

Intentional Community Outreach

Presented by Vicki Landers, Liz Sherwin, and Mary-Kate Wells

April 16, 2024

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Welcome everyone. Good afternoon or mid morning.

As people are logging in, I am going to jump into housekeeping. Just so that it does not take too much time. Welcome everyone to today's intentional community outreach webinar. My name is Mary Kate Wells. I use she/her pronouns. I am the program director at the National Council of Independent Living. NCIL is a partner with the training and technical assistance Center and we support the coordination of these webinars.

And so today I will be the moderator.

Today's presentation is brought to you by the administration on community living at the US Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the IL net operated by ILR review in collaboration with NCIL, April at University of Montana.

On the next slide there is the Logos. All of those are organizations.

A few notes on accessibility for this webinar. Captions are available if you click "show subtitle" on using venue. We also have captions running on an external page, the link will be in the chat where you can adjust the font as needed.

ASL interpreters are also present today and should always be visible. If you cannot see the interpreters, please let us know in the chat and we can help work with you directly.

We have Spanish interpreters available today. In order to access that, you can go to the zoom bar on your screen and choose the link you would like to hear the presentation in. final note we have public chat which is turned off, but you are still able to chat with panelists. We ask that you reserve the chat with panelists for requests for technical support only. You can submit questions in the Q&A box.

We welcome questions throughout the webinar today. But we will be answering questions at the end of the webinar. To enter a question in the Q&A box you can click "Q&A" and type your question in the box that comes up. You can also email me at mary-kate@ncil.org. I will put that in the chat. If you are on the phone you can press\*nine to indicate that you have a question and select, and when your selected press\*six.

We are going to get started. Let me just adjust my screen. Thanks so much for joining our conversation today about intentional community outreach. This is both for sales and silk so we hope to see some silk folks out there. We do always like to give a little reminder about evaluations.

We hear you, will hurt your feedback to try to shorten the housekeeping while still maintaining all the necessary accessibility information -- heard

We do listen to your feedback.

Without further ado, today we have two really awesome speakers list Sherwin, the Executive Director of the Illinois Iowa Center for Independent living and Vicki Landers the founder and Executive Director of disability pride Pennsylvania.

And myself, for a little change. I am going to be sharing a little information on the outreach requirements. Let's get started.

I wanted to start with why, sorry, why we have this title of intentional community outreach. At first we were talking about authentic outreach. But after conversations with our amazing presenters, really thinking of the role of sales and silks in outreach to our consumers. It is more than just being authentic and developing relationships. But it is also being intentional, having a purpose or goal in mind when we are doing outreach. Because I know all of us are trying to make sure that the consumers we serve are representative our communities. That requires work.

On this slide it says, "intents to find" intent means to have in mind a goal or purpose. Or a design for a specific use. When we are thinking about community outreach today we are thinking about your specific communities and consumers and your staff and board.

Intentional outreach, like all IL services, is informed by consumers and the needs of your community. And so we are really going to emphasize that today, is the work that you are doing reaching the folks that are in your community?

We also know that each community has different needs. On the screen it says "all communities have different needs based on.." And there is a list of different things some of these items might be more relevant to you than others depending on where you're coming from. But some things that you might want to consider is, what is your geographic area? What languages are spoken in your community? What regional and ethnic backgrounds make up your community? What is the social economic status of the surrounding community and counties that you serve? What is the age demographic? Are you targeting your outreach for the whole lifespan?

We work with people with disabilities from birth to death. Also residential status. Do you live in a college town or a city that has a lot of commuters? Do you also have work in communities that have large migrant populations? Or immigrant populations?

Really thinking about who is making up your community.

Something that might be important, is religious and faith affiliations. Maybe not for some folks. Disability type and also other disability service providers. Is there some states I used to work at a center in Boston, the Boston Center for Independent living. There was a very active deaf program. What other resources are there for the different disabilities?

And technology access. We know that not everyone has access to inernet or other technologies. Just being mindful if you are using online platforms, or you know that there is a need for inernet, that you are mindful in your outreach practices and so much more. There is probably 10 to 20 more things that I did not include here. This is just to get you started to be very intentional in our community outreach.

Other outreach considerations, really our focus right now is to spark some questions that you can use to explore your outreach practices. Some of the questions we put on the slide are, where is your self located? Is it accessible by the training or public transportation? How can consumers get a center? What is your environment like?

One of our speakers is going to talk about that and give some practical examples of how your center environment can really impact the outreach. And also the consumer input. Are your staff and board representative of the community? Are you providing resources and information in the prominent languages in your community? Getting there really specific information so that all your information is getting to the folks that need it.

Some other questions are, what age groups are you targeting in your outreach? Do you have used specific outreach material? Do you have nursing home transition and say home modification? Specific material. Just being mindful of what type of, what age group you are targeting with some of your outreach material.

What strategies do you use to engage consumers, is something to think about. What community partners do you interact with? Are your outreach practices and material accessible for cross disability, multicultural community?

