

13 May 2020
SCAC Webinar

13 May 2020
SCAC Webinar

Hello everyone who is just joining. I'm Allexa. I'm your tech support today. As we're getting all set up, let's make sure that we're all muted and that you are turning your video off. We're going to keep everyone's videos off apart from the interpreters and the presenters today.

We're going to give it two more minutes to see if we have any more people joining before I officially get started.

I'm posting the captioning link one more time in the chat. Hello, everyone. My name is Allexa, and I'm your tech support today as I said a few times. I'm going to go ahead and get us all set up with how to best set up your Zoom to get the most out of the presentation today.

So thank you for joining the Connecting with Everyone workshop. Right now we've got 166 people on the presentation, which is great. For the best viewing today we want everyone to select gallery view, that's in the upper right-hand corner of your screen. And then if you select one of the participants who doesn't have their video on with three dots in the corner there will be a selection that drops down that says select hide nonvideo participants and this will allow everyone else on the call to disappear for you and for you to just see the interpreters and the presenters.

So that's why we're asking everyone to keep your video off today so we can just see our interpreters and our presenters.

Now, when we have the presentation up, there

will be an option on the top of the Zoom screen under view options where you can select side by side mode. You can see the presenters and chat side by side. We do have live captioning available via bit.ly/streamtextscac -- live captioning available via bit.ly/streamtextscac

We're also posting that link in the chat.

My colleague Alex Deas is also posting helpful Zoom tips for where to find the selections I've explained about.

Make sure you keep your mic and video off and use the chat box to communicate. We'll be able to respond to you there.

The instructions should be similar for those connecting on an iPad. If you're having any other technical challenge or any accessibility needs, please post those in the chat box and one of our team members will offer support. There will be a Q&A at the end of the presentation. So we'll use the chat box to answer all your questions and answer as many questions as possible in the allocated time. This webinar is an hour and a half. And we'll have a brief break midway through.

>> Just a little about me. I'm Allexa Laycock.

And I'm from Rooted in Rights and we're a Seattle-based organization that's part of Disability Rights Washington.

And Disability Rights Washington is the protection and advocacy organization for Washington State that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide. They mentioned I'll be supporting -- I'll be your tech support today along with my colleague Alex Deas, so you can message either of us throughout the presentation.

Welcome to connecting Connecting with Everyone: Creating Accessible Virtual Arts

Programs!

Next please, Rachel? In answer to questions about mobile, before I get started, I don't know if there is a side by side option depending on your cell phone.

But Alex, if you could look into that and post, that would be great.

So first our shared agreements. This is a safe space. We respect all efforts to work on accessibility issues in your organization. The fact that you're here is a big deal. We recognize that each organization is at varying levels of accomplishment with accessibility. We're here to help and not to judge. We are diligent in studying and researching our resources and are interested in learning about those we may have missed.

Next please, Rachel.

So our workshop overview first we'll have the presentation by Elizabeth Ralston. An introduction to the consortium and goals of the presentation. We'll cover why virtual arts experiences should be accessible and give examples of accessibility and considerations for planning.

We'll also give accessibility solutions. We'll have a one-minute intermission and then accessibility examples.

The second part is going to be a moderated discussion with Mickey Rowe, Helen Marion. And that will be followed by Q&A. Next, please. And Kathy Hsie. I'd like to introduce our first presenter, Elizabeth Ralston. Elizabeth (she/her) has more than 20 years of experience working with nonprofits, government agencies and academic institutions. She has a master of public health degree from the University of Michigan and a certificate of nonprofit management from the

University of Washington. As a Peace Corps volunteer, Elizabeth experienced first hand the powerful impact a person can have on other'. She has devoted her life in public service ever since. Elizabeth is deaf and uses two cochlear implant to hear. She is an avid patron of the arts and founded the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium, a grassroots organization with information and resource, a grassroots effort to connect arts and cultural organizations with information and resources to improve accessibility for people of all abilities.

>> ELIZABETH RALSTON: Thanks for the introduction, Alexa. Before I begin the presentation, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People past and present and honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe.

I would also like to thank our workshop funder, the Office of Arts and Culture and our host, Rooted in Rights for the tremendous help with putting on this workshop.

On this slide, the logo of the Office of Arts and Culture is a Blue Capital A with an “and” symbol nestled inside a large letter C and the words Office of Arts and Culture Seattle below it.

On the right side is the Rooted in Rights Logo: It is a black rectangle. Inside it is a small square on the left with a colorful tree with roots and 2 small Rs on either side. One R is backward facing and the other R is forward facing. Next to that are the words Rooted in Rights and the website rootedinrights.org on the bottom. Next slide please.

I wanted to share with you about the work of the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium. Our

mission is connecting arts and cultural organizations with information and resources to improve accessibility for people of all abilities. We are fiscally sponsored by Shunpike. On the right hand side of this slide, we have the words Shunpike in red. As Allexa mentioned, I am an avid patron of the arts. Growing up as a deaf person did not stop my parents from taking me to arts and cultural events. But most of those were inaccessible- there was no captioning. I relied on reading scripts in dark theaters where I had to use a small flashlight. There were many times I got scolded for using that tiny light. And it was often difficult to explain to staff why I needed a script.

Having my public health hat on, I have been thinking about health and equity and the implications this has on a person with a disability's being able to access the arts anytime. Even though I could go to captioned shows at the theater, I could not go whenever I wanted. There was usually only one captioned performance during the show's run.

In 1997, I saw my first captioned movie, the Titanic. Imagine my utter delight, sitting in a darkened theater finally being able to understand what the dialogue and songs were. In fact soon after, I worked with some friends and allies to bring captioning to the Cinerama in Seattle which was being renovated. It spread to many theaters in the area after that.

So as you can see, I have been an advocate for accessibility for a long time. I decided to use my public health and nonprofit management experience working with organizations on capacity building, communications, and program delivery to work more closely on accessibility

issues in the arts. So starting the Consortium was a natural next step. Next please. I'm happy to be spending this next hour plus with you, as you know, workshops are a huge team effort. Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium asked that you support our mission to future workshops.

