that's the level that we're going for. And as I said, this process and tool has been developed by our partners at UNC. It really is groundbreaking research, and I am excited about how we can apply this, the application of this research-based findings and I'm excited about where this is going to go in helping us across the board when it comes to helping folks understand public health information in general and emergency information in general. So definitely one of those positive findings and very exciting for a lot of us, I think, who are in the field. And we can go to the next slide and I'll turn it right back over to Sam. Sam...

>> SAM PETERS:

So I wanted to show you all, this is an example of what the easy to read resources look like on the CDC website. And so the example that we have pulled up here is the wearing a mask guidance. And so this was interpreted from the CDC guidance and has been put in this easy to read format. So I'm going to read just the first paragraph of it on the left. So it says, wear a mask the right way. First wash your hands. Put the mask on your face. Put the loops behind your ears. The mask must cover your nose. The mask must cover your mouth. The mask must fit under your chin. The mask must be snug on your face. Make sure breathing is easy. Masks may feel different. Practice wearing a mask. Practice will help you get used to wearing a mask.

So you can see these are all short sentences, they're intentionally repetitive. They're supposed to, you know, just be easier to read but also comprehend. There's intentionally no graphics on these pages. The research that we had found and even in our message testing found that actually graphics could be confusing to some of the readers. And so there was an example that would be maybe an arrow pointing between two people that was supposed to be representing six feet of space or distance between people. Some testing found that they thought they were maybe mad at each other. So

this was very intentional and we're excited to get people to read and understand the guidance here. And we can go to the next slide.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: And I agree, Sam. You said that well. It is intentional. And it is really focused on how we can help everybody understand, which is great. So once again, focused on inclusion and accessibility. We are also excited that we are able to provide that 508, you know, that consulting when it comes to accessibility. There are a lot of folks -- and I'm sure y'all have met and worked with people, and especially at this, you know, with the awesome Pacific ADA Center, where they say, oh, I'm ADA compliant and it's like, oh, no, that's kind of the minimum, right? What we really want is folks who are willing to stretch, right? And go beyond. And really think about, that's the minimum. And so what is the spirit of the law? And really what does inclusion look like? What does accessibility look like? And that's what you see manifesting in this project. So we have done extensive testing and provided all kinds of recommendations when it comes to best practice, successful practice, it's been exciting to see that, yes, accessibility sometimes requires best practices that go beyond section 508. You know, a web page accessibility is important to consider when we're looking at some of the guidelines that exist out there, you know, WCAG, web accessibility guidelines, and, you know, there's 2.0 and 2.1. You know, 3.0 is being tested right now. I know I provided comments recently on that. But thinking about how do we really make sure that everybody, you know, whoever shows up can access that information. Once again, think about its understanding, but it's also making sure that it's actionable, that people know what they need to do after they have been to the website. PDF for mediation is another one of those areas that we have been very happy to be working on with this project. And once again, looking at how do we make all documents, but, you know, PDFs is one that is out there a lot. You know, available, accessible, and friendly, so that whatever screen reader that you use or I use, that it will work and it will actually be read out loud. So the cool thing about this is looking at applying all the compliance out there but also the guidelines and then taking that to the next level. And there's a been a lot of exciting developments and end products that have come out of that. So, you know, thinking about all of that is exciting. You know, producing all of this is exciting. But truly it only matters if people help us get the message out, if people actually access it. You know, it's -- my dad used to say "it's not what you start, it's what you finish." So Liz is going to talk in more detail about what we have done when it comes to reaching our target audiences, and so we'll move to the next slide and I'm going to give this right on over to Liz.

>> LIZ PERSAUD: Thanks, Carolyn. So you all have heard about the project and you have heard about the materials that are being modified to be accessible and that are out there. And so now we have come to the part of the project that is all about dissemination, education and outreach. And so this is a big deal. Because we have got the materials. And so it's a thoughtful approach of how are we going to get it out there, and what does that really look like? So our dissemination plan for this project specifically has been a tiered approach to partner with organizations serving target audiences. So the target audiences that Sam was talking to you about earlier, we are really having a thoughtful approach about reaching out to very specific organizations,

