*This text is being provided in a rough draft format. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is intended to facilitate realtime access to oral and aural communication. It is not meant to produce a verbatim record of the proceedings. Let the coordinator know if a more verbatim transcript is required. Red text indicates poor audio feed from event*.

⇒13:53:07 This text is being provided in a rough draft format. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is intended to facilitate realtime access to oral and aural communication. It is not meant to produce a verbatim record of the proceedings.

13:56:24 We are going to start in about 4 or 5 minutes so please feel free to drop your name into the chat and we will get started soon!

13:58:47 >>  Hi everyone!  We are so glad you were able to make it. We want to get started in just a couple of minutes, thank you so much for being here.

14:00:30 Hello everybody we still have a few people jumping on so we're just going to give it another minute and then we will go ahead and get started.

14:00:48 If you have not already jumped in the chat, say where you are from and  who you are that would be great – –

14:01:23 Okay we will go ahead and get started.

14:01:39 Good afternoon everybody, good morning to some of you. I am Sarah Royster, I am here as part of a three-part series of community engagement and this is the 3rd part.

14:02:00 This whole series started at the University of Kansas so they've been jumping in and helping us to figure out what direction we are going in right now.

14:02:00 So I called housekeeping things that are all our resume experts about right now.

14:02:09 If you can find your menu box that is where you will find your mute or un-mute selection, usually to the left-hand side.

14:02:35 And there is a chat feature, feel free to drop your name and where you're from and there, and we also have closed captioning today that can be found in the same menu bar with the CC tab with the square CC in the middle.

14:03:14 And we also have a sign language in interpreter today, so our interpreter So we will be

14:03:18 We will be recording today. This is part 3 as I mentioned before.

14:03:37 So if you haven't been on, don't worry, we will be uploading all of these to our website, so don't worry about anything you might have missed.

14:04:03 The 1st part really stands for what it used to look like in terms of communication and what does it look like now?  In the middle of a pandemic how are we going to determine what community engagement looks like now?.

14:04:22 Does it look more virtual?  Is it engaging in different ways?  And we even have a story already that we are going to do a hybrid and many of you are already engaged in that programming.

14:04:38 Right now we are looking forward to moving forward in the pandemic and seeing what getting back into the office looks like for you and engaging with consumers and having the option to get back in person.

14:04:49 I don't know why the pandemic didn't read my thoughts but some places are seeing it spike again so we are unfortunately moving backwards.

14:05:00 So hopefully be in the mindset that we had so long ago.

14:05:26 What does it look like going forward?  Because clearly it's not going away right now so what does this look like for your consumer what does this look like with physical locations around people?  We know that has been redefined with so much online platforming in so many ways that we can engage with one another.

14:05:57 I am curious about what we have learned in all the things that we have covered in the last couple of months -- – where does that leave you?  And I also want to talk to you about where are some areas that you are struggling with?  Is it limiting staff?  Overwhelming staff time?  Figuring out how to do a hybrid and how to engage these folks online as individuals.

14:06:11 And if you have words of wisdom on all that please share them with us so we can all as a community engage and continue to grow and increase our outreach as well.

14:06:18 So with that this conversation is a conversation of you all, so you all are doing the work, so I want to hear from you.

14:06:44 What are everyone's plans?  After what is everyone's plan right now?  How are you taking what you planned in the last year and are you increasing?  Getting rid of it?  Combining it with other areas?  So I am going to open the floor?  -- -- Where is everyone?

14:07:22 >>  I am Shannon Porter and our office has been virtual for over a year now because we have been in the hotspot from early on and we have seen some growth in the virtual area because we can expand our reach, people that might not have the ability to come into the office have been 1 of the positive side effects, but 1 of the things we seen as challenging

14:07:53 's case management types of activity that have really declined, people who are not able to come in and meet one-on-one with the specialist, so our caseloads drop significantly so we have ramped up our virtual programming, but I am hoping we can find a balance with post COVID we can bring people into the office

14:08:12 And get more of a situation with one-on-one cases happening, and engaging people who are farther away from our center and want to join our program and our services.

14:08:12 >>  Thank you for sharing that.

14:08:25 If you're sharing your programs, what are you doing exactly to your program?