Together we can increase accessibility. You can donate at bit.ly/SCAC Shunpike. We'll post that in the chat box as well. Let's talk about the goals for today's presentation.

They are the following: First, I'd like you to understand why virtual programming might be the new normal for a while and and we all could benefit from having multiple options to participate in enjoying the arts. Secondly, the arts can be enjoyed by everyone: Many audiences can participate, deaf and hard of hearing, blind and low vision, physical and intellectual and developmental disability. Thirdly, we'll explain how Universal Design leads to more exclusive practices for arts. Next, please. So let's talk about why visual arts programs should be accessible. Because of what's going on around us, virtual programming might be the new normal for a while. We could all benefit from having multiple options to participate in enjoying the arts. Secondly, the arts can be enjoyed by everyone: Many audiences can participate, deaf and hard of hearing, blind and low vision, people with physical disabilities and also those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And third, the population is aging. In fact, by 2030, only 10 years from now, 1 in 5 people will be 65 and over. Think about this: There's a huge population and elderly people are more likely to develop disabilities as they age. Next, please.

Accessibility needs to be integrated in the

planning and implementation process. Having a plan will save money in the long run. Rather than responding to requests as they come in and operating from a crisis mentality, this is a more forward thinking approach. This plan will include things like: An accessibility auditor self-evaluation, looking at what are the strengths and where are the gaps including a budget for captioners, interpreters, audio description, and other sensory friendly accommodations, planning for staff and board trainings, and so on. You might even thinking about looking at your hiring practices or any of your employees people with disabilities? Have a well-thought out plan of action will help your organization reach more people and be more accessible and welcoming. Next, please.

So, let's get on board! This slide has an image of the letters "get on board" all in black font with different color backgrounds and the statement "getting buy-in from upper management and the board will help your case." You need buy-in from management and the board to make this happen. They need to understand that there is a segment of the population they are not reaching. Plus, it makes good business sense. Next please.

What do we mean by virtual arts experiences? Here are some examples, live streaming arts performances on a virtual platform such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, Mixer, Zoom, or Google Hangouts. Videos of museum tours, performances, poetry readings, audio described tours, performances, events, et cetera. I will live you examples of these a little bit later. Next, please. So what are some considerations when planning your virtual event? When you create your arts please, be sure to include people with

disabilities in your performances and events. And this includes disabled actors and planners.

And even behind the scenes people to help with running your event.

Also assume people with disabilities will be attending your virtual events. These events will be available to more people than ever before simply because of all the amazing technology out there. Next, please.

So the next thing I'd like to talk about is technology considerations. This is a lot of information, so I'm going to be talking up blue streak in the next few minutes. Nowadays many platforms have special functions so it would be good to get familiar with those functions of your platform as well as social media used to promote your event such as Facebook Live, Instagram or YouTube. You might have to manually enable some features. Is the platform compatible with assistive technology like screen readers which have software programs that allow blind or low vision users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or Braille display? If it is not, then this segment of the population will be inadvertently excluded. For example, Instagram and Twitter require you to turn on alt text so you can enter image descriptions for screen readers. Alt text is a way of entering text into an image so blind or low vision people know what the image is. For participatory events, ensure the platform allows for a computer-based audio/listening and phone-based audio listening/speaking, meaning there should be an option to call in as well as using the computer itself -- as an example, when there are virtual meetings I can call in with a captioned app on my phone to benefit from the

dialogue.

Finally, think about where the participant will need to have an account on the platform in order to participate. Next, please. Let's talk about marketing and communications considerations. You will get a much better participation rate if you market the event well and include certain information in those materials. People with disabilities won't come because it is not accessible. So your messaging has to include them in this process. Offer all accessibility information up front and publicly to increase access. The more you make it known that your event is accessible, the more people will flock to your program.

One way to do this is to share the format and timing of the event in advance. Is it a discussion versus listening to a presentation or something else? How long will it run for? Also, provide any written or visual materials in advance in an accessible file format to people will know what to expect and can plan ahead.

This is important so that attendees can plan around their need to take breaks, arrive late, leave early, and so on. Accessible formats sometimes called alternate formats are ways of presenting printed, written or visual material. People who may need this could be blind or low vision, have a learning disability that affects reading, or have a physical disability and be unable to hold or turn pages. Braille and large print are examples of alternate formats. Next, please.

Give attendees the opportunity to share any additional accessibility requests that were not covered in the event's access information. Having accessibility point interpreter person on

your team who can assist with troubleshooting or access issues and provide contact information for this person. The best thing you can do is to be reachable so people can ask for additional support if needed.

I have heard stories of people trying to access assistive listening devices at performances only to find the staff had no idea where they were or how to use them. Market your accessible program to nonprofits working with people with disabilities. They are a great vehicle for spreading the word to the disability community about accessible arts events. Next, please. Finally, let's talk about preparing attendees for the event. Make it clear that they will have an opportunity to ask questions so they can prepare. If this is a live interactive session, allow attendees to send questions and comments in advance. Give notice about questions participants might be asked to respond to so they can prepare even for icebreakers. For example, it's helpful to know in advance the question. Everyone introduce yourself and say where you're from. Next, please. Make sure your events are accessible to Augmentive and Alternative Communication users by offering multiple ways for attendees to participate, answer questions, submit questions, and interact. Many of these users are nonverbal. If you can, offer training sessions with event organizers/volunteers prior to the event on how to use the platforms the event will be hosted on. Remember, the more you do, the better the chances of increasing the diversity of your audience, as much information as you are able to provide in advance has a tone of being more welcoming and conscientious of people's needs. So as a demonstration of taking into account

people's needs, I have given you a lot of information and would like to pause for a minute while we shift gears. Feel free to stretch, put questions in the chat box and check out the Streamtext captioning link and chill out for a moment. The next slide has a horizontal bar with a moving pink line. [Bit.ly/streamtextscac](https://bit.ly/streamtextscac) next, please. [Bit.ly/streamtextscac](https://bit.ly/streamtextscac)

