REALTIME FILE

National Council on Independent Living

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN CILs

APRIL 25, 2018

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>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. And there are participants. Wonderful. All right. Welcome, everybody. And thanks for bearing with me. I'm still a little bit new to this Zoom platform. So, welcome, everybody. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Tim, I want to welcome you to this teleconference and webinar, Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in CILs. Today's presentation, as always, is brought to you by the CIL‑NET, which is operated through a partnership among ILRU, NCIL, Utah State Center for Persons with Disabilities, and April, with support for the project provided by the Administration on Community Living at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

As I've demonstrated, we're still a little bit new to Zoom. It's been working really well, but we're getting used to it. We hope that you are getting used to it as well. Please send me your feedback, whether you love it or if you have issues. You can just email me during or after the presentation today at Tim@NCIL.org. I'd love to hear your thoughts. We do of course have an evaluation form as always, but that's focused a little bit more on the content of the presentation. So I thought it would be easiest to offer you my email to give me feedback on Zoom.

We are in presentation mode right now. And that means that all of you are muted. And thankfully for you, if you feel the same way that I do, your cameras are off and they will stay off. You don't have to worry about that. We want to make sure you know you can ask questions during the presentation today. There is a Q&A option on your menu bar at the bottom of your screen that you probably noticed. You can type your questions at any time during today's presentation.

We will wait for a Q&A break to address them. You're welcome to use the chat feature to share comments, thoughts, or say hello to someone that you know. But try to enter your questions in the Q&A. If you make a mistake and enter a question in the chat, no problem. I will see it and I will relay that to our presenters when we stop for questions. Okay. If you need closed captioning, hopefully it's already displaying for you. Hopefully you found that. You can turn that on in your menu bar.

You know from the confirmation email, as we always do, we offer a full‑screen CART captioning option. And you can access that. In fact, if you can see my chat box, I just pulled that up here. But you've got that URL in the confirmation email. For those of you that are new to Zoom, if you're using the captioning, please know there's a small arrow in the top right‑hand side corner of the captioning box. If you're only seeing a single line of captioning, you can enlarge that and make it much larger.

And I don't have time to walk you through it right now, but you can also go into your settings and you can change the font size there as well. So just know there are some options, some ways to manipulate that captioning that you can control on your own screen. Okay. When we finish today's webinar, you will notice an evaluation form will open in your web browser, the same browser you used to open Zoom today. Please do fill that out. We would really appreciate it.

We take your comments and suggestions very seriously. We'd love to hear from you. That's it for my housekeeping. I want to thank Jan and Roberta for putting together today's presentation, and for being with us today. Many of you know Jan and Roberta, but in case you don't, Jan Derry is, of course, the executive director of the northern West Virginia center for independent living, since 1993. Jan is the co‑chair of NCIL's violence and abuse subcommittee and has been for many years. She's provided excellent leadership there and she is a real leader in this work.

Roberta was also co‑chair of that same group since its inception in 2006 and only recently had to step down in 2017. And so anyway, Roberta is also in her daily life the Project Director of the Initiatives on Access and Justice with the Partners for Inclusive Communities at the University of Arkansas.

Jan and Roberta, thank you for being willing to do this and sharing your knowledge. Without any further ado, I'm going to go to the next slide. On this one, the contact slide, Jan and Roberta have been generous enough to offer their contact information. You're also welcome to send any questions to me if you don't have the slides handy at Tim@NCIL.org. And I will go ahead to this slide, slide four, where Jan's going to walk us through the learning objectives.

>> JAN DERRY: Hi there, everyone. Welcome. I'm not going to read everything to you, but obviously it's important to understand what it is we're talking about and how to define what sexual violence and harassment is, and then the laws that are relevant to these topics you will also learn. We want to give you indicators that you can look at for possible signs of sexual harassment or sexual violence happening in your world, and also we want to share with you how the misuse of power is really what is causes harassment or sexual violence.

It has nothing to do with sex itself. Next slide, please. You will also learn steps that help you to create an environment that supports the victims, which is our number one important goal, but also then that will prevent and address harassment within your CILs. And you will learn about the event roles of policies, procedures, we'll give you sample examples, education of staff and how that creates an environment that's safe for both your employees and your consumers. And then the last thing we want to address is to give you some expertise on how you work therapeutically with an individual who may have experienced sexual violence and harm in your CIL, so how to create that welcoming environment and how to have a therapeutic, trauma‑informed response to any types of sexual violence or sexual harassment that you may be exposed to.

Next slide.

>> ROBERTA SICK: So we want to begin at least by acknowledging that a lot of the attention to this recently has come about because of the MeToo movement. And in our conversations with folks, not everybody is aware of what the MeToo movement is about, though they oftentimes have heard of it. It actually was something that came about in 2006 when a woman by the name of Tarana Burke, an activist and survivor, founded the MeToo movement to create something called empowerment through empathy.

And that was among those who had experienced abuse, particularly women and girls of color. The movement really went viral in about 2017 when the Hollywood kind of got ahold of it. And then the MeToo movement was founded again. And that went viral. So the MeToo movement really has, though, drawn a lot of attention to these issues. And in the past, while we have known that sexual violence and sexual harassment was happening, the sheer number of both men and women who have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes who are now talking about it as a result of the MeToo movement have really offered hope to those of us in the sexual violence field who have been working against the cultural norms that create a climate of sexual violence in our country and in our communities.

There has also been a spinoff movement that has been shifting from MeToo to something that's called Time's Up. Time's Up is actually the movement leaders who are coming together to strategically frame the issues of sexual violence as a social and cultural problem rather than as an individual problem. And by doing that, what they have done is it lets us take a broad‑range look at all of the actions that we can take to systemically, systematically prevent sexual violence. It's a movement whose time has come. And it is definitely time that we from the Centers for independent Living perspective join in that and become more educated about these topic areas such as we are doing today.

My journey into this work began in about 1997, when our partners for inclusive communities here in Arkansas was given $15,000 to look at preventing rape and sexual assault of people with disabilities. That effort then grew into a Department of Justice grant under their Ending Violence Against Women with Disabilities initiative in 2002. We coordinated that for a few years. Then I came in contact within a lot of the leaders within independent living who have been doing a lot of the work, Leslie Meyers, who at that time was at independence First in Milwaukee, and I and a couple of other folks met with the folks at NCIL and began talking about a survey that had been done in 2005.

And it was after that that we did a resolution, proposed it at the conference, and that was when the violence and abuse task force was formed back in 2006. My local effort here in our state, in 2007, I was funded through Department of Justice money that comes to our state as a victims services program working in co‑advocacy with other organizations that provide services to victims in a co‑advocacy model where we provide technical assistance and training and support to the individual around the disability and the domestic violence and sexual assault programs do what they need to do in relation to sexual assault or domestic violence.

So our journey began then. Let me punt this to Jan and let her share about what she has done.