This is a big question to ask your center when you are thinking about your outreach practices. Today we are going to focus a lot on making sure when you are considering your outreach practices, that it reaches across disability and multicultural audiences.

Transitioning into, what is the outreach requirement for centres and statewide Independent living Councils? I just wanted to provide information on what the regulation and the laws that centres and silks have to do for outreach? This is not all-inclusive, but what we called is the key areas of the law but talk about outreach.

You can see other training on the IR LU page that goes more into specifics. Losses they must increase... The community options for Center Independent Living in order to facilitate the development and achievement of Independent Living goals by individuals with significant disabilities.

One of the SIL standards is that making sure that we are letting community partners, our consumers now what is available. But also what may need to be improved. Outreach is very important to that. Second SIL standard, the law says they must conduct activities to increase the capacity of communities within the service area of the center to meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities.

Learning what areas of your center may be using some of those questions we put up on the slide earlier. Where is your capacity? Are you able to translate material if the predominant language is Spanish or Vietnamese? Or another language?

Seeing what is available and then doing some internal work to make sure that you are able to meet those needs. The SIL assurances, the law says that sales must have aggressive outreach for individuals with significant disabilities who were unserved and underserved. I know this is a tricky one for folks because it is not necessarily defined, unserved and underserved. That is the statewide plan for Independent Living and really coming together in your network to identify what those populations look like. SIL will also receive training on how to serve unserved and underserved individuals with significant disabilities. One example is, the basis of many different trainings that would be a benefit to SIL staff and board's and staff members to get that education piece.

Now to give an overview of the CIL duties, we just pulled out two specific ones. The last says that SILCs must follow a federal process helping the state plan for independent living. The indicator for this is SILC out of public input for developed monitoring, reviewing, and evaluation of this SPIL.

It says they actively consult with underserved or underserved populations in urban and rural areas. We all know that SILCs are required to follow the process of developing this. A huge part of that and I'm sure for the folks that were attending TA calls, is public input. How do we hear from consumers and make sure that their voices are represented within the state SPIL? Part of the public input is duly reach those individuals? How do we let them know that we are doing this process and can be engaged? A lot of that has to do with our outreach practices. Using our outreach practices to ensure that we get a representative public input from our communities.

The second duties, SILCs must coordinate activities in the state that provides similar services to or complementary to independent living services. The SILC indicator is that SILCs will recruit potential members to provide recommendations for eligible appointments to the appointing authority. The SILC assurance is they actively consult with unserved and underserved populations in rural an urban areas.

This kind of follows the same logic. If we are trying to recruit members and learn what the capacity of the state and IL network is, having those community partnerships which we will hear from Vicki Landers, one of our speakers about this, we like to see what is out there so your outreach can be really intentional and informed. The SILC five potential members that are representative of their community.

And I believe I am going to hand it off. That is an overview of some of what the law says. What does that look like an application? I am going to hand it over to Liz Sherwin. Liz, if you want to come on camera. She will share a little bit about her center and the work that she is dipping and the community is doing. Take it away, Liz.

LIZ SHERWIN:

Good afternoon everyone! What I am going to do is talk about some of the successes we have had with our center. Because we represent some very diverse populations. Part of the center serves a ri--rural area in the other part serves the urban areas. One of the interesting things about us is that we serve to states--two states. In terms of the populations we serve, they are mostly equal in Iowa and Illinois. They are basically a little over 200,000 people in both states, and we serve three counties in each state.

How this happened, I have no idea. This started prior to my bank epicenter. What has happened is it is made us look at different ways that we are able to serve the rural as well as the urban population, as well as navigate between both states. Illinois and Iowa.

Your question probably is where in the world is the Illinois Iowa center? Basically, we are along the Mississippi, and we are divided between Illinois and Iowa. If you look at the map of the Mississippi going south to the Gulf, we are at that little area where there is a bump where it runs east and west. My center actually is located in (unknown name), Illinois, and it is south of the Mississippi. If you can envision that, which is probably complicated because it took me a while to figure that out.

One of the issues that we had to do was figure out how we were going to certain both populations. First of all, we had to figure out, who are the people that make up our populations? We realize that there were quite a few people that were in rural and urban areas.

When we first started, we were able to reach and serve people in urban areas a lot better than a rural community because there was a lack of transportation and many of the rural communities. So we had to figure out how are you going to get there, what are you going to do? What are the things that are needed to make sure that we are reaching these populations? In fact, who are the populations in those areas?

We worked with a lot of the planning organizations and other areas in the counties and the townships and other governing bodies to identify actually who the population was, and what we found that the majority of the people in our area was white. In fact, around 87% were white, and the rest were minorities. They were located in their communities. They were in areas a lot of times that may be very socially, economic issues with housing, with transportation, with healthcare, and with many other things. A lot of people, even the whites and minority, had no idea what independent living was. The concept of independent living was alien to them. I still believe that many populations, people don't really give a damn. I am sorry, about independent living. What they want to know is what sectors can do for them, and how we are going to improve their lives.

