>> Linda Burger: Hello and welcome. I am Linda Burger, Treasurer of RespectAbility's Board of Directors. We are truly thrilled to have participants today representing many time zones and several countries. Thank you all for making it a priority to join us. I hope today finds you safe and healthy. It is my great pleasure to serve as moderator for today's informative session "How to Create and Implement Successful Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives." Today, you will learn how to take your deep commitment to diversity and inclusion and make it a reality. We will learn from Dorsey Massey and Sally Weber as they share the secret of their diversity and inclusion success, exploring the successful disability initiatives of which they've been a part, and looking at their intersection with other initiatives in the diversity space, including LGBTQ and beyond. First, some housekeeping. The webinar is fully accessible with American Sign Language interpreter, live captioning and screen reader. Please keep in ongoing contact with us via the chat and the question and answer functions as we eagerly anticipate our robust dialogue following the two panelists' presentations. More than 50 percent of RespectAbility's staff and over 50 percent of our Boards of Directors are persons with disabilities, both visible and non-visible. With integrity and validation, all play a pivotal role via their respective positions in a most respectful and mutually beneficial manner. Now in our seventh year, RespectAbility continues to be stalwart, prominently in the forefront of our nation and beyond, as our disabilities leaders and activists strive to fight stigmas and advance opportunities for persons with disabilities. Next slide, please. We are especially proud that our Jewish inclusion work encompasses an actively engaged network of several thousand organizations, individuals, businesses and other entities globally. Enormous gratitude is expressed for the generosity of the following foundations, including the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles through the Cutting Edge Grant, The Diane and Guilford Glazer Philanthropies, The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and several others that have made this nationally unprecedented series of seven innovative webinars possible. They all have shared not only their treasures, yet additionally their hearts and their deep passion for our work. Although RespectAbility is the lead host for this webinar series, we are extremely honored that nearly 45 additional local, national and international organizations are proudly joining us as series co-promoters. Today's webinar is the sixth of seven sessions, with one upcoming webinar to follow. Next slide, please. Each Tuesday for the past five weeks, we addressed critical components of Jewish inclusion. The previous workshops are all available on our website. The seventh and final workshop, "How to Ensure Legal Rights and Compliance Obligations," is next Tuesday at the same time. While our main focus is on doing inclusion right, at some point your organization may need to know a little bit about its legal rights and obligations. This session will cover those topics, including the special sensitivities and limitations applying to religious organizations. Next slide, please. Per the United States Census, one-in-five persons in America has a physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health or other disability. RespectAbility recently conducted a comprehensive landmark study of over 4,000 Jewish participants which revealed that, although the topic of inclusion was of paramount importance, less than one-third of organizations and businesses are in actuality practicing this vital concept. The will was there, yet as was consistently evident from the responses, not the knowledge, not the know-hows, not the how-to's. Jewish individuals with disabilities are making remarkable contributions, strengthening the synagogues, institutions and organizations they work for and ultimately the fabric of the Jewish and greater community. Throughout this series, we have heard from some of the best people and best practice programs and services out there; today will be no exception. Next slide, please. It is a privilege to participate in this session along with Dorsey Massey and Sally Weber. Next slide, please. In addition to my role at RespectAbility, I am the CEO of Jewish Family Service Houston, which is the home of the award-winning JFS Alexander Institute for Inclusion. We work to foster a community that includes all individuals, advocates for disability services that advance inclusion, strives to eliminate the stigma associated with disabilities and encourages community support and participation to create and sustain new and existing disability services. Because of the inclusion efforts in Houston, I have come to know both of our panelists today. Next slide, please. Dorsey Massey, LMSW, will share with you her inclusion work at the Marlene Myerson JCC Manhattan. We have so much to learn from Dorsey, who is also an adjunct professor at Columbia University School of Social Work, where she teaches foundation courses with a focus on diversity and disability to graduate students. While Dorsey is speaking, please put any questions you have in the chat or question and answer section. I will come back to introduce Sally when Dorsey is done. We will address all the questions or comments at the end of both presentations. Next slide, please. Thank you Dorsey.