>> JAN DERRY: Okay. My journey started in 2005 when I was the first Center for independent Living to actually respond to a survey that the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services put out regarding what we do, what our policies are, are we educated in the field. No other center in the state responded to that survey. So they reached out to me. And that began our relationship. And we started working under a developmental disabilities grant to study what the training needs were for individuals who worked in the disability field, whether it was from group homes, whether it was working at psychiatric centers, whether it was in day programs, shelter workshops.

And we got a sense that there was an extreme need for training in this field. And so I started cooperating with the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, and we obtained one of those grants that Roberta just referenced on the OBW grants on making welcoming and inclusive response systems for individuals who were subjected to or survived sexual violence. Through that project, we created a training curriculum called the West Virginia SAFE Project, where we created training modules to work with sexual assault responders as well as disability providers to do a cross‑training toolkit so that we were all on the same page.

We started out by learning about languages, people first language, and what's the language for sexual violence coalitions and the domestic violence coalitions. And our relationship has continued such that my center is now on ‑‑ I have staff on three sexual assault response teams. And although we don't necessarily serve as advocates during the sexual response itself, we provide technical assistance to all the nurses, response teams, to learn to provide effective, inclusive, and welcoming services for individuals with disabilities.

So I've been doing this since about 2005 and joined the task force in 2006.

>> ROBERTA SICK: So there's been a number of steps taken within independent living to address sexual assault, rape, and other forms of violence. We do know that when we began this work back in 1997 and then even as we formed the task force, now the subcommittee in 2006, we really did not have national statistics on rape and sexual assault of people with disabilities because there were none included in any of the national datasets. That changed in 2009 when the first report was issued that used data from the National Crime Victimization Survey.

So if you're interested in seeing a lot of data about this, then go to the National Crime Victimization Survey and put in ‑‑ look for the disability section of that. I want to say, though, that data with this issue is difficult in the general population, and even more difficult in the population of people with disabilities, because so many people who experience any form of sexual assault, rape, harassment, do not report it because they are afraid that they won't be believed, or they have seen how others who have reported it have been handled.

That's why it's really important for us to develop effective mechanisms to address these issues when they come up. So let me just give you a couple of the statistics that gives you just some indication about rape and sexual assault, and violence in the lives of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are more at risk to crime for a variety of reasons. And you're going to know those probably much better than I do. There is a reliance on caregivers. There is limited transportation options. There's isolation from the community.

And we do know that while people with disabilities often experience the same types of intimate partner violence or other forms of violence that people without disabilities do, there are also some additional forms of violence that we have found in the disability community ‑‑ denial of care, destruction of medical equipment, manipulation of medications. These risk factors not only increase the opportunities for abuse, neglect, and violence to happen, but they also make reporting the victimization much more difficult for victims.

In 2009, since 2009, the rate of violent victimization has increased almost 25% among individuals with disabilities. When we look at the statistics that were the latest that we've gotten, which was in 2013. So we know that the rate of violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, is more than two times that of individuals without disabilities. Another ‑‑ among crime victims with disabilities, the group that is most at risk are folks who have any type of cognitive disabilities.

And for that group, it's twice that of the rates of the other types of disabilities. There was a recent NPR series that happened in January and February of this year that looked at sexual violence and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And in their efforts to get data on that, they reported that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were seven times more likely to experience sexual violence. Now, we also have to look at why that is. And it's easy, sometimes, to think that the risk is created by the disability.

And that is not the case. It really has to do with the perpetrator that's responding ‑‑ that's doing the violence as opposed to the individual themselves. The person who perpetrates violence is responsible for anything that happens, not the victim. And I think it's really important for us to acknowledge that. We do know that providers who serve individuals with disabilities may not have considered, though, that sexual harassment is actually a form of sexual violence, and that their consumers may be experiencing this either in our work settings, or at school, or at work. Jan?

>> JAN DERRY: I had to un‑mute. What's important is, we're concerned about what CILs need to know and how CILs need to respond. And one of my major concerns when I learned about the prevalence of abuse and harassment towards individuals with disabilities is many of our centers ‑‑ we can go to the next slide, Tim. Many of our centers provide personal assistant services. And I don't know the hiring practices, the screenings. I'm aware that they do background checks, and they do significant monitoring of what's going on.

But one of the most frightening statistics that we learned over the years is that 33% of all the violence that happens towards individuals with disabilities are perpetrated by personal attendants. And so as a CIL that provides personal assistance services, just knowing that fact alone makes it important that we look at what are the barriers to reporting, what are the risk factors. And so I want to talk a little bit about what the barriers to reporting are that Roberta started to talk about, and then we'll go and talk about risk factors.

Roberta mentioned the lack of transportation. I don't know about most other states, but West Virginia has transportation in four of its fifty counties. That lets you know that the barrier to public transportation ‑‑ the barrier to transportation and accessible transportation plays a big role in people's abilities to actually access the services and supports that they need to deal with sexual harassment and sexual violence in their lives. my center, I take pride in offering employment opportunities that are often the first time that a person with a disability has been in the workforce, because I don't hire people by their credentials behind their name and the alphabet soup behind their name.

I hire people who have dealt with oppression, who have utilized the systems and services that we're trying to make inclusive and use, and create equal opportunity with our communities. And so being able to identify what are the prevalence, and what risk factors exist for those new employees that you have brought into your center, which may be experiencing for the first time the employment world and what to expect. And I also have found that part of that risk factor has to do with the prevalence.

We can go to the next slide there. Thank you. I'm jumping ahead. I'm sorry, let's go back, because I jumped ahead. We'll talk about the risk factors. And what's important for you to realize is that barriers to reporting play along with risk factors. If you have a communication barrier, that creates a risk factor for someone taking your credibility. Individuals with mental health issues. I have several employees that have mental health issues and several volunteers that come here and work in our support groups.

Their credibility is instantly questioned if that diagnosis of mental health issues comes up. Educational, socialization background. Social isolation that many of the individuals that we work with, many of the people that come into our centers is so prevalent that we have to take that into consideration. That's a barrier. The manipulation to feel blame is a barrier to reporting. The lack of knowledge about what is sexual harassment. The desire to be accepted as part of a new team of employees, knowing the difference between flirtatious behavior, friendliness, social networking, establishing boundaries.

Many of the individuals that we work with do not know the appropriateness of establishing boundaries and what's acceptable work behavior, what's acceptable joking around. That lack of that knowledge in itself becomes a risk factor. Let's talk about some of the other risk factors we face as centers for independent living that isn't any different for ‑‑ it's just the negative attitude towards people with disabilities that our societies have put upon us forever. We all deal with that as a CIL, but think about how that creates a risk for higher‑level victimization or harassment by other employees.