other groups that are serving those audiences. We capitalize on existing channels to reach those who need these accessible resources. Our partners, they have partnered with us in this project and it has been absolutely instrumental. So AAHD, the American Association on Health and Disability, it's been awesome working with them and also having that collective voice to reach out to other organizations and explain this project and talk to them about how they can help us provide that outreach. Next slide, please. So, when it comes to dissemination of content and all the messaging for this project, identification of potential dissemination partners was undertaken with CDC Foundation as well as other partners on the project as well. So we absolutely had quite a few brainstorming meetings where a bunch of entities working on the project together, we literally filled out a spreadsheet and we, you know, organized it by the target audiences that we were reaching out to for the project and then just went through the list of national organizations that could potential help us out. What we did shortly after identifying those potential dissemination partners was host a national webinar on the project for those partners that really talked about details of the partnership and what that meant. So we did that on November 11th, and that webinar is actually out there and archived and we actually encourage folks to listen to it, view it, whenever you have the opportunity. Just, again, to learn more aspects of the project. And we'll talk about how to access that in other webinars and trainings in this project as well. We want to make this easy on anyone that is helping us distribute information. So what that means is that we're doing all the work for anyone out there that can help us distribute. We have made messages available for outreach and social media through the use of templates. So if you are representing an organization and you reach out to us and say, hey, we're interested in being a dissemination partner and we want to put this on our website, we want to tweet about it, we want to put, you know, a post on Facebook and Instagram and, you know, do an email blast, we have all that ready for you to go. We have a template of an email outreach letter. And then just different posts for different social media platforms as well. So, again, we don't want this to be difficult. We know that it can be a heavy lift, depending on the size of the organization and the outreach. So we want to make it as easy as possible. And then, of course, we just encourage folks to ask us, what else can we provide to make it easy on other entities to help us spread the word as well. In addition to that, we have -- Sam and Carolyn and I have been might with organizations that just want that one-on-one time with us to learn more about the project. And so that also has been a great way to develop those relationship but to also just explain in detail, meet people, you know, and, again, help them understand accessible materials and the best ways to get that out there. Next slide, please. So webinars and trainings, it's been exciting to see the amount of people registering for these webinars. And just a thoughtful discussion, just like what is happening today, is we're talking to y'all behind the scenes. So we have a whole aspect of our project that was all focused on webinars. And so we created content for additional webinars and these have been hosted -- we actually just wrapped up our last one in this particular phase of the project yesterday. So all of these have been recorded and archived and you can access them on the Georgia Tech microsite for this project. And there's a link right there that actually takes you directly to the training page. But since November, early November, we launched this Webinar Series and we have been covering a variety of topics. And as we are discussing each of these topics, we are obviously tying it back

to COVID-19, we're referencing CDC guidance, but also just talking about these accessible materials and accessible guidance as well too. So back in early November, we hosted a webinar that was all about apps for promoting independence and safety. And even with that, you know, we talked about apps that can help with social distancing, that can help keep people safe, different prompters that people might need for washing their hands and what have you. So all sorts of really cool assistive technology and apps that can help support people during, you know, experiencing COVID-19 and the pandemic. Sanitization of personal durable medical equipment was another one we did in November. That was -- that is unbelievably important. I am a power wheelchair user, and I was definitely concerned about what my life would look like during COVID and all the equipment that I have to use and my caregivers helping me out. So this webinar specifically focused on how individuals with disabilities and support circles can keep, you know, just equipment and different tools that folks use every day to be independent clean and sanitized and just making sure people are staying healthy. Early December we took a closer look at face masks and people with disabilities. That was such an awesome session. We had a great time presenting that one. Lots of thoughtful discussion and questions as well. But, you know, face masks, as simple as the concept is, it can really provide some obstacles for people with disabilities. I, again, am someone that am completely unable to put the mask on myself. So what does that look like if I'm out in public and I've got my assistants with me? So just making sure that, you know, people are safe. It's not just about putting a mask on, you know, looking at masks that have those clear windows as well too. You know, for individuals that need lipreading as well. There's just lots of options out there, so we took a closer look and dive deeper into that. We jumped into mental health and resilience within the disability community during COVID-19. People with disabilities are absolutely resilient in general and especially during this time, they were all -- it was really awesome to just have an awesome handle on there, just talking about the different strategies that people with disabilities implement during quarantine and how to keep our mental health strong. Any one of us, no matter what your situation is, we've all been through a lot during the past year. And so that webinar definitely dug deeper and shared some of those strategies and solutions as well.