Live captioning can be found at bit.ly/streamtextscac

Welcome back, now let's talk about accessibility solutions for four groups of people with disabilities. Deaf hard of hearing and the reason there's a capital D and small lower case D is those that are defined by culturally deaf use a capital D and primarily use American Sign Language as their main means of communication. Small D deaf refers to those who may not consider themselves part of the Deaf culture and may either be oral like myself or use a combination of speech and sound. There's a variation in the reading skills. Then you also have blind/low vision, deaf/blind and neurodiverse. I actually lost my notes for a minute. So I want to talk a little -- if you can go back to the previous slide. Neurodiverse conditions include autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are also invisible disabilities. These types of disabilities may include post traumatic stress disorder, learning disability, traumatic brain injury are diminished mental abilities due to a health condition, diabetes and so on. Don't use one size fits all. This is so important. Meeting the person where they are is the best approach. For example, as I said earlier, not all people with hearing issues use sign language. Some people prefer ASL instead of captions and others prefer

captions because they do not know ASL. And similarly for blind/low vision folks, some prefer audio description and others do not. The first step to respectfully interacting with people who have disabilities should be listening to how they talk about themselves. Ask questions if you're not sure. Next, please. For the deaf and hard of hearing, live captioning is a great option. This can be done by a CART reporter. CART stands for communication access in realtime translation. This workshop is being captioned by Darlene who is actually doing this all the way from England! So you can have remote or local captioners doing this work.

The beautiful thing about CART is that it benefits everyone, not just people with hearing loss.

People whose second language is English, kids who are learning to read, et cetera.

It benefits everyone.

Second, caption all videos. YouTube has a great auto caption feature. However, be sure to review and edit because these auto generated captions are not always accurate. Other companies will caption a feed. If there's a method that will be used to vote or flag who can speak next, make sure all participants can access the process.

There might be slight delays for those who are nonverbal or need to have the information translated and so take that into account.

I do want to mention that sign language interpreters are also a great option. As you can see, this workshop is being interpreted. Next slide. So now for folks who are blind or low vision, make sure the speakers face is well lit and can be clearly seen. This also applies to people who lipread or rely on facial cues for communication. Describe live scenarios. For

example if you're presenting a live video tutorial of applying makeup, you could describe the process. "I am now applying a dark purple lipstick to my upper lip" describe any images, read any text that appears on screen and describe anything that you gesture at as if you were explaining it to someone who isn't in the same room as you. Have speakers identify themselves when speaking and give a brief physical description. My name is so and so and I'm wearing a bright red dress with a large yellow flower in the middle and I have short straight brown hair and glasses. You only have to describe yourself once and then use your name thereafter. I'm only going to read this quick. Here are some tips for good visual access design: Have good color contrasts. Use large readable fonts. Use linear layout with clear headers, include text with images on your Web site or eblast so they will be described for a person using a screen reader. This is alt-text in many programs. Things to avoid: Don't convey textual information within an image only because screen readers won't pick it up. Don't use color to convey meaning because of color blindness and don't read a layout all over the page. Next, please. I'd like to mention a population that is often excluded from accessibility and other equity discussions: The deaf/blind community. This community has its challenges because they depend entirely on tactile communication. They use an interpreter who signs in their hand. Adjustable lighting is also helpful. Like I said every person has different needs. People should talk at a normal pace, not exaggerate, cover their mouth or turn away. When describing how to do something or showing how to do something, give

some time to look between the next item or topic to give the deaf/blind person time to look at the item and back to the interpreter or captions.

Next, please. Allow the deafblind person to sign in to the event early and have the interpreter or captioner ready to assist with set up and getting information where things are for example the chat box. Identify who is talking, especially when there's a switch in the speaker. In the Q&A session, the deafblind person's response may be delayed, like I said earlier because he or she is using an interpreter to get the information. Next, please.

Audio description -- I wanted to mention this here because it's really important for people who are blind or low vision, and it provides an additional narration that describes important visual components and unspoken action of a piece of visual media or live performance. For example, someone who is blind or low vision would not know that someone who was walking across the stage did a cartwheel. The audio describer would indicate that. In this slide has a picture of a person with shoulder length sandy brown hair with glasses and a headset with sound equipment in front of her looking through a window into a theater and describing what she says. The logo AD for audio description is below. Check it out next time you go to a movie. It's pretty amazing the detail that is provided.

Finally -- I went too fast. So the last piece is on access for neurodiverse individuals. Clearly communicate the event length, breaks and atypical filming styles that could be triggering. That could be unpleasant for a person for those who experience visual disturbances, dizziness or pain. For example, will there be multiple cameras

cutting back and forth, loud noise, bright lights and strobing lights. This is so people can plan what they need. And the need for acknowledging breaks is really important. Let attendees know when breaks occur and when performances will be paused. You can create a tip sheet for online platforms with step-by-step information about how to use the platform. Provide the option to attend training sessions about the platform before the event. You can provide a sensory guide. This is a written or auditory for those with vision difficulties, walkthrough of a play or show highlighting potentially difficult sensory moments scene by scene. The social narrative of this kind really helps to prepare attendees ahead of time. Next, please. If the program is open to video participation by attendees, understand that some people may need to move their bodies during the performance or program and that's okay! It is their way of taking care of themselves. Ensure that the experience is inclusive to attendees who may need to adjust the surroundings to participate. Some people may need to lie down and move, especially if they have lots of pain in their bodies. Next, please. I'm going to give you a few examples of accessibility in the arts. This is an image showing a woman in a wheelchair with red tires and her arms are crossed over and arching upwards. She is on a black floor with bare gray walls with the lighting sort of dimmed. This is a clip from a short video performance by Alice Sheppard who identifies as a multiracial performer. This video has both captioning and audio description. This performer is a person of color with a disability which you don't see very often. And this segment of the disability population is often overlooked. Intersectionality

issues come into play when considering the needs of people of color who have disabilities.

Next, please. The Whitney Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art uses Zoom meetings by deaf docents using ASL for specific exhibitions, here's a quote from a Deaf participant. That was very fun to see art works and discuss with remote peers. It's very nice for people to be able to connect with people like themselves when it comes to enjoying the arts.