You know, I don't know how people ‑‑ my center is so small that I don't have janitorial staff. I don't have different staff other than my direct service staff and some support staff. You have to think about what risks are being placed in front of individuals who don't really know that it's not appropriate for someone to be acting the way they are. So we're going to be teaching you those definitions of what constitutes that. Learned compliance. People with disabilities that I've worked with ‑‑ those of you who know me, feisty and noncompliant is pretty much one of my themes in life.

And the fact that someone has come out of an environment where they're using personal assistants, where they're using constant care from someone else, that learned dependency and compliance to not say no, to not disagree, the consequences of saying no and disagreeing often end up in the withdrawal of services. And so we have learned this dependency of being compliant and saying whatever is expected of us. The lack of knowledge about healthy relationships, what's important at work, how do you establish that boundary.

Years ago I had an employee here who continually had the most sexually inappropriate jokes out of his office. My office doesn't have doors, you hear each other's conversations. People became very uncomfortable with that. That is sexual harassment in an environment that's not appropriate, and if people don't know that's inappropriate, they're going to respond to it, feed it, and later have consequences for that. Secondly, the nature of the disability in and of itself isn't the cause for the harassment, but it often creates a risk factor.

Because if a person cannot defend themselves, cannot talk back, cannot respond immediately, that increases the risk factors. Lack of resources, knowing where to go. Your policies and procedures. We're going to talk about that. They need to know exactly where they go if they feel like they're being subjected to harassment. The lack of control in personal affairs. Think about that. My center is not a payee for anybody, but most personal assistants that go into the home also have access to debit ‑‑ some may have access to debit cards, may have access to PIN numbers.

So they're providing assistance. Think about the vulnerability of the manipulation that can happen if they have that kind of access. And finally, you know, regarding perpetrators, you think personal assistant or relative is not going to ‑‑ a coworker is not going to be a perpetrator because they're such good guys, they're such good people. Well, we all have multiple images that we portray. And often what happens in people's private lives is not public information. And so we've seen that where coaches, and the most popular stars, who are considered such wonderful people, how could they possibly be perpetrating this.

Another thing I want you to consider is sexual harassment, sexual violence, is not ‑‑ is the only crime where it's alleged after it's proven. There's a murder, it's not an alleged murder. It happens. If there's a robbery, it wasn't alleged. But the first time someone talks about sexual harassment or sexual violence in the workplace, or in their personal lives, it's alleged. That's the only crime that that happens. And that creates a risk factor, because there's that instant doubt. Okay. I'm ready for the next slide now. (Chuckling)

>> ROBERTA SICK: So let's look a little bit at what the definitions are, just to give us a little bit of knowledge about how we're, kind of, talking as we're throwing these terms around. The actual term sexual violence is an all‑encompassing nonlegal term. And it's actually a lot of times defined by state statutes. And so you're going to see different ways that those things are defined when you look at state statutes. West Virginia, for instance, while we have a federal definition of what constitutes sexual harassment, and we'll talk about those laws in just a few minutes, there are a number of states that also have defined that within their state. And so you need to know whether sexual harassment, when we talk about the laws of that, whether you have a state‑specific law as well.

We do encourage you, though, to know what your state's laws are in relation to rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse. We all know in the disability field about adult protective services and what they investigate and those kind of things. And that's in a different statute in the state. But we really do need to know the legal, criminal definitions for what sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse are in your various states. The best place to find the definitions of sexual violence from those different states is the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network.

And they also operate the National Sexual Assault Line. Tim, can you go ahead and advance? So, let's talk a little bit just about sexual harassment. Jan talked a little bit about what that looked like. In employment settings, it's been defined as those unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and all of that kind of stuff. It ranges from a lot of different things ‑‑ those remarks, those jokes, those gestures, to being touched, grabbed, or any of those types of physical things like that.

>> TIM FUCHS: Can I jump in for just a second? I was trying to figure out why I was seeing the captions just fine, and others were having trouble accessing them. And I just want to go ahead and type out the right link here in the chat. So for those of you that were trying ‑‑ hopefully no one even noticed this. But if you were trying to view the full‑screen CART captioning, you can access that at the same link we sent out, except at the end replace NCIL with ILRU. Just a miscommunication with us and our captioner.

I'm sorry about that. I'm sorry to interrupt. I am sharing that with everyone now. And hopefully they all saw it. Go ahead, Roberta.

>> ROBERTA SICK: Okay. So the bottom line of this is that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, and it violates several different federal laws. And we'll talk about those in a minute. Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances. It could be the victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex for it to be sexual harassment. The harasser can be the victim's supervisor. It could be somebody acting on behalf of an employer, a supervisor in another area, a coworker, or even a nonemployee.

The victim doesn't have to be the person harassed, but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct that's occurring within a workplace. Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to a person. But at the same time, we need to look at the emotional consequences of sexual harassment and see it as sexual violence. And if we can look at it from that frame, then we're going to be addressing this in a way that is professional and which is sensitive to the person who is experiencing the violence.

The federal deadline to file for a charge of discrimination, it's through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is who defines sexual violence. And it violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Education Act Amendments of 1972 also cover this. And that's specifically Title IX. We'll talk about that in a few minutes. Jan.

>> JAN DERRY: The first form of sexual harassment is called quid pro quo. You know what I'm saying here. Which means this for that. And so that generally means that if you do this, I will give you a raise. If you do this, I'll give you a 15‑minute extra long break. It's asking for behavior that would do this to guarantee a raise. The other one is your hostile environment. And that's like the example I was giving with the previous employee that I had that kept these nasty jokes. But you could also have, you know, people wear t‑shirts that are pretty provocative sometime.

So looking at your dress code. The hostile environment is not necessarily an unwelcome offense, it's just the environment that allows for disrespect and an environment that allows for you to ‑‑ that affects your performance at work because you've got this pressure from a coworker. It makes you uncomfortable. And that's the environment that makes it uncomfortable. So you've got the two kinds, this for that, and then just not wanting to come to work because you know that you're going to be harassed, or that it's an uncomfortable environment. Okay, Tim.

>> ROBERTA SICK: It's important for us to at least know the laws that relate to this. And as I said, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is who investigates that for discrimination, should a complaint be filed. By Title IX of the Education Act Amendments of 1972 also prevents sexual harassment from occurring, and that's particularly in schools and colleges. I'm sure that you have heard a lot of discussion around Title IX on college campuses.

We've been talking a lot about it in relation to sexual assault on college campuses. We've been talking about how often it happens. There was a report that was released here not very long ago that talked specifically about people with disabilities on college campuses and whether they were being included in the university's Title IX efforts and in their educational efforts. And that's a report that we would encourage you to read as well. Again, let me just reiterate that it's important for us to look at the state laws defining all of these things and become very, very familiar with it.

Tim, go ahead and hit the next slide, if you would. Now, when we've done this presentation at different times or when we talk about sexual violence, we get a lot of different people in the room who sort of approach this from whatever perspective that they feel like they need to be taking it from. Our approach, Jan and I are victim advocates first. We're not attorneys. We really are proud of our work in the sexual violence field. We as victim advocates are going to be concerned about the safety of the individual first.