In late January we focused on social media, making that accessible for people with disabilities. We're really excited to say we actually published an article through this project in Exceptional Parent Magazine all about social media accessibility as well. And so we'll be sure to get that over to our hosts and hopefully that can share that link when they post the archives as well too. So that was a very exciting webinar, and very relevant. Because so many folks are getting information about COVID-19 and protection through social media, especially people with disabilities. And then lastly, like I said yesterday, we wrapped up, we took a look at guidance for businesses and employees and considering the needs of people with disabilities during COVID-19. We actually presented that with the Southeast ADA Center. That was a great webinar yesterday, looking at employees with disabilities and talking about what that would look like if you are an individual with a disability who have not only shopping and a customer but maybe you own the business as well too. So just looking at those strategies out there as well.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Liz, I was just going to add -- and I'm so glad, you know, that you went into detail with some of these webinars because in Brilliant, Liz was the lead -- she's very humble, she and Sam both -- in pulling this together. But some of the apps, for example, some apps that we knew early on during the pandemic that needed to be created, or needed to be utilized even more, you know, it's exciting to see how all of that has evolved. And I think that a lot of folks aren't aware, for example, you know, of the apps that were created, just like you were saying, Liz, for social distancing. You know, spaced social distancing, 1.5, my shield, social distancing alarm, right? Safe spacer. Those apps did not really exist the way that they were and the way that they are a year ago. These are absolutely apps that have saved lives and they continue to provide that important information. The iPhone 12 Pro has a people detection app. A lot of people aren't aware of that. A lot of the smart watches now will give you a countdown if you want or sing a little song as you're washing hands. So some of our folks have really benefitted from that. We have also found -- and, Liz, I was so glad you brought it up, the mental health webinar. That was an eye opening and really important conversation, and a lot that we were able to share with folks about how lighting, for example, can really help, how we can use technology to make our spaces more friendly and really help us when it comes to all of those things around mental health and really making a lot of what we're trying to navigate through individually but making it a collective experience. So some of the smart home technology, and you smoke a lot about that, but o -- you spoke a lot about that, but other folks have benefitted from that. And I think some of the examples, the other day I was actually talking to somebody who has a disability, they have a difficult time because they have one -- they didn't have an ear altogether because of an accident and the other one, the other ear is super, super sensitive and they wore a hearing aid. And when they wore a mask, it was very difficult trying to keep that on. So, you know, we sent them information about how to adapt a hat or adapt with buttons, right? So you can attach your mask that way. And a lot of times what we're seeing is the double mask now. And so able to do that with a bandanna, too. There's a lot of different ways. It's one of the things I love about our disability community is how we are creative, problem solvers. I ran into it all over the country, all over the world, that folks are problem solvers. And collectively working together coming up with these solutions. And, you know, Liz, yesterday when we were doing the webinar about guidance for businesses, I really appreciated all those important tips that you were sharing when it came to how we can modify the environments and that honestly a lot of that is stuff that we within the disability community have already been doing. Now, ventilation systems, that is becoming increasingly more important. And we're finding that in the guidance for the CDC, but we're also seeing that businesses are listening and employers are listening to their employees. Here at Georgia Tech, a lot of our buildings have gotten brand-new ventilation systems directly as a result of trying to be more inclusive and keeping all of us safe. Which is important. And then also thinking about, you know, the various policies that have been adapted, the way that so many businesses are looking at how we can make the work environment much more friendly for everyone. So it's an exciting time for sure. And I'm excited to see the ways that we're able to navigate. So I hope

you will listen to Liz and actually listen to some of those webinars that we put together and share that information. So very, very cool information for sure.

So, Liz, I'll turn it back to you. I just wanted to give you a big shout-out for that.

>> LIZ PERSAUD: I appreciate it. I appreciate you helping me expand more on the webinars. Often we think about independence and safety and we're just going to talk about what apps are out there, what apps are hot, and especially thinking about COVID-19 and the pandemic, there are so many assistive technologies and apps available out there. We have to get creative on how we're using it. So definitely encourage y'all to check deeper into some of these webinars and access these strategies that we have been working on throughout this project as well. So we'll go ahead and jump to the next slide. And I'm going to give it to Sam. This has been such an awesome fruition of this project. So Sam is going to talk to y'all about the microsite.