>> Dorsey Massey: Thank you so much, Linda. It is my pleasure to be here. I briefly want to give a quick disclaimer that I am in New York and there is a tropical storm outside of my window, so please bear with me in case there is any interruption to my presence with you today. And this current weather is keeping my child care away from me, so if at any point a toddler comes on the screen that's okay.

>> Linda Burger: We're all with you. [ Laughter ]

>> Dorsey Massey. Sure. So yeah. Hi, I'm Dorsey. I would like to share that I have a disability. I actually have several. I'm dyslexic, I have ADD - back when that was an actual diagnosis, I have social anxiety, and I bounce in and out of depression. Even though my disabilities are invisible, I feel connected to the disability community in a very personal way, and I am deeply grateful that - I'm deeply grateful that I work at an organization that recognizes the variance in our community. The Marlene Meyerson JCC has seven core values, and my favorite is that we believe in accessibility. JCC Manhattan strives to create an inclusive and accommodating environment for people of different backgrounds and abilities with opportunities for growth and connection. Inclusion is built into who we are as an organization - it's something that we work towards on a daily basis. Next slide, please. I love this quote from Everyday Feminist. It says, "This interpretation of difference as defect is the true root of ableist acts that cause far too many to feel marginalized, discriminated against, and ultimately devalued in this society." When our community members come into the JCC in Manhattan, we want them to feel a sense of belonging, of being valued. It's not enough to identify seven core values with accessibility and inclusion being among them, but we need to put that into action. We do this better in some areas than in others, but we continue to try. One way that we live our values is through our Center for Special Needs. I just want to pause there and acknowledge that we have a center dedicated to individuals with disabilities and it's called the Center for Special Needs. We are aware that this language is not as current as it was 20 years ago when we were starting our programming or 10 years ago when we were naming our center - we are dedicated to finding the right match to identify what our department does and who we represent, and as soon as we find the right language and the right words, we are game to change the name of our center. Suggestions are welcome in the chat box, if you have anything. Regardless of the name though, our center is dedicated to social and recreational programs for folks with an intellectual, developmental or learning disability diagnosis or a learning or communication difference. It offers many people a community to call their own within the larger context of the JCC. Next slide, please. At the Center for Special Needs, we believe in the idea of social inclusion. In case you are not familiar with Schleien's Levels of Inclusion, or as a reminder for people who may be familiar, let me run through these three steps briefly. So the bottom step of inclusion, kind of our base layer of inclusion, is physical inclusion, where we are inviting people or allowing people of various abilities to be in the same place. So this is anywhere - being outside, on the street and having people of different abilities in the same space. The next level is functional inclusion - this is where people of all abilities are together, and the folks who have disabilities or specific needs have the necessary support for them to participate in the activity alongside a typically functioning or typically developing peer. This is where a lot of inclusion stops. We think, "hey, we've got people of all abilities in the same place, and they're all working alongside each other." And Schleien and us at the JCC in the Center for Special Needs really think that - let's push that a little bit further, let's promote this idea of social inclusion, which are where people are next to each other in the same space, working with supports to have a similar outcome and engaging with each other in a way that promotes meaningful peer relationships. This affords the opportunity for people to connect to one another, to really identify and and hold that people, disability or not, are social beings and have a desire to connect to one another. And if we look through the lens of social inclusion, we at the JCC, have been evaluating the center's disability communities and noticing that, our programs live inside a silo, and we're self-contained within the larger JCC community. And we understand and recognize that this is not social inclusion. So to share more with you about how we are advancing social inclusion within our organization, I'm going to briefly share a little bit about what's working within our organization and offer suggestions on how to advance inclusion in your organization. Next slide, please. Alright, the elevator pitch of why we have been successful in advancing inclusion at the Marlene Myerson JCC has five points - it may be a little long for an elevator pitch but bear with me. So one - inclusion and accessibility are incorporated into the core values of our organization. Secondly, the JCC has committed to building a community for individuals with disabilities, and because we have devoted our time to cultivating these communities, we are now able to leverage our relationships and our trust within these communities and break out of our disability programs, and infiltrate the broader JCC. Thirdly, we have the support of our executive staff and leaders throughout the building, to push for social change and normalization