That's where our passion is going to be. That's where our efforts are going to be directed at. We also are concerned about the safety of the agency. And Jan, as a director, will talk a little bit more about that. But regardless of whether you're a director, or whether you're a victim advocate, you really do need to be clear about what your approach is. And for us, ours is belief first, safety first. Jan, would you talk a little bit about that from the center perspective?

>> JAN DERRY: There's only been one director at my center, and that would have been me. And so I'm somebody ‑‑ and I think every center director is the same. We care about our employees. We care about our consumers. But the reputation of our agency and the integrity, the personal integrity of your agency is the forefront of what we put out there to the world. And that is that we are a safe place. We are an inclusive place. And we will do everything we possibly can to ensure that a center for independent living is a place where you will be believed, and that you will be safe.

And so as directors, we're going to talk about it a little bit later in the presentation, but your policies and procedures, and the environment that you create, and the tone that you are willing to accept and that you permeate through your environment, that this is an acceptable behavior and not an acceptable behavior, starts with your policies, and starts with your role as a leader, and as an executive director, or program coordinator, the head of your PA services, you have to demonstrate respect for those that you work with and those that you serve.

And we have to remember that we as individuals, as centers, we are working for people and with people. And almost ‑‑ our services that we provide are almost what we sell. And we want them to understand that they have to be safe, and they will be individualized. And what makes you feel safe is important. So again, we'll go into it longer, but policies guide what you do, and role models and leadership are key to ensure that your environment doesn't perpetuate an environment that creates disrespect and sets the tone for what's an allowable amount of kidding around, what's allowable for joking around, your social media.

Those kinds of boundaries have to be established by the leadership. Okay, Tim. I want to share with you that it is important to know that as we shared earlier, sexual harassment and sexual violence really have so little to do with sex. And it has to do with the misuse of power and control. And now think about how much power and control we as centers for independent living have over individuals. We don't want to, but we're perceived as the go‑to, the resource. People don't know things about the community and how to access and deal with barriers that they're facing in their community until they come to us.

And so that puts us in a really difficult, I think powerful position, that it's important that we realize that what we're doing is we don't remember that the people with disabilities are our employees. The skills that we teach and the products that we share, and the behaviors that we suppress are seen as quality control. And we're not in the business of suppressing behavior. We're in the business of protecting the individuals that we work with and helping them to gain the skills to identify when they themselves feel that they are becoming victimized by someone who is sexually harassing them.

There's certain things that you can look at to try to figure out what's going on in your center that may help you better understand whether or not sexual harassment is happening at your center. You have to look at your physical environment, you know. Are people being forced to be behind closed doors? If you're walking into an office and all of a sudden that individual says we have to close this door, and there's a threat of violation of privacy if you open the door, then it's a power struggle.

It is not necessarily because you're protecting confidentiality. I have seen it where people are brought into the center and they shut the door, and then all of a sudden you hear loud voices and things are happening. So look at your physical environment that allows for monitoring of others' behavior. And then look at the physical changes that your employees may be making. If there's sexual harassment going on in your center, someone's appearance could be changing. Their eating habits may be changing. They're showing up late for work.

They're afraid to be caught alone with one employee. There's physical indicators that something's going on. And it's important that you look at that and see whether or not that's indication of harassment. If you have a center employee that you have a consumer who's coming in and continually saying I can't work with that person, I don't feel comfortable with that person, there could be an indicator that there's a problem.

And then look at the emotional behaviors that some of your staff may be demonstrating. I take pride in hiring individuals that may have some emotional issues. And all of a sudden if those are becoming exasperated by them coming to work, something may be going on that's making them uncomfortable. They're dressing differently. They may not know how to react. And so some may be getting more sexually promiscuous and more flirtatious at work just as a result of the trauma that they're experiencing.

There might be some aggression that you're not used to seeing all of a sudden. Or a behavior that manifested itself that you weren't used to. If someone comes into your work environment and all of a sudden they're physically aggressive towards you when they weren't before, it's a real good indicator that something different's happening and it doesn't necessarily mean that something's happening in their world that changed, it's what happened here when they came to the center.

I think it's important that we look at sudden unwillingness to ‑‑ some centers, they have these wonderful changing rooms for their personal assistants to help them change and take care of toileting and things like that. And all of a sudden they're not comfortable being left alone with that person. It's a real good indicator that something's going on, and you need to have ‑‑ you need to be vigilant about that, making sure that people feel safe to come to you and say that they're not comfortable.

Using authority rather than reason as a way of changing a situation. Hopefully centers aren't saying you need to do this because I say so. I get equally as frustrated as everybody else. I'm a parent. We all say that. I'm your mom, do it. We're not these people's parents and we have to make sure that we're not exercising that kind of power over somebody. Okay. Next slide, please.

But let's look at our power as a center. I think it's important that we discuss the fact that the greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse. If there's one person that is working with someone all the time, that person has an awful lot of power over them. And there is a wonderful tool that's referenced as a footnote in the bottom of this slide called power tools. This book was shared with me by Roberta. And that book is now mandatory reading of every one of my employees that come into the center or my volunteers for them to realize what personal power they have over the individual.

And you think, I don't have any power. But if you're helping that person set goals, if you're the first person that is now helping them to learn to handle their own finances, they're looking at you as a teacher. You're a role model. Sometimes we get way busy and we don't want to waste time. And so it's easier if we just say, just do it my way, just do it the way I want you to do it. Realizing that if you're making the person a model of yourself, that's a form of abuse. What we want to do is to teach the individual to speak up for themselves and be who they are.

But as center personnel, you have an awful lot of power that that individual may perceive that you have. And it gives you a tremendous opportunity to either teach that person to think properly for themselves, to be able to evaluate situations for themselves, so that they can identify if they are feeling harassed. It's your job and your responsibility to teach them to be able to know the difference between a hug of hello that's welcomed, or a hug that may be perceived as being a power push and a power hug.

There is such a difference. Making someone a model of ourselves, again, is not what we're here to do. We want to teach them to be who they are. You know, do it because I said so rather than teaching the person to think, to evaluate, and then decide for themselves. Centers for independent living say that we are all consumer directed, but I've been a peer reviewer. I've gone into some centers where everybody's goals are the same. Everybody's goals are written before the person signs the plan. That's an abuse of power.

And so it's something to look at. And I encourage every one of you to research this book called Power Tools and invest in that as part of your staff development plan. Okay, Tim. Is your center welcoming? We think it is. But my center is a hole in the wall. I have a tiny little center. And the first thing you walk into is the work room, is the copy machine, not a welcoming place to sit and wait. I don't have frontline staff. So let's think about our rural communities and how we can protect the safety.