Next, please. Smithsonian National Portrait Galleries "visit at home" access programs on line includes ASL tours and audio description of select portraits. The Guggenheim Museum. Audio tour of its iconic building. The Frye Art Museum has guided artwork discussions. This is an image of a video clip. On the left is a person with a large multi colored dress standing on top of a rocky outcrop with a tree on the right-hand side. There are two questions listed: Where might this scene take place? What do you see that makes you say that? There's also captioning on this clip.

Next, please. We have the Seattle Asian Art Museum also using audio tours. This is a clip of several choices of low/no vision tours with different topics listed. There are 44 tracks to choose from. On the left slide is an orange box with the letters, S-a-m and Asian Art Museum next to them.

Finally Howlround Theater Common curated a fashion accessibility project which was both captioned and ASL interpreted. In this screenshot you can see four people in the front, one with a beige dress and one with a red sparkly dress and a guide dog. Other with a billowy short long-sleeved white dress and another with a short beige dress and there are two other people in the background. They are on a stage. What's

happening is these people are indicating their outfits on the stage and there are all kinds of people. Next, please. In the days of the coronavirus pandemic we have to rethink. More programming is converted to online platforms. What better time to integrate accessibility into the fabric of the organization and account for our all segments the population who can benefit from arts and culture? So I've given you a lot of information. There's so many resources out there. I want to acknowledge the many individuals and organizations that have worked so hard to make accessibility a reality in arts and culture. And to make this workshop happen. Thank you so much for all of your help and your support. Next, please.

And now we come to the fun part. A discussion with Mickey Rowe and Helen Marion moderated by Kathy Hsieh. I want to introduce Kathy. She's the cultural partnerships and grants manager for the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture. Kathy is a change agent in transforming the office's community engagement and arts funding practices through a racial equity lens she helped the agency earn the Seattle management associations first race and social justice management award and is a local award-winning theater artist. Welcome, Kathy and thank you for your staunch support of the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium.

>> Kathy: I'm Kathy And I'm wearing a casual long-sleeved jacket with pink trim. My hair is black. And I have brown eyes. My hair is pulled back today. It's very long and I am Asian-American. I'm so excited to be here today to introduce our two guest speakers. Next slide, please.

Mickey (he/him) is the founder and Artistic Director of National Disability Theatre. Their productions re-imagine disability and universal design as key storytelling and design elements showcasing that people can be successful not just in spite of their challenges, but also because of them.

He was the first autistic actor to play Christopher Boone, the lead role in the Tony Award winning play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. He has appeared as the title role in the Tony Award winning play *Amadeus* and more.

* Helen

Helen (she/her) is an immigrant POC Person of color, actor, teaching artist, model, dancer and singer, who also is Operations and Marketing Manager of Centerstage Theatre.

She hosts a weekly lifestyle segment on Seattle's CW Channel.

In the past she also led a T-Mobile training series on leadership, inclusion, equity and diversity.

Her degree program had a special focus on theatre in education, and she has done local, national and international educational tours.

Welcome Mickey and Helen.

>> Mickey: Thank you so much for having us, Kathy.

>> Kathy: It's great to see you today. We're going to have a conversation between the three of us and then we'll go to question and answer. We'll have a chat. Moderators -- but first, question for you, Mickey, can you tell us about your experience living with a disability and how that made you such a strong advocate of disability in the arts?

>> Mickey Rowe: Absolutely. First off for those blind or low vision I'm a white man with very short hair, currently light brown but it's just been buzzed because of COVID. I have blue eyes. My hair is thinning a little bit. I'm wearing a black V-neck and maroon jacket. And my pronouns are he/him.

>> I'm a Black and Asian woman and I'm wearing a gray cardigan and purple shirt and I'm an Asian woman.

>> Mickey: We're local Seattlites, but we work with organizations like La Jolla playhouse and Goodman theater as accessibility consultants. I want to say quickly I realize the one minute break we got isn't always enough time to use the restroom if you have a mobility disability. So, if you need a longer break or need to use the restroom feel free to get up and do whatever you need to do while I'm speaking and we won't be offended. How has my experience living with a disability made me into an advocate? I really think, Kathy, that people with disabilities our whole lives have been told undirectly to stay home, stay hidden, stay unemployed. Often, people don't even mention the fact that people don't want us to even mention the fact that we have a disability. And in fact, no one else is even going to say the D word. How often do you notice people saying special or all abilities. Handi capable when they're disabled. People are truly afraid to include disability. They don't even want to say the word or acknowledge its existence sometimes, which is refusing to acknowledge my existence. So why do I advocate for myself? Because according to Money Watch, preCOVID this is before everyone was unemployed. According to Money Watch, 85% of

college graduates on the autism spectrum are unemployed. I'm going to say that again. 85% of college graduates on the autism spectrum are unemployed according to Money Watch, preCOVID. We know the census tells us that disabled folks make up 20% of population. So a study done by the Rudeman family foundation and another by the Ford Family Foundation only one percent of the roles we see on TV and in movies are disabled. One percent of roles are disabled.

And of that one percent that are disabled are 95% of those roles are played by disabled actors so there's a lack of visibility in the disability community and that's happening even though we make up 20% of the population according to the census. Even here in Seattle I feel like a couple years ago a really large -- I believe equity house did a show that was specifically about autism. But wasn't able to include the disability community in any way even though they were reached out to and provided lots of resources. Often theaters don't feel they can include the disability community in post show discussions that are shows that are about disability. So I felt like my options were stay home, never have a job, never work in theater, or start banging down doors. And because I decided to fight for myself, I got to keynote speak at the Lincoln Center and Kennedy Center and direct a show at La Jolla playhouse. So I think that that's why I advocate for myself because otherwise the other option for disabled folks right now is to be home and often unemployed. The other interesting thing to jump back to this is something I said a second ago. It's important when we think about accessibility issues and how to make our organizations more

accessible, that we also look at the cultural landscape of the disability community. That those two things have to kind of happen together to be really successful and fun and sexy, right? And in the disability community right now there's a big push getting people comfortable saying the word "disability" there's the #saytheword. Lawrence Carter Long started it but you can Google "say the word." People use words like special needs to describe people with autism or Down's Syndrome.