14:09:00 >>  We started a program a few years ago as a holistic wellness program, something we've seen become very successful as a virtual option because we look at different types of wellness and bring in guest speakers especially from far away is fairly easy on Zoom, so I think it's been great for opportunities for us.

14:09:04 We don't have to physically bring in people from out of town where we don't have to see our reach go from outside our service area.

14:09:25 So I think that that is definitely a benefit where we want to  maintain some sort of connection with that, but not everybody is comfortable with Zoom.

14:09:25 So we will see what happens only to go live again.

14:09:32 >>  Thank you for sharing!

14:09:38 Does anybody have any questions for Shannon or anything to add onto that?

14:10:05 This is what I was hinting at at the beginning, Heather and Ashley reference at the beginning that everything is going backwards as far as they were commenting in the chat that Kentucky is going backwards, they just went virtual again and everybody hates it, and Zoom overload that we feel is just pumping again -- --

14:10:28 >>  I think 1 of our biggest challenges has been trying to engage with our youth because they have the Zoom overload especially since schools went virtual and they are not interested in maintaining virtual contact outside of what they have to do.

14:10:37 I think that's one thing we have to do, is to struggle to serve that population. We can't do it in person.

14:10:46 I don't know if anybody has any better opportunity to engage youth virtually?

14:11:15 >>  Hi Shannon, this is Donna Gillett from upstate New York -- -- we have our main center in Utica, I am outside of an Amsterdam satellite office and I have a question just for you about -- – he said something at the very beginning that as you introduce yourself, that you were doing remote presentations,

14:11:44 So I wondered what kinds of topics you are finding in tracking and I am interested to hear about that -- -- and the other thing is we have a real active youth service program across Utica, where these young people can access us anywhere across the community.

14:12:00 And these young people actually had, I think, many school districts participated – – I think it was 40 kids -- the best

14:12:36 So you know how it goes when you are trying to get registrants from  Zoom registrants -- -- so we put in some pretty strict protocols, having meetings by phone, gently asked meeting by phone, can we ask questions ahead of time, these people don't have facemasks or other PPE, this is a struggle.

14:13:10 I did a series of advocated workshops in March and April and I was the 1st time that me and my crew – -- let me tell you we found extensive outreach, we had flyers, we had opportunities for anything that was not a partner agency or there was,

14:13:27 And in March and April we were lucky if we found internal staff that registered and participated, we had 2 or 3 participants for each topic.

14:13:44 So we are getting ready to do this again in late September and going into October, so maybe I can remember who mentioned it, but we were talking about bringing deaf speakers.

14:13:52 So the eviction moratorium, the end of it, that attracted the most interest.

14:14:06 But we did not even get enough information back through surveys, incremental testing of the waters, it is definitely a struggle.

14:14:14 I think that our referrals have been increasing immensely over the last 2 months, I would say.

14:14:55 And so Shannon also asked about challenges so as we see the buildup of referrals coming up, -- -- that's just a little update on what we found so far, but it's a struggle to see what we've found out so far about topics that have come up so far and I want to call you afterwards, and say I want to talk to you about that -- --

14:15:32 >>  Hi this is Sarah in Texas -- we never got opened up again, we found ourselves working from our home for the last year and 1/2 and we thought that the area that we were going to open up again -- -- we are being hit hard again by these numbers. So not looking to open for a while, anyway.

14:15:39 The one thing that's happened to us,

14:15:53 We host this huge health fair every year, and of course last year, we did it but it was just a drive-by. And amazingly, we had a lot of people who drove through for the information and to get the services.

14:16:08 So we had already made big plans to open up and have it this last month, in 2 towns, Palestinian Crockett, we had to shut it down and rethink the whole thing.

14:16:27 I guess maybe it's difficult with a drive through but it's  tough to get these services to these people.

14:17:01 >>  Sarah what has been your independent living centers policy for staff vaccination, what safety protocols for staff can be put in place, because as you talking I'm thinking that as you talk to you about going in reverse again – -- I have a small office here

14:17:07 And every 1 of us have been vaccinated.

14:17:28 We are able to open this office backup, and up until this point we did not have to mass when we were in our work areas but we had to mask when walking people to somebody else's office or going to the kitchen etc.

14:17:28 So we had to have some really strict protocols.

14:17:39 So what happened that you're thinking you're going so much in reverse in your service again?