Think about the use of interpreters. You know, if somebody comes in and they're using an interpreter, a lot of people at your center know how to interpret sign language. And so are you providing that privacy so that the interpreter is not being viewed by someone else who may be coming to your office to explain that they're uncomfortable with a coworker, or that something's happening. If they're using an interpreter, we have glass cubes. You can see what's being said.

So pay attention to that. Your privacy. You know, we're in the cube world. If someone wants to talk to you about that stuff, do you have the opportunity to meet privately with the person? You know, our small, rural communities. I don't have any guards on my doors. You walk in at any time. And so if the first person in the office that they meet is not someone who is welcoming, is not someone who encourages participation and says I'm sorry, we don't do this here, you need to go down the hall.

Centers for independent living need to be the open door. We all have open door policies. But in rural communities, remember, if you refer them to another agency or adult protective services, it could be a family member. In my community if they've been sexually violated or harassed and they physically want to have an exam, that nurse may be a relative of theirs in the community. So think about the difference between these large city centers that have lots of staff and lots of opportunities to interact, and select different staff, versus the small ones where you have such tiny staff.

You get one person, one skills trainer, one advocate, one this, one that. Think about how you can create an environment in that small, rural community to give the person the opportunity to be comfortable but also know that everybody knows everything and everybody knows everybody in a small, rural community. Okay, Tim. Equal ‑‑ you know, look at your position of power. Do ‑‑ is someone over you? Do all your ‑‑ is there equity in your center? Male/female equity? Think about does your behavior change when you're alone with a person versus when you're not alone?

Would you be willing to have your behavior videotaped by somebody? If you're thinking about is my behavior harassing, would I be talking the same way to this consumer if my spouse was in the room, would I be talking this way to this individual if my boss walked in? Or would my behavior change? If your behavior would change it's an indicator that perhaps you need to be evaluating your behavior. Would you want someone acting like that towards you? If any of these questions are no, or yes, then you would change your behavior, I'd suggest you look at that behavior.

Would you want someone writing an article about the way they were treated at the center that indicates that they were mistreated by a staff member? You have to ensure that ‑‑ I'm sorry. I lost my train of thought here. What I was trying to say, we have so much power over the people that we work with. And we try to get friendly, and we're involved with their lives, and sometimes we get too friendly. And sometimes we're joking around too much. And they don't know how to take that behavior, because they're so eager for the social networking, for the social isolation.

They want to be liked, they want to be included. They put up with things that are not appropriate. So would your family member be putting up with that, or is this something that's exclusive to just you and that person. If there's questioning behind your behavior, I'd suggest you evaluate your behavior. Okay. You know, we were talking about the importance of policy. I want to share with you that the elements of having a policy include one, the very first thing you have to do is define what's acceptable and not acceptable, standard behavior for your center.

You have to define that in your first sentence of behavior. Everyone needs to know this is not going to be tolerated at your center. And so your documentation standards, put that in your policies as to how you document about your conversations with people. You know, I'm not talking about my own staff now. I'm talking about all staff. I watched a contact note written and they were talking about the way the person was dressed, their body, the way they behaved themselves. And I'm like, that is not standard documentation behavior.

So we need to document that. You also need to have your reporting requirements. Designate who is the person that sexual harassment should be reported to. You know, the very first standard that you should say is that the person needs to be taught to identify that and say stop, I don't want this. You cannot do this. Encourage that kind of behavior in your policy that says please speak up. Your basic code of conduct at your centers should define what is acceptable and what's not acceptable, whether it's on your social media contacts, whether it is ‑‑ because we don't see.

I mean, at my center our rules are the executive director cannot request a friend request of an employee, because that allows you to do harassing things to that employee and get involved in their lives without ‑‑ and have an avenue to communicate with them that's outside of work. Now, our policies also say that if an employee requests me to be a friend on social media that's different. They're reaching out to me, not me reaching out to them. You have to have an established complaint and grievance procedure that protects the confidentiality but that moves that complaint along so that the individual knows that their complaint is being taken seriously and that there is a procedure that will be followed that will deal with that procedure.

You can have it formal. You can have an external review team. You can have an internal review team to look at that and see what has to change. But you need to be looking at how you're going to be supporting the person that's being harassed, and then your staff and consumer training so that you can identify what constitutes harassment. Looking at your employee evaluation forms, besides assessing whether or not they are punctual and do they meet their reporting requirements, do they follow dress code, you know, you need to be looking at do they see themselves as a role model.

Do they demonstrate the behavior we're trying to prevent happening. If they've got sexual harassment charges that have been founded against them, that needs to be incorporated into the evaluation plan or the corrective action plan. And then, you know, your policies also need to say and teach how you respond to a victim. How you respond to a survivor so that you're not re‑victimizing the person by your lack of an appropriate response. And you can get that training, and I encourage you to work with your EEOC person in your state as well as your sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions in your state.

They can assist you in providing that training. But you need to not just do it once during orientation. Sexual harassment is such a big thing in our workplace now. We're learning that it needs to be an ongoing part of your training. You need to have signs posted in your environment that say this will not happen here. This is a safe environment that this will not happen and then take the necessary steps if it does happen. But supporting the individual, whether it's a coworker, whether it's a consumer, or whether it's a board member or a volunteer that may be subjected to the sexual harassment, your number one responsibility is to provide that individual with the support that they need so that they can keep their job, not lose wages because they're emotionally distraught, not calling in sick because they're afraid to come to work.

It's our job to have policies that will provide the individual the assurance to know that their claim will be taken seriously. You can advance it now.

>> ROBERTA SICK: So when we talk about staff and consumer training, one of the reasons why we started the violence and abuse subcommittee task force back in 2006, because those of us who were interfacing with independent living centers realized that in terms of violence that was occurring to people with disabilities, centers for independent living have always been great advocates in their community. But when you start talking about folks who are in domestic violence situations, there are safety issues that come up.

And we need the people in the domestic violence field to work with us to understand those safety issues. We had a lot of folks early on in the movement who kind of, like, we spent a lot of time telling other people what they needed to be doing. And we needed to turn the fingers back and look at ourselves and what we needed to be doing within our programs and within our environments. And so while that sexual harassment is a policy issue, sexual harassment and violence in employment settings is really broader issue than just sexual harassment.

So as Jan talked about those policies, we want to begin looking more at a holistic program that's focused on several different areas, the first being prevention. There's been a lot of outreach happening to youth at the moment. Youth, whether they have disabilities or not, are really a little bit confused about what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like. This world around social media has changed a lot of the ways that bullying might happen, or that violence happens. And you are seeing the ramifications of that.

So we need to provide prevention and education. We need to look at helping people to understand what healthy relationships look like, what unhealthy relationships look like, how to identify those, whether they're taking place at the school or whether they're taking place in an employment setting, or whether they're taking place at some activity in the community. Prevention is not a place where we have spent a lot of our money in the past. We have really spent most of our money under trying to provide intervention for situations that occur.