And there's a great video by -- you can also look up Down's Syndrome talking about this. If I needed to eat dinosaur eggs if I needed to sleep in the tree, what I really need is I need employment. I need love and support. And I need to be invited to the diversity and inclusion table. And those are human needs. There isn't anything special about them. So Google "say the word" and then but I think that answers your question about why I'm an advocate.

>> That's so great, Mickey. We met online a number of years ago because I was talking about racial diversity, this person name Mickey Rowe would pop up in social platforms and be talking about disability rights and then we started talking together about that intersectionality.

>> Absolutely.

>> So Helen, I want to bring you into the conversation. As you know, the disability rights movement has been historically very white. And I'd love for you, as a woman of color, mother of a disabled son and partner to a disabled man to talk about what is top of mind for you, as we talk about accessibility for all in the arts.

>> Being a mother of a disabled son and partner of a disabled man, it makes disability rights issues

hit close to home for me. But I think, as a woman of color, it's top of mind to me to be calling in my community women and people of color to be fierce allies for the disability community. We talk about how disability rights movement has historically been very white. So has the theater and arts world in this country, very white, very hetero normative, cis And I think this has been changing`. And we've gotten to a point where a lot of arts organizations have said this is important to them and something to work towards but I'm seeing a lot of organizations think that diversity means race and gender parity. and as long as they have cis women and color involved, they've got it handled. As a woman of color I have benefited from this. And I'm finding myself with a seat at the table more often than I used to. So I think now it is my job to say hello, I'm so glad to be here, I.t's about time. Where are the trans folks? Where are the disabled folks? They should be here at the table as well.

Intersectionality, like we were talking about I believe that I rising tide lifts all boats. And if the disabled folks join forces and lift each other up and they see the disability rights movement has been white. I think things have changing, Mickey's company, National Disability Theater. Last year 97% of actors were disabled but 55% of them were nonmale. 50% of those were people of color, 27% were queer. Stims invalid is a nationally touring company which centers people of color, queers, nonbinary, trans people of disabilities that's their description, how they describe themselves. So it is changing add I'd love to see people of color.

>> Everyone has a disability and people of color let's do this. Like we tell white people not to make

us do all the labor and educate fellow white people, people of POC, let's do this too and educate ourselves on disability rights people and educate our fellow nondisabled peers and that riding tide will lift all boats.

>> Kathy: I love that. We're all stronger together. So Mickey, I've heard you talk a lot and very eloquently about saying that most autistic people don't necessarily want performances or experiences to be modified such as adjusting lighting or sound for performances. When it comes to creating virtual experiences, are there ways to make them more engaging to autistic people?

>> Mickey Rowe: What you said, historically in Seattle, and across the country when you look at organization that's do sensory friendly performances, we've been hearing to change things about the show. But those organizations aren't hiring autistic adults or working with the autistic community, working with autistic adults. To find out what the autistic community actually wants. When we talk to these people, we find out that people that want to experience the same show everyone else ask experience experiencing and we need things like proper notice of what's going to happen and almost like a trigger warning. So that we can enjoy the same show that everyone else is enjoying. So that's the concept called "nothing about us without us."

If you're going to do something involving the autistic communities, make sure that you have autistic people leading the conversation, right? And I think the other thing is all of this work should be fun and it's just like that. Right? It's really hard for a company to retech an entire show just to have a sensory friendly performance,

that's a lot of work, right? But include autistic people or include people with disabilities to find out what they really need, it's often so much cheaper, easier, less work and more fun, right? Because disabled people are the best creative problem solvers in the world. It's called disability gain. What do you gain from having a disability? And all of you out there watching you are all fun, sexy, creative problem solvers too. So we should really be the best allies, but in terms of making online content better for people with autism we look at tenets of Universal Design. One of those is equal objections. If someone maybe is uncomfortable with being seen on video, have the call-in phone line that you can call into Zoom. Make sure people know that's an option too and that it's an equal option. You can be just as valuable to our team calling in on the phone as you can be participating on video. Things like still doing sensory friendly preshow speech before a Zoom meeting. So saying we are all at home and we are all going to do -- we're all going to focus during this Zoom meeting in whatever way works best for you. And we're going to trust everyone else to focus in whatever way works best for them, too.

So, if someone needs to get up and pace around and move to focus best, go for it. We trust you. We know nothing's wrong. We're going to let you do your thing.

And just naming stimming so that nonautistic people on-call know what stimming is maybe and know it's not a bad thing, it's not a problem.

Doesn't mean the person is not functioning or not doing well. Stimming actually means that the person is self-regulating and doing what they need to stay focused and productive. And for

those who don't know. Stimming is the stereotypical rocking motions or hand flapping movements or tapping that autistic people sometimes do.

>> Helen: I like to point out that you all do this too. If you're anxious or wringing your hands or biting your lip, the same thing. You're feeling overwhelmed by things outside you so you're giving yourself stimulus to cope. Autistic people might do it more often or in ways that seem bigger to nonautistic people but it's the same thing. There's nothing to be concerned about. Really important to say things about that at the top of the Zoom meeting if we see someone in the Zoom box stimming, it's fine. Everything is fine.

>> Whether it's virtual or in person. It's --

>> Kathy: I'm the person shaking my leg under the table. So when you censure the work on disability community or person of color or whether it's gender or any other -- social categories that have often been oppressed, they make it better for everyone because lots of people need that time to stretch and make themselves more comfortable.

>> MICKEY ROWE: Absolutely correct. Final thing helpful for people specifically people on the spectrum for things like Zoom meetings, it is because a lot of the communication can often be nonverbal or things that aren't intuitive to people on the spectrum like sarcasm or things that aren't intuitive for people, email out here's what we said, here's what we agreed upon. And here's the next steps so everyone's on the same page and there aren't any miscommunications from those communications that aren't intuitive to people on the spectrum.

>> Kathy: That's great. I know that the disability community has long been asking for more online virtual options and opportunities. And they've actually said that they've always wanted this to be an option, to the just now when people current gather for in-person events. When we're finally able to transition back to in-person events, do you see advantages for organizations in being able to continue providing both live and virtual programming?