14:17:47 >>  I mean we will be okay… That's when I say in reverse I mean I didn't get to do what I intended to do.

14:17:54 You know okay I get it!

14:18:04 >>  But you did bring up a very good concern. I have been struggling with her yesterday, I was trying to write policy and come up with issues, but it is about the staff.

14:18:14 When it's time to get all back into the office, it's about staff vaccination.

14:18:25 We can't make them get vaccinated. I mean I would like to know what other people are doing in that respect -- -- and the reason being is that we had an incident

14:18:34 In these last 2 weeks when I was working in the office my assistant was working there, and we had another stop in there.

14:19:06 Well, 3 days later she has COVID!  And she said I was fixing to get a vaccination!  And I'm like ''fixing to get!?!?''  So you know, I'm just asking like what can we do about the staff that just refuses to get vaccinated?

14:19:13 Millie of the protocols in place about math, social distancing, sanitizing, but I gotta tell you I don't feel comfortable, frankly -- --

14:19:34 >>  Thank you for sharing that. I know that some people say we can ask but -- we are not allowed to demand -- that anybody is vaccinated.

14:19:41 But I do want to circle back around that because I think y'all brought out a lot of good firm pieces within the

14:19:58 . I think that the more talking there is about programming, or if you're already in person, or if you want to be eventually  be back in person,

14:20:15 I'm assuming that you have something in mind, hopefully, and if not have you included anything as far as your consumer coming in and what that could look like?

14:20:43 >>  I know that in eastern Montana here we have what we call our community management team meetings, and I don't know if you are interested in getting this started in your communities but what those are our team meetings between service providers so they can share what they do, what they offer, and those kinds of things.

14:20:51 And it really helped with referrals. 2 agencies. So when you're talking outreach that's what I'm thinking there.

14:20:55 >>  So can you say what's the title of the group?

14:21:00 >>  CMT -- the best community management teams.

14:21:04 We have different ones for different areas.

14:21:19 I don't know what the western side of the state looks like but I know that over here in eastern Montana there are a couple that I attend. In the cover different areas.

14:21:28 >>  So for the community management scenes are those within your center or people outside your community as well?

14:21:47 >>  Outside as well. It might be child and family services, any agency that could be a resource basically for your consumer's work can refer consumers to you. Fair.

14:22:03 >>  So I think that goes to trying to find everything -- -- Shannon, Donna, that's what you were talking about -- -- I think it's about having people engaged in maybe that's the intentionally new consumers coming in.

14:22:19 So somebody might need to help with the direction of the programming, right?  If the other community agencies are saying hey we can really need help with this, Maccabee were the center jumps and it feels like that.

14:22:22 Thank you for sharing.

14:22:49 >>  I think, also, that this goes to trying to figure out what IL messaging is because there's so many things that we provide, we get stuck in our own lingo and independent living skills training – – what the heck does that mean?  It convenes something like 2 different members of the general public.

14:23:14 In the way we are talking about IL, the way we talk about the services in the way we connected to the real life problems, when they see us putting a flyer in the library, or they get something emailed to them, they are like oh my God, yes!

14:23:27 I am dying to know about how the kit works. So what we call it doesn't always translate well to everyone.

14:23:49 >>  Can I throw something in there?  So the reason that I called them CMT meetings is because yesterday I actually presented our name on them.

14:24:00 And the people on the meeting are service providers that react with all the time, and the people that we work with all the time just all the time -- -- they were shocked at the amount of stuff that we offer.

14:24:11 So it really helps to break them down in simple terms for them to point people toward our independent living center.

14:24:24 >>  Thank you for sharing. If you already have those partnerships in the community, maybe somewhere where you can initiate and start that.

14:24:26 And I know Heather you have had your hand… --

14:25:00 >>  My question -- – I hope you can all hear me – – my question was for  Sarah, the lady that spoke about the drive-through healthcare fair.

14:25:03 Did you guys ever offer COVID vaccines at that event?

14:25:06 >>  We did.

14:25:14 We had been scheduled for this year but I'm sure we will still be able to do those -- -- is going all have to be outside.

14:25:29 We have so many people – we are kind of a rural area – we have so many people that don't have insurance and don't get to the doctor like they should.

14:25:43 I cannot tell you how many people that, and get the health care that they need.