Our mission was to identify what these individuals did, or what they wanted, or what their interests are. Try to work with them and be partners with them on how we could work with them and get them to identify with independent living, and some of the opportunities that independent living and the whole concept of consumer control could bring to their lives. How they would be able to advocate. How they would be able to work with the assistance that exist. Whether it was government systems or social systems, are actually the structure of how their communities work to improve their lives.

A complete with us, working in those areas, in fact when I first started, I had no idea what a center for a bit Lydia's. I am hoping we don't have that problem right now. I started with my center almost 30 years ago. When I came to the center, I was looking for a job. I had gone through messaging boards. I needed an income. I saw where that was a job application, and I came in and thought the Center for Independent living was actually a lovely nursing home until I got there. I realize there were not beds. People were not in a nursing home setting. At that time it was an idea, a concept that people with disabilities and rights, they should make their decisions for themselves. That is how I came to independent living. One of the mandates back then is I guess you would call it one of the power we were looking at services provided by that agents that serve people with disabilities, there was a lag in the services they provided to minorities and others. One of the things that we attempted to do in Illinois was to look at, since we had such a diverse population, of course there was Chicago, but there is the rest of us. How do we reach these people, and how do we provide services? How do we let them know that we are out there and available?

Back then we started a whole group of centers in Illinois with varying needs and varying populations and whatever. It was to figure out how we were going to reach all of these different diverse populations and geographic areas.

We found that in all those areas, there were key things that were necessary for us to teach these people and provide services.

The first thing was you need to know the people were that were in your service. Whether you are working with the predominately majority population, or whether you were trying to identify those pockets of individuals that were minorities or whatever.

I even had different disabilities, because we found that many of them were kind of isolated in their own communities and they had no concept of independent living or what it was about. Therefore we had to meet people where they were. One of the things that we worked to do, was to increase the number of consumers are CFR that we were serving. Whether they were minorities, whether they were white or whatever.

So we actually went to the census data to find out what our community looks like. We found like I said, the majority of people might, but there were other minorities. These minorities included the routine community as well as African-Americans, and then there was (indiscernible) of Asians and others. Are we going to try to create brochures or information where all these people can understand what we were doing?

One of the first things we did was look at in these minority populations, who are the majority? We found out that African-Americans and Latinos were the majority population. So one of the first ideas was to make sure that our material was in Spanish. After this, we also elected to I guess you could call (indiscernible) Spanish, because apparently the original brochure was written in a language that was equipped for people with college degrees. It was not written for just the average Joe on the street. We had to deal with that. Once we got that corrected, the Latino called-- the Latino people call the office expecting someone in Spanish to answer the phone, we did not have anybody. So we had to address that issue.

In turn, that brought on a staff person that made us aware that we need a staff person who was able to speak Spanish.

Then we looked around and there were individuals who were deaf in the community. We had a large population of the deaf. But one of the issues they complained about was not having sign language interpreters who were qualified. So we worked with them to address those problems.

In fact in the minority community, the original people that started the center had concepts about those communities. They felt that they were (indiscernible), whatever. I'm not sure. We did not reach certain communities because we felt they were unsafe to go to those communities or interact with those people. In fact, within the office we had issues. In fact I was called the N word by one of the staff. You can see where we were in terms of going at working within the communities. We had management that felt if staff went out to those communities then they may not be safe.

But at some point we reached out to the community and wanted to know exactly what their issues were and how we could help and introduce them to the concept of Independent Living. They did not necessarily understand the phrase, but they understood the possibilities and what are the things we may be able to assist them with.

A lot of the things we did when they had issues we would partner with them and try to work on their issues. And improve whatever the conditions were. For instance, if there were issues with housing, public housing, we would work with those individuals in those areas. If there were particular housing issues or whatever. We started at the time working with people and bring them into the center. At the time and even now, there are certain areas of the community that do not have certain technologies to use. They may not even have spaces to meet.

We opened our offices up for them to have access to our technology, to have access to our meeting rooms, and if there were specific things we could do. Maybe they were having an event. They did not have the capabilities to produce their material like flyers or whatever. We would use whatever we had. Our copiers, our printers, whatever to assist them.

And after working with these groups we were able to identify with the people that were in these groups and in these organizations and agencies so someone that they could count on to at least assist, if needed. And in turn they understood that Independent Living and the types of services we could provide to them like advocacy, peer counselling, information and referral or whatever. Things that are useful.

In fact, in one of the very rural counties they had no way of identifying all of the service providers that were in the county. The school systems and other places, if there were issues going on within the school system and they needed to identify a resource for their individuals, they had ever written down on business cards or whatever.

So on one area, I think one of the most rural counties, (Name) in the Illinois side, we actually help them develop a human service directory for their county. And in that directory there was a large thank you with our logo, indicating that we were responsible for that happening. That was away of outreach and getting our name out to people.