Prevention is a little bit more difficult. And that's where you begin to look at those risk and protective factors that help an individual to at least have the knowledge base. Now, let me also say, because when I'm doing this training with people with disabilities, I have to say this a lot. The violence that does happen is never the responsibility of the victim. It is always the responsibility of the perpetrator. It is not the victim's fault. And that is true both for people with disabilities and without.

We do a lot of victim‑blaming. When something happens at a college campus and someone asks a woman what they had on, or somebody asks a man what he did, those kind of things like that are victim, blaming the victim. And we don't want to participate in that. The support, should something happen to someone, your prevention program will help to set an environment which will enable support to happen to an individual should they either experience sexual harassment within your setting, or in some other setting or in they experience sexual violence, it will create an environment that is safe for them to be able to get support.

The number one reason that most people who have experienced sexual violence do not report is fear of ‑‑ their fear that they will not be believed. And indeed, that is many times what has happened, as Jan was talking earlier about that. So prevention is important. Support is important. We need to have respectful environments that promote respect as opposed to ‑‑ if it's approaching a line, then we need to address that. We are setting the tone for the future of our disability rights movement. And we really do, right now, need to be setting the tone for what our future leaders are going to be acting upon.

And the equal access and equity is really important. We need to not look just at women's violence. We need to look at the violence that's happening to men. We need to look at the violence that's happening to people who are in the LGBTQI community, and we need to also look at what's happening in the transgender community. We have a lot more in common with underserved groups than we are different. And if we can join together within those movements and replace some of these boilerplate policies with a holistic program and get involved in some of those efforts nationally, then we're going to create a climate that is not going to allow violence to occur.

One of the things that I'd like to mention is several years ago within the violence and abuse task force, we had a request, because we know that centers for independent living provide services to people with disabilities. So at times you may be providing support to victims of violence. And at times you may be providing supports to perpetrators of violence. And you don't really have a choice about doing that. It is their right also to receive services. But you need to be very clear within your centers.

And you need to be very respectful and supportive of how to enable those services to be provided in ways that are safe for both groups, both people, but at the same time that are respectful of the individuals who are experiencing the violence. Next slide, please, Tim. So let's look at how do we create a culture that supports victims of violence. The first thing that we need to do is to just acknowledge that victims of any form of sexual violence, whether it's harassment, or whether it's rape, or it's sexual assault, they do need support.

The MeToo movement has definitely in the last six or eight months increased the calls that have come to the Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network. It's increased the number of calls that are coming to the state coalitions that address sexual violence. And it's increased the number of calls that are coming in to all of us. I don't know if your centers have experienced it, but we have people within the disability community who are now coming forward to talk about their violence and abuse that they have experienced.

And it is those stories and those individuals who are coming forth to share that that is setting an environment that allows other people who may have experienced violence in an institution they lived in years ago, in a home that they were at, on a bus, in a school bus that they may have been transporting, or in some of the different forms of transportation that we have now. Those are all environments where different things can happen. And it's important for us to create a climate where people with disabilities know that they can get support and then we as advocacy organizations need to be able to adopt that culture of supporting victims of violence and supporting a culture that addresses violence when it happens.

We're not in a very good culture at the moment. We have a lot of things that are being modeled that are really, really concerning. So if somebody does report violence, it's important to encourage them to talk with someone that they trust. Let them know that you believe them and it's not their fault. We did a brochure here a couple of years ago because we were being invited into rural communities. And we would meet with individuals with disabilities who were oftentimes in developmental disability programs.

And so many times when we would be invited in, what we would come in and find is that everybody was looking at what happened around that individual, what did that individual do that allowed this rape or sexual assault to happen. And many times they felt like they were being victimized not just by the violence that they experienced, but by the way that people were responding to it. And so if somebody asks me how to respond, I say you want to be supportive. You want to let them know that you care about them. And then you want to provide as much support as you can.

So let them know that you believe them and it's not their fault. Help them to consider their options. Look at resources, either to stop harassment that maybe occurring, or to get some supports of anything that they might experience, whether it's the harassment or other forms of sexual violence. I can't stress enough how important it is for all of us to begin looking holistically at these issues. Even though we've had the NCIL Violence and Abuse Subcommittee since 2006, we still have not been able to push that topic area into the mainstream of the issues around advocacy like employment, or housing, or supports, or services.

Yet we know, we who work in the violence and abuse field, know that those things happen in all of those settings. And people are making decisions about what supports they're going to get, whether they're going to do certain things, whether they're going to return to work, based on some of their prior experiences with violence and abuse that might have happened to them. Next slide, Tim. Jan, your mic.

>> JAN DERRY: We were talking about the importance of workplace policies and procedures, and how important it is to have that policy in place. What I also want to stress, centers for independent living have a tendency to want to be everything to everybody. And there are ‑‑ it's imperative that you understand where the community resources are in your community. You don't know what you don't know when it comes to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and the impact it has on your fellow employees, as well as your fellow ‑‑ your consumers.

And so there are people who are professionally trained to work ‑‑ that work in this field. You need to become partners with those individuals. You need to reach out so that you have a good working relationship. And they can help you establish good response systems and good environments because they can help you look at your own environment to make sure that you're welcoming and that you aren't creating an environment where sexual harassment is allowed.

Know your state laws. As Roberta pointed out, in West Virginia, sexual harassment doesn't necessarily just end with sexually inappropriate behavior or sexual inappropriate advances. It also includes physical violence and physical threats of violence if it's gender‑specific. And so that constitutes sexual harassment. If sexual harassment continues after you have worked with your employer or with your ‑‑ think about the fact that we have a lot of consumers who come into our centers and they could be sexually harassing each other.

So that's why it's important that you teach this to your consumer base to identify sexual harassment and what's appropriate and what's inappropriate. (Coughing) In West Virginia, the Human Rights Commission is the first place you go to file the complaint. If you can't mediate the complaint internally and the behavior continues, you'll have to file a formal complaint against that person. You need to find out in your state what is the avenue to do that on the professional level.

You can go outside your state and go straight to the EEOC on a national level, but it's important that you find out what those resources are within your own state. Learn your state statutes, because they're different. How do they define them, and the number of employees that it involves, whether you're a center with 15 employees or a center for 150. The regulations vary per state. And so you really do need to understand that so you know how to report and who to report to.

One of the first steps is looking at your written procedures and identifying who within your center is going to be the recipient of such complaints. And then if the complaint is against that person themselves, who is the next step above that. So understanding where you take reports is critical for ensuring that the person gets the supports and the environment is created where this is not perpetrated over, and over, and over again. Okay. Next slide, please.

>> ROBERTA SICK: So we've given you a lot of information today. (Chuckling) And we're hoping that you're not quite as overwhelmed as we were in trying to put this together for you today. There actually is a really, really good national resource hub that is for victims and coworkers, and employers and advocates to begin shifting their workplace culture from facilitating harassment and silence to promoting support, respect, and equity. And that's included in one of the slides at the end of the presentation.