14:25:49 But anyway, yes, I answered your question that we do have that opportunity.

14:26:07 It's a pretty big deal. The people that we collaborate with, we call it the Cadillac of health fairs.

14:26:07 So that's a pretty good recommendation.

14:26:29 People that we collaborate with  call it the Cadillac of healthcare.

14:26:58 >>  I would just like to say a couple of things. We have been open since June and I am from New York. So when all of this started Gov. Cuomo was very clear with what he wanted to have happen. So our workstations are 6 feet apart. We put up a lot of glass partitions even though we now found out that the virus doesn't spread that way.

14:27:03 But it helped with colds and other things to not spread.

14:27:19 We have a test station for all of our staff every day, anyone who comes in has to sign in at the station so if we do have the new contact racing we know who has been in the building.

14:27:32 And before we reopen we asked the governor's staff whether they were or weren't vaccinated.

14:27:41 We just wanted to have an idea what percent of staff was going to get a vaccine, for most of our staff is vaccinated.

14:27:53 You do have to wear a mask at your workstation. You are far enough away, supposedly, from the aerosols that you create on your own.

14:28:02 You go into somebody else's office. It's really up to you how comfortable you feel.

14:28:17 We have been very lucky. We had to staff people get  COVID but they did not get it from here.

14:28:17 Which is great.

14:28:28 When people come in we asked them to wear a mask but you don't get into an argument with anybody who feels strongly that they don't want to wear one, we still try to serve them.

14:28:41 We do run a durable medical equipment loan closet, which is probably how most people know us and that's in Ulster County, the county that we are in.

14:28:56 So now we remind people that we sanitize it when we can, and we want them to do it when they get home, because we still want to be able to lend out the equipment.

14:29:06 Because just because we are having a pandemic doesn't mean the people have come up with a need and maybe don't have the insurance to cover.

14:29:29 I think it has helped us to really understand – how we can be a little bit more serious about it – but how we look at it maybe differently and tighten symptoms up.

14:29:29 So we have 28 people on staff, and most of our people can work remotely if they want to.

14:29:39 The front end staff can, as well as the chief operating officer.

14:29:39 So I am there almost every day. And so the office is never really too crowded.

14:29:48 >>  So it does sound like that loan program that you have is definitely still going through all of this.

14:29:51 Yeah,

14:30:18 >>  Yeah, we had to shut it down for a little while but we started asking people to set an appointment so that we can serve one person at a time and then we found that actually works better rather than having 5 people sitting around or sitting around waiting to borrow a wheelchair or commode or whatever was needed.

14:30:27 Whatever was needed.

14:30:33 So that helped the front end staff to manage their time and it's helped us keep things a little bit more organized and straightened, when the world rewrites itself.

14:30:39 And again we have a little closet set up as a provided station that we run.

14:30:53 So we're trying to keep it looking nice, looking retail, like a place that somebody would want to go in there to purchase something.

14:31:15 >>  Sort of have to apply online to make that appointment or was a process like, because it sounds like what you adopted during the pandemic works well, so how do they get in that?  Is that in person?

14:31:26 >>  So somebody can email us or set up an appointment that way, and a lot of people ask if we have something that can help them so they can reserve something.

14:31:54 So right now we have a very fancy motorized wheelchair that can do the tilt and stand so we keep lists of people who are looking for items that don't have the coverage to get going on their own, and then we try to set up a coordinated effort to get these pieces of equipment in the house.

14:32:02 So we use Google calendars, and we have a calendar set up for the loan of pieces of equipment like that.

14:32:09 So somebody wants to make an appointment to pick something up next Friday. I can click on the calendar and see if we have an opening and schedule that for them.

14:32:29 That is also been a help for us as people start to go out in the field to know who is going out when, even though we are not seeing the person and working from home we know what their schedule is in if they are working from home, and it helps us to answer the questions properly.

14:32:44 So we can ask how did it feel going on the field, how the individual felt, to run into a senior apartment, was this difficult?  You know, were there any problems?

14:32:49 >>  So another question in the chat, where are you working out of?

14:33:14 >>  We are about an hour and 1/2 north of New York City. So we have a lot of people in this area who were impacted by the virus right away. – – When it hit New York City and a lot of people were dying, yet a lot of people living up here who had contacts in the city.