We found out that in many areas because of the rural-ness? That was away? It was very limited. They would work together to make sure that people in their areas did have the services they needed. So we joined those counties we participated in them. If they were having specific events, we join them. And at some point we realized that this was a help to us in our provisional services and reaching people.

Mainly what we have done and what we have been able to do, is reach out to people. And in fact we have been able to reach people and get the staff outside our Center. And to go to areas where they may not have been comfortable going. Because one of the things, and I am not sure how it is with other centres, but with our center we had a problem with staff getting outside the office. Because we are not going to serve people if you just sit in your office and expect them to come to you. That is not going to happen.

You are going to have to go out and engage in communities and work with what is there. It just depends on who is there and how you work with them. You have to become part of the community. You cannot be standoffish and not a part of the community. The community has to feel that you are a part of their community. You do that by engaging them and participating and always showing up and being a part of what the community is doing.

Then in turn, the community will come to you and participate and feel that you are a part of whatever is going on in the community. You are a place where they can count on for support and in turn they will give you support.

One of the things that we have done, when we were actually looking at how we were going to serve our communities, we looked at the main areas where there were gaps in services. In our area, mainly one of the major ones was transportation. Another one was housing. There were several others that we were able to work with. And in terms of, I am sorry that is my cell phone.

That happens sometimes.

Basically what we did was look at all the people that were in our area and tried to identify people we could work with. We worked with the transportation providers, in Illinois as we had already started working on areas that had to do with outreach to our diverse populations. We worked with them. And since we worked in Illinois, at that time that was an association of Center for Independent living. Of course Iowa is less populous than Illinois. Therefore we only had six or seven centres at the time that were working in Iowa whereas in Illinois we had 22 centres to support us.

What we did was work with the centres as well as the Independent Living Council and we did that in both states. We worked with whoever was out there to get an idea and get some training and get a vision of what we needed to do in order to serve people.

In the end, it was not easy and it was not a slow process. It took us a while to bring Independent Living to rural areas and it is still difficult in some cases. We are not perfect. But the issue is we found in order to serve people you have to be where they are and meet them where they are. We found that the whole use of acronyms and all that sort of thing in the delivery of services, does not always work.

We had to bring them to the concept of Independent Living. What it is and what it means. And how it can improve your lives. In some cultures, people are more apt to take care of their members and Independent Living we talk about, individuals with disabilities managing their own lives. But there are people actually out there that feel that they have to manage the lives of their people who may have disabilities. You have to get beyond all of those types of things in order to provide services.

Currently we have been able to do a pretty good job. But we still have issues, especially as it relates to rural communities. And places where transportation is very difficult to get. It means that it is difficult for staff to get to those areas, as well as it is difficult for consumers to get to us.

In fact, we have one central office and that is located in Illinois. The question is, if that center is located in Illinois in one of the more popular towns, how are you going to reach out to someone in Muscatine Iowa or Clinton Iowa? Or whatever?

One of the things we decided early on was that we needed to make sure we had transportation available for our staff to reach these areas. And we had to figure out how we were going to serve people in those areas. One of the things is we partnered at one time with the vocational rehabilitation office. They allowed us to have office space, maybe one day a week, to actually meet consumers and work with them on different Independent Living goals.

We worked with different other organizations and they allowed us to have space one day a week at their office. We would go in and work with consumers. In fact, in one of the rural communities they actually allowed us to have office hours once a week and they would actually schedule consumers to come in to meet with us. Which was not a bad thing. But the issue here and what I am trying to say is that, your engagement in your communities can take all forms.

Basically as I said you meet the consumer where they are. They could be anywhere, it does not make any difference. The issue is centres have to make themselves available and engage in these communities. And it is not a situation where you do it once and the consumers are always going to be there for you. It is a situation where you continue to work with your consumers and your communities to identify things that you can do that will make sure that you are a part of the community, that you are continuing to reach out and work with individuals.

The fact that consumers may have the same types of disabilities, but they may have varying needs. We found that in many areas, consumers have issues with housing, and housing can take many forms. One of the effect that housing is just not there. Another could be the issue that housing is there, but it is not access it will-- accessible. And the knuckle issue of whether housing is affordable. These are all issues that you can work with consumers and work with them how to advocate for and improve the condition.

One community, one they are trying to develop new housing, we even wrote letters of support to funders. We have attended meetings where people were planning how they were going to increase the housing and communities. We always bring the issue of disability to those meetings, so that if they are going on, they understand that they should not only talk about housing, they should talk about the issue of accessible affordable housing. There is any number of areas where you can partner with people to improve situations where people with disabilities.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Liz, your sharing so many great examples and I know you have some more in your slides that folks can view. We need to make a little transition just to stay on time, but if you wanted to wrap up before handing it off to Vicki?