of disability. This work could not be done without the support of our leaders and our leadership. And fourth, we continue staff development in the area of disability inclusion to support constituents of all abilities throughout the JCC programming. We view ourselves, meaning the staff of the JCC, as part of the barrier to social inclusion - in addition to the broader community and our constituents, but we feel that it's imperative to openly discuss and identify ableist views and train our teams on how to better support individuals with disabilities. We can't control the views of our constituents, but we can and should model inclusivity as a best practice. And last - the creation of a diversity, equity and inclusion leadership team, in the past several years, that focuses on equity and accessibility in the areas of race, LGBTQAI+, ability and age. So there are highlights of - sorry, these are highlights of what has been working for us at the JCC in Manhattan, but that might not be what works for you and your organization. So, let's spend the rest of my air time with some suggestions on how to propel inclusion in your areas. Next slide, please. Alright. So, here are some suggestions for making a cultural shift in your organization regarding social inclusion. I'm actually going to start on the right side and then move over to the left, so sorry that this might feel a little out of order for anyone. There are four areas of action that you can take in your organization. The first area of action is your staff culture and its view on ability. This looks like updating job descriptions, staff manuals, things of that nature to promote accessibility for the staff. This reinforces normalization of disability and breaks down an 'us versus them' mentality at the staff level of the organization. Some suggestions include adding social inclusion as a responsibility on a job description and including inclusion in an annual review, asking the question of "how did you advance inclusion in your job, in your program area, in your classes this past year?" holds the staff accountable. Incorporating inclusion training during onboarding for new staff from the very beginning, the very start of a relationship with a new team member, you're signaling that inclusion is valuable and that this is something that we do here. Updating or creating accommodation requests and service animal policies for your staff - you might be surprised at what policies are existing or are not existing in your agency, so taking a look could be really eye-opening. And finally enhancing the accessibility in your organization's safety protocols. The second area of action is how your organizational policies support various abilities. This looks like updating your organization's policies to promote your constituency's accessibility. This helps to front-load information about accessibility so the stigma of asking for accommodations is lowered. Some suggestions include publicly marketing your building's accessibility and your accessibility features for programs or classes or services, having easily accessible accommodation request forms available for people - if it's like a scavenger hunt in even getting a request for accessibility, that sends a message that the accessibility is not accessible, which is a little silly. And providing information in multiple styles; so communicating orally and using a microphone, including written materials, having visuals - which is different than just a written handout, an ASL interpreter when appropriate - we're doing a lot of this today, ReelAbilities is definitely a model to follow. The third area of action is what your marketing says about your community, accessibility and how you include people. This looks like updating your organization's marketing. This showcases an authentic representation of your community. The key is to be authentic with your images. So if you are including on your posters a really wide range of ability, yet when somebody comes to your program or your synagogue or your class and that's not represented, then there's a disconnect in the expectations of how people will truly belong to a space. So we want to be thoughtful about being pro-diverse in our marketing but also really capturing who we authentically are. It also sends a message that people of various abilities are welcome in your community. Suggestions include having individuals with disabilities in your marketing images, and not just for disability programs, ensuring that your website is accessible, again RespectAbility does a phenomenal job of this, so check out literally anything RespectAbility does as far as accessibility features online and you cannot go wrong. They did not pay me to say that, I promise. And the final area of action is evaluating what professional development is needed to support your teams as they grow their social inclusion skills. This looks like staff awareness and training on ableism and privilege, person-first and identity-first language, creating a guiding principles for social inclusion at your agency, and I'll give you a snapshot of what this looks like at the JCC in Manhattan. We have this in our staff manual and as part of our onboarding paperwork - there's an opening statement that says "we strive to honor the dignity and ability of all individuals in our programs and classes, to value and value the promotion of growth, independence and skills needed for success. Staff can help individuals grow by upholding these principles." So we're really saying, we at the JCC, believe that people are valuable and belong and we want to send the message through our actions and through the way that we facilitate our programs that says "I'm here to