14:33:25 So you don't find many people appear to have not been impacted by things that helped with the vaccines and people wearing masks and doing what's asked of them.

14:33:52 Right now our county is going to be a warm zone for the Delta  variant, which of course will happen because we're so close to the city.

14:34:00 We are in the Hudson Valley by the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains, so it's a beautiful place and is close enough to the city that people who can't afford 2nd homes, prefer to relax.

14:34:26 >>  We're also in that orange zone, and it's really frustrating, but it's reality. Fortunately I think it's that everybody has to do an amazing job to be able to provide services during this and figuring out very quickly how to switch gears and not let people down that need our services.

14:34:43 So it sounds like everybody's said so far, I like to hear from folks in the other part of the country, if you're in the armed zones, what's happening in your part of the country or anybody else?

14:35:07 >>  I will send that out to everybody – – if you want to share what program – – what have you seen that has been a success?  Kathy just shared the change up some of their protocol of how they are loaning and meeting with people and how they meet with them to give out loans – -- how is that work for you?  Is it something you want to keep going?

14:35:23 What is that look like?  Feel free to jump in.

14:36:05 and where we are all figuring that out, I want to circle back to that question – – and I don't want to leave Shannon hanging. I was actually trying to look at the chat and share -- -- so how are you engaging young people?  What's going on with  youth programming?  Can anybody give feedback?

14:36:25 >>  Yes, I'm Jody Armstrong and I am with the disability achievement Center in Florida, and we have a very strong youth independent living skills program, and we started operating it virtually back at year ago in March, it took a while to get them acclimated, but they all became very comfortable with that,

14:36:46 To the degree that the young women are in their own group, so we now have groups for everyone.

14:36:46 And another thing that we did was for isolation.

14:36:55 We were very concerned about isolation. We started online with tai chi classes and they are continuing every Monday.

14:37:30 We did open full-service back in May, and everything is pretty much back to normal but we do have sanitizing protocols, and we do have an E list 360 which is a hospital grade sanitizing piece of equipment that looks like a battery powered drill, and you can go around with it in 15 minutes will have the entire building sanitized.

14:37:30 It's that quick and very well worth it.

14:37:50 We have hand sanitizer sanitation to the building, so to enable clear communication we have a very large population that we serve so we want to make sure that people on both sides of that Plexiglas feel comfortable, we have 6 of those people can just move around in front of them.

14:37:55 It has worked very well because our young adults are very engaged.

14:38:33 >>  I am Kathy with the Center for Independent living in rural Missouri, we are open and just had our youth?  Employment transition last week -- -- everyone participated except for one in person.

14:38:46 We did the social distancing, and after the event was over the youth that dissipated virtually was sorry that he did virtual, he wished he would've been in person.

14:38:49 He said he would definitely be in person next year.

14:39:05 In the state of  Missouri, we have the money follows program -- – the person program in the state follows.

14:39:19 So we are now doing that with precautions -- – and that's about all. Thank you.

14:39:50 >>  Sierra we are also getting ready, and we did this last year, also, this is the last  thing that I am going to say on this call – -- for getting ready to do our youth transition conference we started at about 13 years ago, and we had to do it virtually last year and I will tell you that we were scared to death that it wouldn't work but it did.

14:39:54 And we are trying hard to get even better this year.

14:40:06 We usually have between 125-450 people attend, that doesn't sound a lot but for our area is quite a bit.

14:40:18 Anyway, that's what we are doing for the youth, but I can tell you that they are not happy about not meeting face-to-face.

14:40:26 But they are attending anyway.

14:40:26 So anyway that's our youth yell.

14:40:36 >>  I will say that the youth that participated in our program last week all told us that they had received their vaccine.

14:40:40 >>  Wow!  That's awesome.

14:40:51 And I would just say to you, Sarah, that 100 anything is a lot of young people.

14:41:02 That's very good!  Awesome!  And thank you, Kathy, for sharing news from Missouri.

14:41:38 I think what we talked about earlier you go back to talking about staff and vaccination, they start bringing in younger consumers -- -- I think what we want to do is bring back what Jody had shared, saying we started out one way, but what do we do about the issues?  Right?  So we listen to what we hear from the participants and sometimes putting these into groups,

14:41:46 Is all it really takes to find their niche to engage.