But I wanted to mention that because this is just an hour and a half presentation about some really, really important topics. And the fact that you have joined us today says that you're a center that wants to become more involved in this and who wants to address these issues in a way that will help to support victims. So what can you do as an employer? What are the top ten things employers can do right now? Well, the first thing that you can do is to exhibit leadership on this issue.

You have to begin to change your workplace culture to one that promotes that respect equity. And to make that change from the top, because if it's being modeled from the top, then the folks who are observing that individual are going to know that every person in the center will be accountable to each other. If you have a person who's in a high‑level position who does sexual jokes or has sexually inappropriate comments or touching, then there's a real problem, because that individual ‑‑ those individuals in power, because this is an abuse of power, it's not about sex, it's about power and control, those folks are setting a climate.

So we need to have everybody in a workplace hold each other accountable. We also need to have a workplace culture that promotes and supports instead of encouraging silence. I have to say, it is a lot easier not to know about sexual violence. And those of us who are embedded in this field oftentimes talk about how you can't not know what you know. And once you've become involved in this, even what is happening in the MeToo movement in the media right now, you are seeing literally hundreds and thousands of people who are having conversations in their homes and with their intimate partners and with their friends and with support people about things that have happened to them.

And it's really critical that we who are in touch with and support individuals with disabilities and their advocacy efforts can help to support that as well. So we also want to check in with employees. Odds are that there are some employees even in our centers now who have experienced some form of sexual harassment or sexual violence in their lives. Let's put up some posters. Let's put up some things that promote healthy relationships, that let people know that we are supportive and that we will not tolerate sexual harassment and that we support victims of violence.

You can conduct a sexual harassment workplace climate survey where people can take it anonymously if they feel safe to answer questions. However, I would suggest that you have that done by an independent group, especially in the small centers where you only have like ten people who may be employed there. Do it with your consumers. Use the results of those surveys to determine the gaps in response and how you can better respond and engage in a conversation about what the workplace community needs to look like.

Close the gaps in gender equity. It's not just about sex. It's about power. We know that women are underrepresented in the workplace and when they are in the workplace, they are more at risk for sexual harassment. Are there folks of different nationalities, different sexes that are in power positions within an agency? Create a workplace policy that addresses sexual and domestic violence and review it regularly. Don't just stick it there in your manual and use it when you have a sexual harassment complaint, but make it a living, breathing part of what you do within your organization. Next slide please, Tim.

Reevaluate your performance review process. Supervisors need to really think through what really constitutes a good supervisor or a high performer and realize that if somebody's engaged in disrespectful or abusive contact with coworkers, then those actions need to be taken into account regarding the perpetrator's work performance. Provide training on sexual harassment and sexual violence in general. Know how to enforce an order of protection should a woman or a man come in with an order of protection.

How are you going to relate to that? How are you going to support that individual? The training that needs to be provided should be for everybody that's there. But it also needs to be trauma‑informed and trauma‑sensitive, knowing that many of the people who might be listening to that information may have already experienced some form of violence in their life, and be very, very sensitive to that. And it doesn't need to just be a onetime thing. It needs to be an ongoing thing.

Here where I work at Partners for Inclusive Communities, our executive director has begun every month in a staff meeting having just a little bit of a section that has to do with sexual violence or violence prevention, because part of what we have to do within our community is to desensitize ourselves, our staff, to know that there are times when we're just going to have to talk about this. And we have got to be the leaders in being able to do that, because the folks that we work with take their lead from us.

So cultivate a culture of support and respect. Provide a confidential way for folks to report harassment, safety cards and posters, and engage everybody in the workplace, including men and bystanders in the kind of training that they can offer. Okay. I think we're to the question and answer.

>> TIM FUCHS: Indeed we are. Thank you, Roberta and Jan. As Carol ‑‑ excuse me. As Carol has been reminding you faithfully during the presentation, please use the Q&A feature. And in your menu bar in the bottom center, if you click that, you can type your question there. We got one from the chat. Let me start there. So, I apologize. I can't see the name. But they asked, do you have any advice or tips on starting a CIL, victim of sexual violence support group? Jan or Roberta, care to respond?

>> ROBERTA SICK: I think that what you really need to do is you need to reach out to the folks who are in your community who are providing support groups to victims of domestic violence and sexual violence. And the reason that I say that is because if you're looking at providing a support group, especially if it is individuals who might have experienced domestic violence, then there's safety issues that come along with that.

We had a situation where . . . You can't just advertise a location and say we're going to have a sexual violence and domestic violence support group at this location at this particular time, because what you've just done is you've alerted anybody who's a perpetrator of violence that if they're looking for the person who is their intimate partner that has left them, that they might be at that support group. So there's a lot of things that you need to educate yourself about when you are providing support for that kind of situation.

And you might even reach out to your domestic violence and sexual assault program and see if they would colead something with you and do it as a mutually beneficial arrangement, because I think that we really do, especially in the area of domestic violence, we don't understand the safety issues as well as we need to. Jan, how about you?

>> JAN DERRY: I just want to add that I've always believed that separate is not equal. And so encouraging members of your community, people with disabilities, to go to the support groups that are offered for all survivors also educates the general public and those at the group of the unique needs that individuals with disabilities face and they can provide support for one another. That whole thing of we don't know what we don't know is so critical that you need to utilize the experts who have been educated on trauma‑informed responses and trauma‑informed services.

Now, it doesn't mean that you can't have a peer support group within your on center as well, after you've gained the skills to understand. I wouldn't recommend that you start that right off because you need to educate yourself on how to not re‑victimize, make sure you have policies and procedures to deal with response, and that you also have a mechanism for providing support should disclosures become something that comes out during that support group.

I was recently sent one of my employees to a training that another agency was providing. And they did not even think about the fact that they allowed the caregivers to be right there with the individuals as they were in the support group. And one of the participants kept saying, I have experienced this. I have experienced this. And even the leader ‑‑ the caregivers were trying to shush the people. Don't talk, don't say that, don't disclose that. And then someone else disclosed and they did not have the proper people there to offer support when that individual disclosed for the first time in their lives that they were experiencing sexual violence.

And you can re‑victimize real quick. So it's not the first step, it's a next step. The first step is educating yourselves.

>> ROBERTA SICK: You may be in situations where because of your relationship with somebody, you may be the first person that they disclose to. And if it happens, then what you want to do is you want to let them know that you believe them. And you want to say that you support them and that you care about them. And you can acknowledge that maybe you're not as knowledgeable as you need to be about this, but how about together we reach out and let's get some good information for both of us.

And you walk along beside of that person as they access other types of supports. Now, we have had one center here in Arkansas who opened up their center for independent living as an accessible location and the domestic violence program actually had their support group meeting at the independent living center. And they were able to have an accessible facility for that. And they were also able to encourage the folks who were at their center to attend that.