>> MICKEY ROWE: Absolutely, yeah. This should always be an option. I think live streaming should always be done in addition to theaters are doing not as replacement for accessible spaces in accommodations, online shouldn't be used to segregate disabled and nondisabled audiences by making the only option nondisabled folks participating from home. But for a lot of people getting out the door and attending in person just isn't possible or reasonable and that doesn't mean these people don't want to attend your theater or become a subscriber or a donor, it just means that your theater and the track to get to the theater simply isn't accessible to them. So disability conversations. There is always an option to attend remotely via Livestream for both participants and speakers to help make the event as fully accessible as possible. Right?

At national disability theaters kickoff event, for example, Claudia was not able to attend in person for disability reasons. So instead she brought down the house with her lecture remotely over video. And so I think as we consider this accommodation, we need to make sure that also this live streaming when we open back up and hopefully have theater in person continues into all aspects to include people with disabilities. So, if

we Livestream the performance and then there's a post show discussion or something afterwards, make sure we Livestream that too so that the people with disabilities can really be fully included and make sure that if you are live streaming that post show discussion, if there's a way to -- for those people digitally to ask questions via email or text message or something like that so they can really participate, that reminds me of one other thing though.

I just wanted to say really quickly. A lot of this webinar right now looks like is using the chat box feature for questions and answers coming up. And often for people like me who are legally blind to use large print, that -- or having only one option like chat box sometimes doesn't work because the text in the chat box is so small and there's no way for me to make it large print for questions and answers.

But, if we think about Universal Design, we can provide lots of options and they're cheaper than you think. If you have questions and the chat box isn't accessible to you or we don't get time for your question, feel free to email us at RoweMickey@NationaldisabilityTheater.org and we can answer your question that way. If the chat box doesn't work for you, or we don't get time for your questions.

One other really quick example of "nothing about us without us" that I think is really funny and interesting, does anyone know -- you know the National Theater of Great Britain. They worked really hard, spent millions of dollars on these caption glasses. Have you seen these caption glasses? And it turns out that a lot of people who want to use captions either wear cochlear implants or use over ear hearing aids or maybe

are aging just like we heard -- so much of the population is and wear glasses. And for anyone who wears glasses or has cochlear implants, or uses over the ear hearing aids, these caption glasses aren't always the best option right? So that's just one example. If the National Theater of Great Britain had included people with disabilities in these conversations leading the conversations from the beginning, they would have saved millions of dollars on this technology when it turns out that often the easiest things are the most helpful. I think about the work we do with La Jolla playhouse, every theater has sound designers. Every theater has projection designers, right? And all of a sudden if you have projections then bam, now you have captions for your show that are artistic and dynamic and designed as part of the production and actually add to the story telling and help everyone. Or sound design, National Disability Theater had audio descriptions for our show built in so that they were part of the sound design, part of the auditory storytelling for the whole world. It wasn't something people had to opt into necessarily. But by doing this, it made it cheaper for the theater. It made it easier for theater because it was using technology they had for every show. And it was more exciting, dynamic sexier storytelling.

>> As a nondisabled person there's so much happening on stage you don't always see everything. They said yes, everybody wins. Universal design everybody wins. Universal Design helps everyone. When I'm on my phone and watching a video maybe I'm in the library or maybe I'm at a doctor's office or --

>> My earbuds transportation, I use captioning, right? So this helps -- it makes -- when we use

universal design, not only does it help the disability community but it helps all of our patrons, right? Audio description helps everyone.

Captions help everyone. If you're at the airport and you're pulling your luggage, are you going to use the ramp or are you going to use the stairs? You're going to use the ramp because that accessibility, universal design has made your life easier as well.

>> Think about the question. Will it be an advantage to continue doing these live virtual events. Yes, it's going to help disability community who has always been asking this or maybe parents flake and now they can still see the show. Those who are medically fragile. I think COVID is always going to be with us, temperature rose, I should stay home you can still see the show. Advantage for so many people.

>> Elderly. My husband recently injured his foot so it's hard for him to get around. He can enjoy them still in they're online as an option.

[Talking simultaneously.]

>> Back to the person who would want the option.

>> Yes, options we love it.

>> I thank you. You already answered the next question. So I'm going to reframe it and then we'll move to the Q&A. If people have questions, be sure you're putting them in the chat window. This pandemic, as awful as it is, as actually created an opportunity for the arts and culture sector because ours was the first sector to close down event bans and stay at home orders and will probably be the last to open back up. So, it gives us time to really reflect on new ways of thinking and working as opposed -- I know some people said when we can get back to what we used to have. But I like to think of it -- and challenge us to

really think about what do we want the world to actually be moving forward when we take with us in the future and what do we change to make it more equitable for all people truly.. And so are there -- what are next steps that you think very specific steps that groups can take while we're still -- we're using this time to explore these virtual avenues. So I think it's definitely the ability to do before and after. So do you have specific ideas about how we do that working together? Moving forward? .

>> Absolutely, yeah. I think a lot of the specific steps we saw in Elizabeth's amazing presentation and a lot of those specific steps, too, though, can feel so overwhelming when we see all these contents brands new to us all at once, it really not every single thing is going to apply to every arts organization. What's more helpful is getting that one on one. Here's your arts organization. Here's your budget and here's the tools you already have. Let's be creative problem solvers together and think about how we can make this work for the most people possible. Using universal design. So I would say probably the first thing that would be so wonderful as arts organizations open back up is -- this is a time you get to look at your staff. We get to look at boards. We get to look at leadership and see whether diversity that we've been wanting to happen in our audience is actually reflected in the staff and on the board. Right? And make sure we have diversity on the leadership team. Make sure we have diversity in our staff. Make sure we have diversity on our board. And make sure that that diversity includes leaders with disabilities as well. Yeah, I think disability is the only really equal opportunity minority group.

Anyone can join our prestigious club at any time and will, should they be lucky enough to live long enough, right? And even as you rebuild your organization, even if you don't care about disabled folks, do it for you, right? You can go out and check your mail, get hit by a car and suddenly you have a disability.