>> SAM PETERS: Yes, we have developed a microsite. The link here is at the bottom. It's CIDI.gatech.edu /COVID. And so we created this site to house all of the documents that we're creating. And so we have -- we're hosting all the accessible materials there. We have our links to the trainings and the resources that Liz was just talking about. All of those are archived on our microsite as well. There is supplementary resources that are on there. And then we also have linked back to the original CDC guidance. And so I would like if possible to share my screen and show you all. I think that might help to visualize a little more and get an idea what it looks like.

I don't know if I'm going to be able to. If not, that is okay. I recommend you all to check out our website here. It's pretty easy to navigate. You'll see at the top you'll be able to see our resources by accessibility type, so you'll find our Braille resources there. So if you go to the Braille resources, that's where you are able to download the digital Braille or you can request the embossed Braille from a request from there. You'll be able to see our accessible Word documents and PDFs. Our ASL resources also will be on our website once those are available. We have a first batch that have been filmed and those will be posted hopefully very soon. So those will be coming soon there. And then we also have the easy to read guidance that you saw on the CDC website. We have the same guidance here on our site too, just so we have everything in one place.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Sam, we're going to give you screen sharing privilege now.

>> SAM PETERS: Thank you, Lewis. Sorry to throw that on you.

So here is the microsite, what this looks like. I was going over here the Braille resources, the accessible Word documents and PDFs, the ASL resources and then the simplified text. So I want to show you quickly what the Braille form looks like. So if you want to request Braille documents, you would click this form and it has at the bottom all of the documents that we have available to request-be requested in embossed Braille, and so go back here. All the documents are here for you to be able to view as well so you know what you are requesting. And then the other thing I wanted to show is the

easy to read resources. So as I mentioned, you can view them here at the CDC site. We have linked that, but these are all the same resources you find there also on our site. And then at the bottom here, if you are interested about how those resources were developed, finding more information about the guidelines for minimized -- for minimizing the complexity of text, there is more information about that here. So just wanted to show that also. Here, additional resources, you find related articles and updates and press releases and things like that that we have archived here. You will find webinars and trainings archived here. This is what Liz had just gone over earlier. So all of the webinars that we have done you can find here. And we're also offering credits for these webinars. We're offering CEUs and CRCs that are still available, as long as you email and let us know that you have watched the webinar and then you'll be able to request those CEUs or CRCs if you need those. And then we have some more information about the CDC and the CDC Foundation. And our partners through this project. So there's a lot of great information on the site and, again, this is going to be your one stop shop for all of our accessible resources that you will find right here. We've put a lot of work into this site and we're excited to offer this for people to have a place to come find the accessible COVID-19 guidance. Is there anything else, Liz or Carolyn, that you want to add to this before I stop sharing?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: I just wanted to say once again give a shout-out to Sam because she was leading this effort with Liz and Shana and our team. But, you know, this whole design was also about UX, right, user experience, and having people that would benefit the end users, right? Those of us with disabilities would be able to weigh in and say this is what we need. So lots of thought, lots of effort, but also a lot of input, and we appreciate everyone that has weighed in to help us throughout the whole project, and especially with these end products for sure. So, yeah, that's -- I just wanted to make sure I added that part. So thank you, Sam.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Would you guys like to return to your PowerPoint?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Yeah, that would be great, because we have a couple more things and we absolutely want to answer your questions. So, yeah, we'll move to the next slide. And thank you so much, Sam and Liz.

>> LIZ PERSAUD: So we just have an email address here. It is training@GATFL.GATECH.Edu . And it was typed into the chat there for all of you. This is a great way to reach out to us to learn more about the project. If you are representing an organization today and you are interested in becoming a potential dissemination partner, we absolutely want to hear from you. We would love to not only feature you on the microsite, your logo, but spend time with you and give you those templates of information. The email outreach, the tweets, the social media, anything that you need, we would love to be able to supply you with that so you can help us distribute this important health information. And it really and truly can be a matter of just, you know, putting a link on your website and directing people back to this microsite,