LIZ SHERWIN:

Yes, that is fine. Mainly, I think ? I have probably gone over everything I need to.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

OK, that works. I did not want to cut you off if you are mid-thought. Everyone will have access to these slides, so I know there are a few that we did not get to, but we are going to please put questions in the Q&A box for Liz, and we will have Q&A after we hear from Vicki.

Thank you so much, Liz, and I will ask Vucki--Vicki to turn their camera on and handed to them. Thank you.

VICKI LANDERS:

Hi everyone. My name is Vicki Landers. I am Vicki first, I always tell everybody. I am a disabled, queer person. I see/her pronouns. I am a board member and a founder and executive director for the disability pride Pennsylvania.

Why am I here? I am involved in the IL movement because of my amazing CIL liberty result in Philadelphia County. I was living on the street, counts hopping, all of these things because of my mental health. I was picked to do a research project by somebody in the mental health unit that I was in. I got paired with the Pearson group at Liberty Resources. -- I got paired with the peer support group. I started to have one-on-one conversations with folks there. I found out that they had an art studio in the basement. I am an artist, so I was able to go down and spend the day to work with people, get to do great things. It really turned my life around. I am here today, doing what I did because of Liberty Resources.

They have helped me to find my way. This is why I'm going disability pride Pennsylvania now. Alchemy find housing. They have helped me with different types of supports and services. I really feel like the liberty resources CIL has saved my life. I am very much a part of the independent living movement. I support everything that has gone on in a help in the ways I can possibly do that. I just to give you a little bit about who I was, because some folks like "I am not with a CIL, so why am I talking?" I just wanted to make sure you understood that.

Next slide. Parent--

Disability pride Pennsylvania. Some folks say DPP. I spell everything else because I am not an acronym type of person. We are a cross disability, nonprofit organization. That cross disability is also in our staff and board. We are very small ? we started out I should say, a very small organization. It actually started with one of my friends. A big part of the IL movement, Ellen Holdsworth. He pulled down into the art studio inset the somebody to help them with signage and banners and all of the things that needed to go along with this disability pride of Philadelphia that they were putting on.

I was looking for something to do, I signed on. I started working with them. We started to comanage the event and then six years ago, he turned it over to me. He works on disability quality in education bill and program, so this is where we are at. I felt that I wanted to be here because we wanted to create space where folks can have fun together, and for me, it is where can we have fun? We have to remember to have fun. That is super important. We all have things that are going on whether we have disabilities or not. In the disability community there are so many things going on, that we have to remember to have fun and celebrate our liens--wins. Whether they are tiny like getting out of bed, are huge. We have to be able to celebrate the fun.

Next slide.

Disability pride Pennsylvania has mission, disability pride is a movement. We are more than just a means of self advocacy and a push for acceptance. Disability pride is above all, a celebration of inclusion disabled people who are proud of themselves. Our mission is to celebrate the pride that the disability community feels. It is a place for us to come together to celebrate the disability experience, and what makes the programming different from others, is that we plan accessibility-- accessible community events to bring disabled and nondisabled people together. We want people to come out and have fun. We always have great resources because I believe that that is something we always need to have. I believe that bringing people together socially, can't create space in fun ways to build stronger communities.

Those communities have better conversations, at our programs provide spaces for advocacy, celebration, and some good trouble.

Next slide.

So, I a lot of work-- I do a lot of work in the DEI space. DEIA for folks that need that reminder. This was something, a definition that I really enjoyed, and I push for intentional outreach. It is through deliberate, well-planned, public engagement, community members become informed about, participate in, and influence public decisions. Community members go beyond just knowing about a pending decision, to participating in the decision-making process. They become a part of the community change. Right there, that kind of resonated with me. It made sense. It is why we do our work. We want folks to have an individual voice, let them be a part of the decision-making, in whatever that looks like. For me, advocacy looks like a large variety of ways that somebody can participate. That is kind of the way we take to our outreach and to our advocacy. Finding a space for everybody to feel comfortable, wanting to dissipate in whatever way it looks like to them.

The escapement let's see. Some of the programs we have created through this, as we have created cooking shows about what people are getting in the pantry is, what are people getting their boxes? Lots of folks get a box here, especially in Philadelphia County. Trying to figure out what they can cook out of the things they get inside this box. We want to start a place where people could get some recipes, give us recipes because we would love to do a cook look with folks recipes and share it out for everybody.

Somehow the victims that we do our inclusive dance-- some of the other programs we do our inclusive dance with our amazing workshops for disabled and nondisabled people to come and learn how to move together. We believe that everybody can move in whatever way it feels like to you. Even if you can't trickle your nose or move your chair around, or whatever it looks like you. People can still learn to move together. It is a beautiful thing.

Slide five.

So, disability community is the most diverse community. We all know that. For me, when I go into my work all of my work, because I also do work for work on DEIA for a lot of different communities. Communities and organizations. I always ask people, does your staff, does your board do your volunteers, do the community members represent the disability community in your area? This is really something that I started to talk about when I first learned about the disability pride Philadelphia event that was happening.