And when that happens, will you still want your job? Will you still want to be able to go out and see a show with your friends? Right? This pandemic came up so unexpectedly and all of a sudden you all have to stay home just like disabled folks have for much of their lives, right? So suddenly you all care about virtual programming just like the disability community has been asking for a long time. So what I would say is really think about disability on a personal level. And when things open back up, don't just -- don't do it for the disability community. Do it for you. It's being universal accessibility is only going to help you and your future self. And the best way to do that is by involving adults with disabilities from the beginning.

>> KATHY: That's beautifully put. Thank you. We're going to transition now and bring Elizabeth back on to the screen. And open up our Q&A. We already have some questions in the queue. And if you have other questions, please put them in the chat. Even if we're not able to get to all the questions in the chat, we will find some way to address them, put them out when we send stuff. There was a quick question we had about Mickey's email address. We'll definitely send out a followup. So you have all the information you need from this session today. So first question I have -- actually, I think this applies for any of you to be honest. You might have specific things. So

the question is some feedback in an arts organization that this person is in, is that a perception of trigger warning sets people up to be upset instead of preparing people for potentially upsetting content. What do you think about including language like content includes -- instead of the words trigger warning or is there something lost in translation there?

>> MICKEY ROWE: You know, I think -- I work really -- I know there are lots of different views in the disability community. I think as long as we're doing what we can, think about always possible, to the perfect, so really -- not perfect. We can spend all day and night getting upset about words we choose and word choice. But, if the company is doing the thing, that's great. And if you have found for your content includes works better for you than saying trigger warning, that is great. And I think that it's just so great that you are doing the work and making the thing happen. And that's so much more important than us -- than these specific words if that makes sense.

>> ELIZABETH RALSTON: Yeah, I want to add that you're not going to make everybody happy. There's going to be different perspectives from different people in the disability community. But like Mickey says, you're doing the right thing by communicating what's available and what's going to happen. I think that's the most important thing that your intentions are in the right place.

>> Helen: As long as we're talking with wide as intersectionality as a trauma survivor myself, I do like trauma warnings. But I'm up to talking about trigger warning might be a good word or not good word. We need each other and not we're going to do this and decide this is the best way. Let's not be afraid of conversations with groups. Ands we'll

figure it out together. It's going to have to be collaborative moving forward which is what we said for a long time we want. This is our chance to let's do it and collaborate together and we'll find the best language.

>> Kathy: I think what I've been hearing throughout today's conversation is really including people in the conversations. So the greater diversity you have with people making the decisions about all of this stuff, you're going to -- we're never going to achieve perfection and we shouldn't. But that will make sure that we've included all the different perspectives that might weigh into the decision of what's ultimately decided upon.

We also have a question on Elizabeth. Can you address why you use an interpreter when you have captions? Why is it important to include both?

>> ELIZABETH RALSTON: That's a really good question. And there's several reasons. One is that people who sign really appreciate the facial cues they get from interpreting. There's a lot of emotion, nonverbal language that's conveyed through interpreting. So they get a lot more from that than they do the captions. Other reason is that some people may not be able to read English as well as others. So it's a good option for others who want to see the facial cues and be more expressive. So that's the main reason.

>> Kathy: Great.

I'm going to throw this out to Mickey first. And then Elizabeth, if you have thoughts--and actually I'd love, Helen, since you are also a theater artist yourself, training. So the reality is that we know how inequitable any kind of performance art, the whole arts -- the whole world actually is still very

inequitable when this comes to access for people with disabilities. People of color, even gender still.

Reality is as inequitable as it is for performance museums, if someone, for instance, Helen, your child, if, say, he wanted to grow up and be a theater artist or Mickey your own experience, how do we make the whole pipeline of anyone wanting to pursue this and create opportunities for how they can get training -- the training just like anyone else can in order to really pursue this as a profession?

>> MICKEY ROWE: Yeah, I think there's really two steps to that. One is looking at the -- step one is looking at training organizations. And step 2 is looking at the other way people can get training which is on the ground experience in organizations, right? So, if we start by looking at the training institutions, I think people -- the training institutions need to be doing this work too, right? I don't know if anyone from University of Washington or Cornish are on this call or not, but they need to do this work too. But it's little things that make a big difference when we think about universal design. I think a lot of times people hear disability or think meeting someone with a disability or even interviewing someone with a disability would be scary sometimes because they just don't know, right? And the less scary we can make it the better, I went to UW and at that time I was much less able to "pass" as nonautistic as I am now. So I worked really hard to be able to pass as nonautistic which takes a lot of energy and you can do it for short periods of time. But when I was at school I had a lot of tension and stimming in my hands all the time. I was told I'd never work if I couldn't get rid of the

stimming in my hands and the tension in my hands. So every class, no matter what I did, the only notes I got were about my hands when I was doing Shakespeare or Czechov or voice or Alexa and technique or scene study, right? Instead of the notes I was getting being about the acting that was going on, the comments were about my ability to change the scene partner and being changed by them the notes were only about my hands for four years, right? So I didn't get very much personally out of that program. But I think -- so I think one part is universal design.

This is an example of universal design. My business card is accessible to everyone. On this side it has the normal small print text. It has the Braille text as well. If you can see there's Braille bumps on it. And on the other side, it has the large print text. So for anyone, so that like it's so easy to make something small like that accessible for everyone. It doesn't cost a lot of money. And school is the same way. If we want to be creative and think about what's the most important thing for an actor to be about they're alive, they're a living breathing human being, schools can be creative about being accessible and not get stuck on finding neutral.

>> I work in schools a lot as a teacher artist and using doing race related shows. And I'm like okay, this is my classroom now and my chance. Before I do any show I do my pronouns, image description, I let students know if you're on the spectrum. This is a show you're welcome to pace and rock. In that little way I have normalized to a whole public school classroom that the theater industry thinks about you with disabilities. Without me telling them you can be an actor one day, just an actor coming into their classroom

normalizing disability plays a part in that. That's something I do every time I'm in a school, any school.

>> MICKEY ROWE: I think the other thing that all the theater professionals can do is realizing that university training or that that kind of training is not the be all and end all. That that devalues lived experience. People with autism are acting their whole lives, right? I script a lot of the things I say. If I go into a coffee shop, I'll say hi, how are you today? Can I please have a small coffee. If more conversation is needed because I scripted it, I'll say how has your day been today? Has it been busy or slow? And no matter what the barista says, if it's busy or slow, I can say do you like it better if it's busy or slow. I script a conversation that I use in daily life. And I work really hard so they don't know I prescribed and they think it's live that I'm coming up with these words on the spot. And that's my same job as an actor. Right? As an actor now, I don't think that I got very much training as an actor professionally. Because of my disability.