14:41:46 They have to show up, of course.

14:42:01 But I'm curious – -- are you going to maintain these tai chi groups online?  What's the hybrid thinking going forward?

14:42:23 >>  We are going to continue this tai chi for the year, and the food banks as well – – both program to the end of the year and we remain flexible and able to move forward if you want to be on December, but everything is really in wait-and-see mode.

14:42:33 Everything is ready but we are ready to spring into a different direction should we need to.

14:42:42 >>  I think that's where we all have to be right now, right?  Flexible!

14:43:04 >>   when Kathy was talking about the money follows the person program it has been hard in nursing homes, because the state basically tells them what's allowed, or their family consent restriction.

14:43:11 And unfortunately, for some people it leaves them in a position where they can't really communicate with the transition specialist.

14:43:23 So our grant just got money  to purchase cell phones.

14:43:36 So this might help them to transition back into the community, other getting there and cell phone, to help transition to when they live in their own home.

14:43:54 So when you're waiting at -- -- as a social worker – -- for a call to come back from your patient, this hopefully will help people from being frustrated anymore.

14:44:17 >>  That is such a great idea. We have a comment here that has also created a space for working parents with school-age children to use, for remote learning, a cell phone.

14:44:20 Took a lot of stress off the parent trying to juggle full-time work and remote learning.

14:44:25 The parents chipped in to hire the person to oversee the children while they're at work.

14:44:32 And when they had, when they had a question, it was one way to knock it out.

14:44:42 So in some places this is happening and it's it's great way to approach this.

14:44:53 Way to go!

14:44:53 I have a question from Jed -- --

14:45:12 >>  Hi, my name is Jed Barton and I'm the government affairs  coordinator in my community.

14:45:19 You've already heard from my colleague Jen in Glendive Montana.

14:45:54 I'm in Billings Montana, and we are slowly reopening. We have a sort of a room set up where we hire staff to meet with consumers who can sign up and sanitize, and wear masks, and all of them have the barriers and all that stuff.

14:46:18 So, so far it's been okay, but in my experience it is a little convoluted because if somebody in the office but not being able to think hey this is my workspace, and my computer does what I want, and nobody's that lucky.

14:46:50 But, yeah, it's been neat to have people come in the office again and we have unlocked the doors during working hours reset a couple of walk-ins – – those are always interesting, to put it politely – – we are on a very busy commercial Street here in Billings, so it does help our foot traffic.

14:47:37 We had an open house in the middle of all this -- -- if you know the history of our organization, we were able to have an open house that would've been July 29 and they were getting ready to have a picnic in the park with consumers hearing Billings in the course that is pending like everything is right now.

14:48:12 So again things are going back towards normal -- -- not my favorite word in the world – but we are taking each day as it comes and doing the best that we can.

14:49:05 We have an enormous geographic service area, like our square mileage for our service area is somewhere between Pennsylvania and Mississippi and makes it very interesting – – – – Steve, you and I used to go to Columbus in red Lodge all the time, we can get up there provided they're not on fire – – there's something like 175,000 acres of forest fire and that's just 1 of them in our service area today.

14:49:11 So keep on keeping on!

14:49:22 >>  Keep on keeping on yourself, and thank you for sharing that with us, Jed.

14:49:28 We have about 10 minutes left, and what I would like to do is grab takeaways.

14:50:08 So this last year or over year and 1/2 now, -- – what has been a lettuce or programmatic fees policy  peace or procedure piece that you would like to put into effect right now?  What does that look like?  Is there anything you would like to share of that?

14:50:08 [no audio]

14:50:26 >>  I hope we've learned something!!  It's going to be a long rest of the year!

14:50:51 >>  What have we learned?  I want to pipe up again and say it's amazing what we can actually do when pressed against the wall, and it has been very helpful for me to be part of many of these types of nationwide listening and participation sessions. Hearing about the cool things that you all are doing, and I am feverishly

14:51:02 Writing notes and trying to get emails and follow-up because these are things that we all think of, but not all of us think of.

14:51:44 Like I'm working from home, and my kid is there, and I love that idea he should be in kindergarten buddies here – – so,!  So these things will continue. I think that being able to really use the remote locations like Zoom and meet up, and all that -- – I think that's going to stay in my bag of helpful things for a long time and I really want to be able to continue to help with that.