what have you. So there's all sorts of creative ways we could utilize your help in dissemination, outreach and education about the projects for folks out there as well. Carolyn or Sam, anything additional you would like to add?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: No, I think you covered it. So, you know, having that outreach collaborative, it really has just paid off. That is for sure. So we mean that, if you would like to be our partner, we absolutely would love to partner with you. We'll jump to the next slide. We want to know what questions you have for us.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Thank you, Carolyn, Liz and Sam. That was a great presentation. There's a lot of enthusiasm in the chat room and I want to get to some of the questions so they can be answered. The first -- before we do that, I just want to remind people that this is a good time to submit your questions in the chat window, and we'll get to those when we can. The first one I think is important is that somebody said I don't want to assume that I understand, so, please, what is Native ASL?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: So I'm happy to address that. So what we mean when we're saying "native ASL" is a lot of times folks will -- when they're making videos, for example, and we have been trying to educate people about this, they'll take an English script or a script in any other written language and then they'll translate it kind of word for word and expect that, you know, okay, well, that makes sense. So Native ASL, it really is not necessarily what somebody that would, you know, be an interpreter necessarily. It's what's really utilized. How do we really talk with each other? Kind of the way we would say "native" about other... it's the language that we use in real conversation. And so we often talk about native tongue or here in the south we'll talk about, you know, our native language, where we're really just talking about how we communicate. So that's what is meant there, that it is -- it's moving away from and really making sure, just like with any translation, that it's a true and honest understandings and translation of the topic, and of the information. I hope that helps answer. It can go into much more detail, but that's a quick answer.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Let's go to the next question here. Someone was asking, is there a timeline for releasing the additional ASL videos? They said they look great and I don't want to reinvent the wheel for our own materials.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Yes, absolutely. You know, I did want to say one other thing about ASL. It is a... as I said, it's a beautiful language. It is a visual language. It's a graphic language. It's a physical language. And I think it's important that people realize that. Yes, so our timeline, we actually have about 29 videos that are actively in production right now and we're about to release, my guess is next week, next Wednesday or Thursday, there will be a whole batch of new videos all about COVID-19 with the latest guidance. And it will be released to -- on the YouTube channel. The CDC YouTube channel. And we'll also have links on our website just as Sam explained.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: All right. Next question. When developing easy to read text, did you try to follow up with a video plus reading the text?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: So with the easy to read text, what we were doing is utilizing and looking really at language in general, all of those documents can be read by a text-to-speech or screen reader, and they were all tested with individuals who would benefit. We are actually making some videos that are going to go as -- we're big into Universal Design for Learning principles, so having multiple ways of expression, so that everybody can understand, and so we are developing some of those videos. And I'm glad to hear that you asked the question. So thank you for the question.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: This crowd has great questions.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: I can tell. I love it. These are some of the best questions we've gotten.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Here is an interesting one too. Are there any resources for making the data dashboards accessible to screen readers? And they mean things that were created by Tableaux, or Power VI, for example.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: You didn't have to give me the names, know exactly what you're talking about. That is something that we are actively in conversation about, because those data dashboards are extremely important and we've explained that everybody needs to have access to those. So we are talking about solutions, looking at ways that everybody can have access to that data and those data dashboards, so we can make informed decisions about where we want to travel if we need to go somewhere, what we need to think about, what does that really look like when it comes to infection rates or what have you in our own community. So I hear you, and I totally wrote that down, and we will bring that up again. Thank you. I'm glad to hear that somebody else is concerned about that.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: The next question... the hard of hearing community has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Only a small percentage of these individuals use ASL as a primary mode of communication. ASL is critical for those who need it, yet by focusing on ASL, you are leaving out those who are most impacted. How can we assist you in developing messaging and education that supports the 48 million Americans with hearing loss?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Yes. Once again, excellent question. And we are on the stadium page. We have that as part of our message and education that we're also trying to do. We would love to talk to you in particular, the person who asked the question, more about that. Because we hear you, we're with you, and we're advocating for the same thing. We have found that a lot of the videos, you know-and I'm not talking about CDC videos. I'm talk about in general, when it comes to public health, that they have not been, you know, considered looking at guidelines or even, you know, thought about, how do you do the captioning, let alone audio description, right? And you know,