I -- before when I was working mostly working locally in Seattle, I hadn't really gotten any speaking roles anywhere. Cherry Simpson was my first role that was a speaking role.

And we did that and so, right? But "New York Times" reviews it and loves my act. Loved it and gave us great reviews. "Wall Street Journal" reviewed or Amadeus, right? And it goes to show that when we value lived experience, as equal to that kind of in-school training, that can help really equalize those. Sorry did that answer?

>> Kathy: Elizabeth.

>> ELIZABETH RALSTON: Yes, Mickey said it beautiful and so did Helen. I want to introduce a

concept that I don't think a lot of people have in the forefront of their consciousness and that is the term of an ally. We need more allies. We do live in an ableist society and I think the most people who speak out about that, about playing people with disabilities on a level pedestal would be best. We often see -- we have this bystander intervention kind of philosophy where we see something happen but we don't speak out about it. Being an ally is a really great way to do that.

>> MICKEY ROWE: This is powered from the deaf community borrowed. The deaf community was the first to come up with deaf gain. What does someone gain from being deaf and the disabled community has borrowed that from the Deaf community and said disability gain. If you think about there's the social model of disability and medical model and medical model says this person has a disability. There's something wrong with them. There's a problem that needs to be fixed, they are deficient in something and that's what a disability is. That's the medical model. And the social model says we are all just people. Disability is not about the differences. Difference is okay, difference is wonderful. Disability is not about the difference as much as the environment. And what do we need to change in the environment to make everyone equal? Right? So disability isn't about me being deficient. Disability is about this text being 12 point font instead of 8 point font. Disability is about this space not being accessible. Social model of disability and think about disability gain. Organizations can think what is this person bringing to the table because of their lived experience? How is the way their brain is wired differently everybody else's a benefit for our

organization.

>> I love that. With racial equity we do the same thing. As people of color a lot of people think they don't have as much education or income or there's a lot of negative stereotypes, but the reality is we so much more resilience. We can do so much more because of racism and structural systemic issues in the country that we have so much expertise we're ready to bring into any situation and that we should use an asset framework to really look at all people. So it's the same thing intersectionality, right? I wanted to actually close with asking you a specific question but actually because Elizabeth, you brought up that example of bystander training so this is about how do you make virtual events more accessible? I wanted to mention a couple Zoom meetings I was in. Different people, not just people who are hard of hearing or deaf were having trouble with their sound. But so the moderator kept on telling people what they needed to do to fix their sound. And the reality was one of the questions was someone was having trouble figuring out to get the live captioning up and explaining it all verbally. I was private messaging the moderator to not call them out and private message. You have to type it into the chat so they can see because they can't hear anything they're saying because they're having a problem with the sound. And then finally they didn't respond to that so finally I just did an everyone chat message to say here's the link you go to get the live captioning so that's a way to be a bystander ally in a Zoom visual setting and the other was just today. Cameras were set up in advance but I didn't realize until I watched it that the name covered in the bottom part of your box. So the interpreters

hands were sometimes going -- being covered up by their name and you was worried that people who needed the ASL interpretation couldn't see it. So I private messaged both interpreters to say reangle your camera. So those are ways you can support each other in a Zoom virtual setting. But the question I wanted to close with is. Given the topic of our conversation today, the different arts events that you've experienced or participated in the last two months or even before then that were in online or virtual setting is there any quick highlight of something that was like wow that really made me feel -- I loved that, that made that virtual or online that made that feel more inclusive and based on Universal Design or on the flip side was there a note you saw when you felt you completely lost access what was going on because they did not take something into consideration. And if each of you can actually just maybe highlight one thing that was really a plus or something that was a big no no that people should be aware of.

>> The moderator is hey we're at home, if your kids or pets come in. That's fine. If you need to pace, that's fine. They weren't like formal. I feel like some formal ways of disability inclusion. Just normalizing disability feeds and needs that people could just have that I love it was just so casual we're all here, we're all at home. Whatever you need to do that was so well done that was just so casual and normalled. We're building a new culture and we can sit still center frame or just be real with each other.

>> MICKEY ROWE: Which is also relaxing the rules of whiteness, it all intersects. It all intersects. I think that one thing that I saw that was really incredible is it was a -- it was not

like -- it was a video they created a video of a performance and it was a dance performance by a company where all of the dancers in this performance were using wheelchairs but what they had done is the way they used audio description is it was not something you needed to opt into. It was just included as part of the soundscape as part of the autistic soundscape of this video. It was poetic and beautiful. Almost like listening to an audio book and even though I personally would not opt into using audio description for watching a video of these dancers, it really enhanced my experience too and it was just beautiful and really added to the art of the experience. Dance is so much ahead of theater when it comes to audio description. And we all look at a lot of dance companies in New York for easy affordable ways to audio describe things.

>> ELIZABETH RALSTON: I just want to share one thing. If someone asked you a question and you don't really understand why they're making that request, be curious, ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions. I think there's a lot of fear. Relax. If someone is going chop your head off, be curious and --

>> It was so great chatting with all of you. Thank you for all your requestsr Again, we're not able to get through it. We had so much questions. We will look at those and figure out a way to address them in future webinars perhaps in information sheets and definitely things to share out. I want to turn things back over to Allexa who will close us out today.

>> ALLEXA: Hi, everyone. Thank you all so much for joining us today.

Wait a second here. We are going to share the recorded video and resources. So please do

follow the Seattle accessibility Consortium on Facebook. Contact Seattle, that's Seattle CAC@gmail.com with any questions or comments that you have. We would love your feedback. Please fill out the survey that will be e-mailed to you and your support is appreciated. Donations can be made at bit.ly/SCACShunpike. And that link is also posted in the chat as well. Bit.ly/scacShunpike. Thank you for joining us today.

>> ALLEXA: Thank you, everyone.