14:51:52 I like to hear more about how people are attracting new referrals that are working.

14:51:57 So I like to hear from any other agency staff, organization staff, rehearsing the opposite and how you did that -- --

14:52:10 >>  And why are you thinking of the answer to what Donna proposed -- -- Steve did you have your hand up?

14:52:49 >>  Yeah, I work at Jen here at the living independently for today and tomorrow in Billings Montana, and in responsible your points about is there anything that we like to change or see continue to happen – – fact that would be about making arrangements to meet face-to-face with people but in a controlled environment if you will, if the COVID in Delta numbers will go the right way.

14:53:10 Because I spent several years here working with an independent living specialist, I have face-to-face contact with consumers and I feel like I'm doing a different job now but I have felt like not being able to have face-to-face contact with consumers is almost like talking to them on the phone.

14:53:26 When you can meet with them face-to-face you really get a feel for getting to know them, and you can relate in terms of establishing goals and services and that sort of thing.

14:53:36 And I miss that, now, because I do this different job and I don't work the same way with consumers.

14:53:47 But I look for the dates soon when we can reopen and establish the space contact.

14:53:59 You know I saw a lot of nodding of heads on that so I don't feel like you are alone on that.

14:54:37 >>  So for a lot of you who spoke before, are you going to continue your parent groups?  Yes, it's still there and although the schools are not in place right now we have somebody who has 3 sons with her right now, so they have that space. So there's arts and craft stuff back there, and I'm a grandma but because of the virus my son, who's a sound agenda here for large events, and my daughter-in-law and their 3 children -- --

14:54:41 They moved from California, and they live with me now.

14:55:27 And I've been out of the parenting game for a long time now, but we have the flexibility to let that happen and so we have been trying to be as flexible as we can be in the parents of really try to help so we  has to be more careful with the kitchen and more careful with the water cooler so that we don't spread anything, and it just takes a lot of stress away to know that they can be here.

14:55:47 So we're going to keep the option open that we don't know what we're going to do, or sending emails to parents saying we're just not sure yet – – but our school doesn't start here till after Labor Day.

14:56:06 >>  There are some districts in New York State and elsewhere where the district superintendents are requiring children to come back with masks or they are being sued or being threatened to be fired in some cases.

14:56:14 And I think it's really distressing to see all of the conflict around all of this.

14:56:14 And it just makes matters more complex for us, also.

14:56:33 So I think we're going to be in a situation where we are going to be going back to more safety precautions and social distancing, and the need for all of the wonderful services that you come up with during the pandemic because you're probably going to need it for a while.

14:56:43 >>  I would agree, unfortunately

14:56:45 >>  Heather did you have something?  I think you are on mute

14:57:23 >>  I hope that -- – there has been such great stuff being dropped in  care for so many people -- – they do a lot of mental health, they help check in with people who make phone calls and don't want to Zoom, and not participate in the various virtual programs that are being offered.

14:57:23 That's what Kuma does for us.

14:57:49 >>  I want to thank everybody for being in this series just to see how we are engaging in our community and I want to just Backup and continue with where I started, to see how we are helping each other.

14:58:13 Again, this is not where I hoped we would be when I started this series but as many of you have dropped in the chat and mentioned to me, communication is key to everything that is important to us.

14:58:18 I think we have been 1 of the most flexible organizations and agencies across the country to make sure they are still meeting everybody's needs.

14:58:42 Social needs, mental, physical needs, and equipment -- -- and I thank you for that and from this conversation I want you to know that I'm going to go back to our APRIL team and see what conversations we can have.

14:59:17 Maybe create conversation just around vaccines and the hesitancy behind that. How do we operate?  What are some of our best practices?  I'm sorry that we didn't get to dive into that a little deeper, but I thank you all for spending time with us today and, like I said At the beginning, this was recorded, so please go back to our website soon and see if there's anything from the 1st 2 parts

14:59:23 that might help you understand where we've been up till now.

14:59:46 And we do have a COVID tab on our website that we are constantly adding stuff to, so hopefully you will always have resources for you that we can get out to you.

15:00:04 Again I just want to thank the University of Kansas and I'll be available to provide for us, So make sure that you are hooked into that listserv.

15:00:08 Thank you all for joining and I hope you have a great afternoon.