I participated in the first one and I thought to myself, well if this is just the pride Philadelphia -- if this is disability pride Philadelphia, it is also a County, does this effect really look like our community? The answer was no. I made it my mission to dealer outreach to all of the communities that we are missing. Still today, I have a goal every year that I reach out, at least let folks know about what is going on. Not everybody may participate, but to make sure that we are getting out to as many people as possible.

Through our work, we are dripping, we are reaching out to at least 30 new organizations every year. And for Adelphia County, there are a lot of organizations. Now that we are doing work across Pennsylvania, 30 organizations does not sound that hard. It is finding those folks and involving community members across Pennsylvania to help us figure out who should be reaching them to.

That is how we started disability pride that's just in Philadelphia, but across Pennsylvania.

One of the other things I stress folks when they are starting to think about outreach, is to have a strategic plan. Some of the questions you can ask.

What are your diversity equity inclusion initiatives? Do you have any? If not, I think that is the first place you really need to start. It is a huge problem if your outreach, if you do not have a goal and a plan and intention in what you are doing.

Slide six?

For me all of the conversations I have across the state, I have done a lot of DEIA conversations. And for me, DEI, this is my take on it. Diversity is a look at what we are doing. Equity is the feel, it is how you want to feel. And inclusion is why we are doing this work. If you want to add access, I say that that is how everyone is invited in to participate.

Next slide?

I feel like as a disability organization, we should be the experts on the A, in DEIA. We do add it in our outward facing organization conversations because they need to add that A. Because they have a lot of work to do. To make sure they are making.

One of my next things that I would really like to talk about is how when I have, when I want to start an event, say disability pride Pittsburgh which we are now in our third year. We ask the community in Pittsburgh if they want to come to the table and if they want to participate in the planning, learning how to do it. Because our goal is, communities will learn how to do the event planning parts of these things and they know who should be there. And they know what they want the event to look like.

What we want, what I do is when I go in and say "here we are. This is what we look like, even if we are little boxes. Who is missing at the table?"

I always say that if we say someone is missing from the table, then we need to stop. We need to invite them in and then we continue. Everyone is on the same page. We do not want to continue our conversations and then somebody feel like they are not trying to catch up. We want to invite them in so they are there from the start, helping out from the beginning.

We also look at, are you attending events that are outside of the disability space? Those are great events to do. I really find that they are really fun. Some of the things that we are doing have just been amazing ways to connect to the communities outside of the disability space. So that way, they are starting to include disability in their spaces.

Are you going to networking events? You should. Next slide?

One of the things I always talk about is, one of the easiest things is are you a part of the Chamber of Commerce? You should be in your area. It is an amazing way to get to know all the organizations and to have conversations with them. Make sure you are asking diverse communities to come in to your space?

Are you going out to their spaces?

We wanted to make sure we were very intentional in what we were doing. We asked the Philadelphia pride organization if we could participate, not just participate as in being there and not just having a table. We wanted to see how we could help support the event by creating an accessible space. This will be our third year of doing that. We run what they call the decompression zone. Which is the sensory friendly space which has grown into an amazing space.

Last year I believe pride had over 50,000 people that came and we probably saw at least, I would say 500 people if not more. We do not count. There could have been a lot more. One of the things you want to do this year is provide a space for folks to still feel like it is pride. So we are doing silent disco. Which is an amazing way of incorporating that fun idea and also staying with the way that pride looks.

Do you partner -- do we partner with them on joint ventures? Those are things we do at all times. Whenever someone says, "what you like to partner and do something?" We always say yes obviously.

Do you include them in important conversations? We need to include everybody in conversations. If we want to get our point across, we want folks to be allies on our side, we need to include folks in the conversations so they understand why it is necessary and important to us.

Next slide?

Here we are. Some of my examples. Host the decompression zone at Philly private. We created rest of Philly Pride . They are made up of disability advocates across Philadelphia and Philadelphia County. We always need to talk about affordable, and accessible integrated housing.

We partnered with the Academy of natural sciences to create an outdoors for everyone program. Showing them how to make their events more accessible so folks can participate. But also creating some of our own, and asking them to join us. It is a humongous success.

Next slide?

Make sure that you are attending your local council members fairs. That has really been a great piece of how we are building and strengthening our rev up voices.

Provide spaces for community members to use their voice on stage. We know that disability pride Pennsylvania has the privilege of having a stage, so it is important for us to let other folks be the voices on our stage. Let them talk about what is going on. Make sure we are looking at the representation that is going on on stage. Making sure the new voices get to be heard, young voices get to be heard.

(Name) asked me to make sure that when we do our disability pride events, I make sure I invite a young person to let them share their voice. That is super important to me, and make sure every year. And I do that across all of my events now.

Next slide?