Now, they didn't acknowledge that publicly that that was what was happening that evening, but the people who were there who were participating knew where it was, what time it was, and what it was about. But it was not advertised publicly. So we really do encourage you to get educated about these issues regardless of whether you're a trained sexual assault or domestic violence advocate. Get connected in your community and just use those really good peer support methods that we use when we don't know something.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great tips. Thanks so much. I don't see any other questions, which I find hard to believe. So please, if you will, take these last few minutes to type your questions in the Q&A, or even the chat. We've got four minutes left, so plenty of time to answer a few more questions. Let me check in with Carol. Carol, I'm sharing my screen, so I can't look. Are there any questions that have come in on the full‑screen CART?

>> CAROL EUBANKS: Nope. Sure haven't. None.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay.

>> JAN DERRY: Tim, this is not unusual. When you're talking a topic like this, people have to process. People have to think about what they've just heard and how it applies to them and their center. I can't stress enough the importance to move slowly as you're moving in this direction, because the one thing you don't want to do is to have someone disclose that they have been a victim of violence and abuse or sexual harassment and then you don't have access to the support system to provide that necessary support.

So get that stuff in line before you start, as you develop your policies and procedures, and building those relationships with the providers within your community so that if you're going to have a training on sex education and sexual harassment with your consumer base that you've got a professional there who knows how to deal with trauma and disclosures. The way I did it first with my center is we do a lot of outreach, a lot of social displaying, going to events and having your table set up.

I've also included the sexual violence and domestic violence people to be a part of every one of our events that we have, so it becomes a common thing that there are literature available to individuals who may be experiencing this. So it's not an alert system to a perpetrator that you bring them and all of a sudden you've got the sexual violence people there. If they become a part of your daily activities, if they're a team member and they help to do education at your center and they're the speakers, they realize that this is part of the array of services that we offer.

And so you don't want, like Roberta said, you don't want to target the people and make them know that everybody that's coming today has been a survivor or a victim. It's just part of your ongoing program. And there's another program that's happening that I wanted to share with you. It's called Our Lives, and it's out of Portland University. And several centers for independent living are working with them. And it's Our Lives and it's ‑‑ we're going to be bringing it forward to other centers to be partners in this.

NCIL sent them to me. They reached out to NCIL and they sent them to us. And this is helping you to help your consumers identify their own personal risks, whether it's financial exploitation, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and then doing safety planning. Safety planning needs to be a part of your learning as to how you assist people to be safe in their own work environment, whether they're going into sheltered employment. I see our role as to help consumers identify when they're being sexually harassed outside of centers, when they're being sexually harassed at a day program.

And as educators, trainer, and teachers, we have the responsibility to ensure that we're giving people the resources they need to deal with today's life.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great.

>> ROBERTA SICK: Okay. I also saw a question come through that's related to the difference between quid pro quo and the hostile environment. So let me just tell you that quid pro quo is an employment or educational decision that are made on the condition that a person accepts unwelcome sexual behavior. That might be if you go to apply for a job and whoever it is that you're interviewing with says you can have this job if you do this. So a hostile environment is characterized by pervasive sexual‑related verbal or physical contact that is unwelcome or offensive and has the purpose or effect or interfering with work or school performance.

As we end out, let us acknowledge that even as we are listening to this as people who are working in the field or are listening to this that there are many of us out there who probably have also experienced some of these things ourselves. And the first step that many of us who came to work in this field had to do was to realize that when we ‑‑ to pace ourselves in the work. Do the work, but pace yourself in the work. And it might be that if you are a victim of violence yourself or a survivor, that you don't be the only person within the organization who's helping to raise this issue.

Develop a little bit of a support group within your board, or within your team, or within your community. And from that you build it together, because part of this is also dealing with our own effects of the violence that we've had. And nowhere else have I seen more men come forward than men with disabilities talking about their experiences. We know that it happens to women, but we also really know that for men with disabilities, this is a common occurrence.

>> TIM FUCHS: Thank you, Roberta. All right. I've got 4:31 on the east coast, so I'm going to begin to wrap up, but please know that you are always welcome to submit your questions to us after the fact. Part of the project is we provide ongoing technical assistance, not just these singular trainings. If you think of a question later today or in a month, please don't hesitate to send it to me. Again, Roberta and Jan were very nice to include their email address, but you can always reach out to me.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the call, Jan has not only established herself as a leader here, but she's the co‑chair of NCIL's own ‑‑

>> JAN DERRY: Violence and Abuse.

>> TIM FUCHS: Violence and Abuse Subcommittee, along with Kim. And so anyway, please do reach out. Let us know how we can be a continuing resource. I want to thank all of you for joining today. I can't remember who said it exactly, but you all really have ‑‑ you've made it clear that you all care about this issue. And I want to thank you for taking the time to join this webinar today. I know at least some of you were participating in groups from your center, and I think that's fantastic.

We're doing the same thing as NCIL. All of our staff are on the webinar today as well. And we're archiving this as well. So please know, let people know that you participated in this. I hope you'll share it with your colleagues, certainly with your, you know, employees, employers, coworkers, and know that the archive is coming. We'll put that in your inbox so that you can share that with folks. It'll also be posted on ILRU's website. They're our partner in the project, and they actually host the archive material on their website.

So please do take a look. You can access it for free after the fact. And, of course, thanks once again to Jan and Roberta for being willing to do this, and for putting this together. Don't miss also, in addition to the PowerPoint, in your confirmation email, those sample policies. And, you know, as we talked about, it's broader than that. But if you do not have policies, please make sure to start that conversation and take those policies, and adapt them to make them apply to your organization, and at the very least get those in your policies and talk to your staff about it.

So anyway, thanks to everyone. Be in touch. And when we close you'll see that evaluation form. I hope you will fill it out before you move on to whatever else your afternoon holds for you. Thanks so much, have a wonderful afternoon.

>> JAN DERRY: Tim, can I do a commercial?

>> TIM FUCHS: Go ahead.

>> JAN DERRY: I want to go a commercial for the Violence and Abuse Subcommittee. It's a wonderful opportunity to get peer support for the work that you're doing, to get questions answered. We are constantly looking for new members. And so if you'd like to join that committee, contact Tim and NCIL, and we meet on the first Thursday of each month. And it's a good time to do some wellness activities. We've incorporated taking care of one another into our subcommittee's agendas, and offering resources. And it's a wonderful opportunity to learn what's going on nationally in the movement itself. So if you're interested, just reach out. We'd love to have you.

>> TIM FUCHS: That's right. Thanks so much, Jan. I thought of that earlier. I didn't know if you were recruiting right now. That's wonderful. I'm the right person to ask with my NCIL hat on, and I'll put you all in touch with Jan. With that, we'll go ahead and close. Have a wonderful afternoon. Bye‑bye, everybody.

(Session concluded at 4:35 p.m. ET)