honestly, there is some really great captioning. As somebody who depends on captioning, there's great captioning out there, and there is really bad captions out there. And I'm concerned about how many folks are moving to AI, artificial intelligence, and that concerns me. You know, they think that's the solution. I have seen incredible misinformation through artificial intelligence, and, you know, through the captioning. And so I am with you and, yes, if I can get your information, definitely I would love to talk to you in more detail. We are going to be producing actually a journal, a whole journal because we have so much information that we want to convey. This is one of the articles that needs to be in that journal and would very much like to talk with whoever shared that information and asked the question. Because we need to raise the awareness for sure. That is something that we're committed to, by the way. If you look at our videos, what we're trying to do is also show excellence and you know, here is how these captions look when you follow the guidelines. So I'm with you.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: So the person who wrote the question was from the Hearing Loss Association, and that's how they signed in, if you're this on the captions, please put your information in the chat window so the speakers can contact you afterwards.

Or if you guys have... do you have a slide of your contact information?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: We might. Yes, let's... actually, if you... I'm wondering...

>> LEWIS KRAUS: There we go. So for the person from the Hearing Loss Association, go ahead and write directly to them to connect with them about that. Excellent. Next question. Regarding the templates you have for reaching target audiences, if someone uses it, do they just add their local resources or can they modify them to be appropriate for their local community?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Liz, I can turn that to you.

>> LIZ PERSAUD: Yeah, absolutely. Yes, we want you to add your logo, we want you to modify -- these templates that we're giving, they're just a basic structure. For example, it could be a tweet about face masks and then pointing people back to the microsite or back to the original guidance on CDC. It's just making that connection. So, absolutely, we make it to be like a framework and we want y'all to put your language around it as well. So just a good healthy conversation of what we've got and then what you want to do as well. So absolutely customizable.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Great. Next question... and maybe your email is enough, but one person is asking: How do we contact you about social media messages?

>> LIZ PERSAUD: The same way. And also that training email, that collectively goes to myself, also to Sam, and to Tori Hughes who is on our team. And Tori is one of our -- she's our outreach specialist, so she's the one kind of behind the scenes working with me and Sam on some of outreach and the webinar organization. So either way, the

training email goes to three people, or you can reach out to any one of us, Carolyn, myself or Sam. And we're happy to talk to you more about that.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Just to respond to some of the questions, the slides are at ADApresentations.org if you want to do that. It will be archived. All of this will be archived, including the recording. That will happen next week at ADApresentations.org in the Archives section. So I just want to make sure people understood that. One person asked, Are there any fees to use your resources?

>> LIZ PERSAUD: No fees at all. You know, we don't want to create obstacle or barriers. There are too many obstacles and barriers out there enough for everyone, but especially folks with disabilities. So no fees at all. These resources are, you know, straight from CDC. We're making them accessible, and we want to make it as easy and as simple as possible for folks to access it. So no fees. They're free. And we absolutely encourage you to go check it out and access them.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: This is a question, and I think it's important for you to answer. I'm not sure if they're asking for us, but maybe you guys can answer. Can you use live transcription in Zoom in place of an ASL interpreting? And I'm going to answer after you as well.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Okay. So, no, you cannot do that. That's my opinion. But it's also our experience that, you know, using transcription instead of an ASL interpreter, it's -- once again, it's a language. ASL is a language. And so our presentations, we have, you know, live interpreters with us and we also have our own captionist on our own team. So, yeah, very important. And it's a good question. So I don't want to embarrass anybody by asking that question, that's the only way we all learn but, yes... no, different.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: And I want to follow that up, because I'm not sure exactly what the question was getting at, but this may also be a question that you are wondering about in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and so do feel free to call your regional ADA Center if you think you have a question about -- if the question is what does the ADA say about this in terms of what your responsibilities are. All right. Next question. We are having issues in North Dakota and Minnesota where people with disabilities who are not able to use computers, or who do not have access to computers, are unable to sign up for vaccinations at the pharmacy sites because they are only offering sign-up by computer. In the past hospitals and clinics would allow people with disabilities to sign up by telephone or someone would assist with computer sign-up. How can this be addressed in a way the pharmacies offering COVID vaccinations allow phone sign-up? This may not be something in your wheelhouse, you guys, so let me also say, this kind of a question might be one that you may want to call your ADA Center to talk about responsibilities of these places under the Americans with Disabilities Act. I just want to put that in there in case you have -- if you have anything to add, please do.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Honestly, Lewis Kraus said exactly what we would say and we would be connecting and asking what state are you in and let's get you connected with your ADA Center. Great question. And we have run into this exact situation all over the country and we are continuing to raise awareness about it directly with folks who we hope can make the difference and change that. But it takes all of us.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Right. And I think that that connects with another question that came in where somebody asked, are there any resources available to provide communication access at COVID-19 vaccination sites? So, I don't know if you guys have anything related to that. If not, I would, again, turn the questioner to talk with their ADA Center about the responsibilities there.