I told you a disability pride is doing. The reason we do it is because we are trying to connect with the local CIL's to bring them to the practice planning and implementing the community events, to highlight. NCIL person is always speaking on our stage during our events. It is super important that happens, as original rep in Pennsylvania it is necessary and I believe it should always happen -- CIL

I just wanted to thank everybody. Make sure you are talking to folks in areas where you may not think of. HIV and AIDS, young adults, self-care, trauma, drug abuse, brain trauma, diabetics. A lot of unseen disabilities. Be a part of the community. I find that sharing other folks social media is bridging this community that I want to thrive in.

I want to thank everybody. You can always reach out to me at vicki@disabilitypridepa.org. Thank you for letting me speak today.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Thank you so much Vicki. If you are on social media, checkout disability pride Facebook and Instagram. I know I follow them and they are doing some really great, eye-catching but also accessible postings. I found you had a birdwatching activity event this past weekend I think?

VICKI LANDERS:

We had over 30 people join us and it was a lot of fun. Now we are doing heavy circuits trail on the 27th. I just have so much fun.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

And I'm sure that brings in so many different folks from different communities and a lot of life and everything.

VICKI LANDERS:

We found out there was a adapted (indiscernible) in Philadelphia. All of these different groups which basically came together for this event. That is really what I want. One thing that I did not tell everybody, is about our event in Harrisburg. Do I have a minute?

MARY-KATE WELLS:

It's exciting. Go ahead.

VICKI LANDERS:

May 1, disability pride Day at the Capitol in Harrisburg is an event that we are having. Their asking folks to come in from all over Pennsylvania, advocates, allies, workers. Anybody who wants to come and join us. In the morning we are going to have capital visits. At noon we are going to rally in the front of the Capitol building down at the bottom, it must be almost 60 stairs to the top to the front doors of the capital building.

We are going to rally, talk about different issues. At 1 o'clock we are going to do a press conference where I will ask the Governor to make the front entrance of the capital building accessible for all Pennsylvanians. If you are in PA, or want to be a part of the day we are doing our own capital crawl.

Very excited about it. Everybody who signs up will be registered in a historical registry that we are creating. Very excited.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Awesome. Thank you so much. I'm going to stop sharing the slides and asked Liz to come back on video. Because we have some great questions. Vicki before he turned on, I think someone had a question. "What do you mean by good trouble?" I think the capital crawl event might be one example of good trouble. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

VICKI LANDERS:

Because we are advocates I think that the capital crawl is a perfect example of how you can do advocacy work. You can cause a little trouble for the folks that be (Laughs) But you are doing it in a very non-violent, very simple "this is what we would like. We are doing something to show you how we feel" John Lewis was all about the little good trouble. So that is where I love that, that comes from.

Anyway that you can shake of the universe.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Awesome. I am going to go into the Q&A. Liz I saw you already answered some but I wanted to read them out loud and see if it sparks any other questions.

One of the first questions is how do we conduct outreach to our underserved when we know we do not have the funds or human resources yet to be able to serve them? In other words, letting them know what CILs can offer them in services if they were able to reach them geographically? That is a question. Liz I will rate out your response out loud.

"We partner with existing agencies that allow us to use their spaces to meet with consumers and try to have days where we are at locations."

Do either of you want to add anything to that? That is a tricky situation because we are needing to do outreach but at the same time a lot of centers unstrapped for resources and such. Awesome.

There is another question in the chat.

"I agree with we have to go where consumers and participants are to serve them, but and be a part of the community. However, CIL staff often themselves have disabilities and accessibility barriers. Subchapter remotely most or all of the time due to COVID. Some have transportation barriers with driving the only option are only feasible option and they may not be able to drive or have the funds to do rideshare, over, or lift. What strategies for reaching communities with your staff significant barriers?"

Liz, I don't know if you want to read your response out loud or if you want me to. But unmute. We can hear, if you unmute first.

LIZ SHERWIN:

One of my staff is blind. Therefore transportation in many of the rural areas are not accessible, and there is no transportation. Whether it is accessible or not. She currently partners with another staff person who may be serving that area, and go along with them. The issue of the people that have mobility disabilities is very difficult. Many of those are able to work from home through remote, but the issue here is that a lot of the communities we serve have the technology or they can take place. It is very difficult to reach those communities. I am not going to say it's easy. We are still working on some of that.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Yeah. I know from my experience when I was working at center, some of the options were, which I know this is not option and rural areas, but meeting at the library or a common space, VR offices. You just have to be creative.

Vicki, I know during COVID you all did a lot of community events. I am just curious how you all kind of addressed or gauge the community, even through virtual events. If you could touch a little on that.

VICKI LANDERS:

Sure. Wow. (Laughs) So, in March right before that, we were planning our Disability Pride Philadelphia event. All of these great things going to happen. We were going to do these amazing conversations and parades and all of that. They said we were going to shut deck, and that extended more than that two week period that it was first thought we were going to do, everybody was like we are going to shut everything down, nobody is going to do anything, we cannot have an in person event. I said absolutely not. Disability pride happens. We are in the disability community. We can figure out how to get online and still engage with each other. It actually opened up this floodgate of all of these folks out wanted to engage with the community. So he created disability pride virtual PA. We let anybody who wanted to come in and have conversations. We also made sure that we had a good mix, so that it felt celebratory but also good information. We had an opening on where we showed photos of old parades. We had Senator Harkin came in and spoke to on the bus. A bunch of different advocates local politicians came in. It felt regarding the parade field during that. We had conversations around accessible and affordable housing. We had conversations on assistive technology. We had a stuttering night where we had a stuttering come in and a stuttering singer. They each performed, but they had a conversation about the stuttering community. We had nights where it was just games, just kind of how to figure out how to engage folks in finding and making sure we were doing stuff for as many pieces of the community as we can, and bringing more folks in.

Everything was Zoom, everything had captions, we had interpreters. We had print for those folks who needed it, and we ended up having 80 events in 30 days. The first year. The second year we did 30 events in 10 days. After I realized that 30 days was a whole lot. People being engaged.

LIZ SHERWIN:

With our center, we have a Facebook page and we do annual meetings and events like that. We did our annual meetings virtually. We have been doing it for the past three years.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Yet, suggest using all avenues that we have available, and like I like to say, the disability community is very creative. Figure out some solutions. Just going back to the Q&A box, someone asked what is the best way to present this information about what Liz just spoke about to CIL supervisors? Is there any literature outlining the recommendations in addition to the slides?

Liz was funded in the Q&A box. If she is willing to share. Personal experiences and both Liz and Vicki's email addresses are in the slides.

Liz, I wonder if you could talk a little bit ? I know you did, about how when you came into your center, it was a big culture change as well, within the center environment. To get you where you are now. We have a few minutes. I wonder if you could talk a little about that.

LIZ SHERWIN:

I started with the center, we were a center that I was in fact the minority on staff. The staff actually did not understand how to interact with minorities. I think I briefly talked about earlier, being called the N word by a staff person. We had to get over that issue, as well as there was concepts about the community of the minority that we had to (indiscernible), because at that time, the director in some of the staff felt that they did not want their pepper is out in these communities because they may be dangerous. We had to deal with those issues. We had a number of issues that internally, we had to look at and how we worked with the community. How we interact with each other as well as how we interacted outside.

We actually had a planning session. Our many planning sessions when we asked the community to tell us how we did and what are the things we need to address some. Once fully expect that some of the things of the community are the perceptions they had about us were accurate, we figured out how to work on those and how to address them.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

I am sure that was a tough conversation, but we need to do that work.

LIZ SHERWIN:

It was quite painful at times.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Would you have any advice to the person in the chat about speaking to their supervisor of how they might approach some of these internal recommendations?

LIZ SHERWIN:

Well, one of the things they could probably do is maybe just have a session for the staff, I am not sure in our agency, we have staff meetings with all the staff. We can bring forward the issues or whatever that is going on. If you need someone from the outside to come in and talk to us about different things. We can bring those in. The staff in our agency runs the meetings. I do not set the agendas for our staff meetings ever. The staff are the ones that determine what the agendas are and what the discussion is. We all participate in the discussion and if there are solutions or issues, then that is the way we resolve them.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

I love that. That is great. Sometimes it does take that outside person because they are kind of a neutral party indicate facilitate a conversation.

I am just going to read the last question that Vicki answered in the Q&A box. Before we go ahead and wrap up. Those folks still hanging in with us, Joey is going to put the evaluation link in the chat and also pop up when we end this call. We listen to your feedback. Please, if you have a minute to do that. With the final components we have, someone asked "Any recommendations for affordable translation services for printed materials and ways to ensure the language is appropriate and accessible?"

Vicki responded "Partner with language services office at the city. We barter with Spanish organizations and blind organizations for materials. I also do a lot of access (indiscernible) as barter for services we need."

That is interesting, Vicki. That reinforces that reciprocal relationship a bit. Cities will sometimes have stipends or resources that are assigned for translation services. Start building it into your budgets for any new projects.

Awesome.

VICKI LANDERS:

You can also reach out to some of the local colleges and cities. I know Temple here in Philadelphia has a language resource group that has helped us out.

MARY-KATE WELLS:

Gap. And something, I think we are also mindful it is one thing that we translate the information. I think the person who typed the questions that it is appropriate and accessible. Being aware of not all translation is equal, and make sure that it is culturally informed based on the language of the community you are translating for. I just wanted to mention that.

Liz and Vicki, thank you so much for joining us today. I think this will be a great resource for folks to go back to. Folks will have access to the PowerPoint slides and recording. The link has been in the chat. If you take a minute to do our evaluation survey, we would greatly appreciate it. Thanks for joining us. Have a good rest of your afternoon.

Alright.

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