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: Yes. You know, much like what we're in the work that we have done with FEMA, which Liz and Sam and I have done quite a bit of work with FEMA, with a lot of partners around the country, and the Assistive Technology Act programs that every state and territory have, a lot of us have loan closets, and so, you know, making sure that folks have access is extremely important. Especially at that point where there is a service which would be the vaccine being provided or what have you. Multiple ways to solve that, and so once again I think it's about raising awareness and also making sure that people understand that we have got to have communication, we've got to have, you know, the technology. And we want people to think about us before we show up. And I think that's one of the important themes in general, but we have just got to do that. There's a whole webinar Liz and I have done years ago around technology during emergencies, and unfortunately it still is needed because people haven't gotten the word as much as we would like. But, yes.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: Again, some questions coming up for the screen reader user, yes, the links that they were providing are in the slides if you want to just download the slides, you'll be able to get those links. And then for the three of you speakers, people were putting their contact information in there, in the chat window, so I want to make sure that you get that before we end soon, so that you can follow up and connect with these people. Another question. What types of resources are you developing for people who are deaf-blind?

>> CAROLYN PHILLIPS: So, actually, that is one of the things that we have been talking with a lot of folks. You know, a lot of our research at our center is done with an N of 1, like just one person sometimes, and our UX, our user experience testing for design of technologies or products or websites or what have you, sometimes just tested with one or six people or what have you. Thankfully, you know, in Georgia we have a really dynamic community of folks who are deaf-blind and very active and have hosted symposiums and trainings and, you know, definitely have had folks who are deaf-blind that were part of our users and you know, some of our testers who participated in the focus groups for this project in particular. And that is part of why we have transcripts. Sam and Liz have done an outstanding job making sure that we have transcripts for, you know, all of those webinars, that they are accessible. And so people can use if they have a refreshable Braille display, for example, being able to use that. Also, you know,

thinking about transcripts for the ASL videos or any number of other products that are out there. And just thinking, what is it that the community needs? And that is what we're talking about that it's exciting, you know, seeing how so much convergence is happening where we have folks who, for example, that are deaf-blind who have let us know that they really appreciate the minimize text complexity. It's very clean, very simple, very easy, whether they're using the screen reader or if they're having somebody actually interpret it for them you know, in realtime, or if they're using a refreshable Braille display. So we have put a lot of thought into that and we absolutely are open to even more suggestions. Great question. And thank you very much.

>> LEWIS KRAUS: If you can go back to the slide where they have presentations near the end. Somebody wanted to make sure they had the address of how to get to that. And while we do that, there we are, for the person who asked about how to get those trainings, there is where you find that. I'm losing track of where my other question was.

One person was following up about the Live Transcription and asked about what we're using on this session. And, in fact, we are using a live captioner. It is the fantastic Beth, who is with us every week, or every month, I should say. So she is there listening to us and providing captions for us today.

Okay. And I think we're going to have to end there. So we realize that many of you may still have questions for speakers and apologize if you did not get a chance to ask your question. If the question is an ADA related question, please contact your regional ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232. Otherwise you have the contact information for the speakers and you're welcome to give them a contact if you have further questions. You will all receive an email to an online session evaluation. Please complete the evaluation for today's program as we really value your input and want to make sure that our funder understands the value of this as well. You want to thank our speakers today, Carolyn, Liz and Sam, for sharing their time and knowledge with us. Very informative and I think very -- the chat room is full of enthusiastic responses, and a reminder that today's session is being recorded, will be available for viewing next week at ADApresentations.org in the Archives section of Emergency Preparedness. And that includes the transcript that we are pulling from the captions. Our next webinar will be held on March 11th, and we hope you can join us. Watch your email two weeks ahead of time for the announcement of registration for that webinar, and, again, thank you so much for attending today and have a good rest of your day! Bye-bye!