support you," and the principles include respect, dignity of risk, assume competence, build independence, scaffolding for support, everyone has value and social connection enhances life. There's a little bit about each of those topics, but I won't go into everything - I'm just giving you some snapshots here. Additionally I have - inclusive language is a key area for training because communication is what we are in the business of - it's hard to be a social support if we are not communicating. I rely heavily, as does our JCC, we rely heavily on the JCCA of North America. They created a association guide to language, inclusion and disabilities, and that was shared out in January. And it is wonderful. It is a great launch pad for any organization, and it includes things like talking about how language matters, that human agency comes first along with how a person identifies and ask, don't assume. It is several pages long, those are just a couple of my favorite areas that it identifies, but it shapes the landscape of how valuable language can be. And then at the JCC in Manhattan, I want to share two examples of staff resources and trainings that I have developed. One is a tips of engagement document - it's a training on 10 tips for engaging individuals who have communication and learning differences, so if somebody is taking a cooking class that is not a disability cooking class, we want that chef to know how to best engage that individual, or if somebody just needs a little extra support but isn't coming in with an identified disability, we want people to be able to fit into the space that's provided for them, and not have to feel like they don't belong. So this includes setting clear and reasonable expectations, how to do that and why it's important, using schedules and routines, giving individuals the space and time to process information and several other tips. There's also a training on suggested language for challenging behaviors - this is a training for staff with scripted language and suggestions on how to support behaviors that are challenging. Highlights include if you notice someone having a difficult time staying engaged in activity, dot dot dot, it breaks down why someone, anyone, might have a tough time being engaged - they could be hungry, they could be anxious, they could be tired, and how to approach each different area. Other topics or other areas of the more challenging behavior are if someone's pacing or having trouble being still, if someone wants to talk to you or other students in the class instead of the task at hand, these are not big, aggressive behaviors or... sorry, I got distracted - these are not aggressive behaviors, but more attention- or outcome-based challenging behaviors that sometimes if you are not savvy to the world of disability or to learning differences, then you might not know what to do if somebody gets up in the middle of an art class and starts pacing or stimming. Some of us here today might know that that person just needs a moment, but not everybody does. We all have to learn this at some point. So I want to point out that as much of the social inclusion... sorry, I want to point out that much of the social inclusion training at the JCC in Manhattan, while directed towards individuals with intellectual, developmental and learning disabilities, is generalizable to a large portion of the community - so it might have come from the Center for Special Needs, it might have come from a social worker, but really it benefits so many more people than who we are personally connected with through our disability programming. We often say that if you build supports for the person who needs it the most, everyone else will benefit too. Training our staff on how to be warmly direct, communicate clearly and invite everyone to the table benefits the larger JCC community. You have unique needs and areas to focus on regarding the cultural shift within your own agency or organization, and I encourage each of you to think about what would be necessary to affect social change in your agency or community, and reflect on these above four areas, these areas on this slide. I'm happy to share any materials that I have with you if you're interested in seeing what these tips of engagement looks like or if you didn't get the JCCA's inclusive language examples, send me an email - I am happy to share anything with you. That's the Marlene Meyerson JCC in Manhattan. My name is Dorsey Massey and I work in the Center for Special Needs, so you can find me there if my contact information isn't readily available to you. But I want to thank you so much for your time today and I look forward to your questions. And Linda is going to introduce our next panelist.

>> Lind Burger: Thank you, Dorsey, so much and I can tell you from the chat in the chat box, everybody wants access to your documents, so perhaps you'll just share, you'll share them either in the chat and we'll make sure they get to everyone. Thank you. So I hope that the weather will permit you to continue being with us so that you can be part of the discussion, but if you'll go to the next slide, Eric. Thank you. So it's my pleasure to introduce Sally Weber, LCSW, to you, with full disclosure, Sally consulted with JFS Houston and three synagogue inclusion committees over the past years. She has extensive experience with issues ranging from understanding the needs of families with disabilities to the importance of social and cultural inclusion of people with disabilities in Jewish communal settings. Again, as you listen to the presentation, please post your questions in the chat and we will get to that after Sally's presentation. Next slide, please. Sally.

>> Sally Weber: Thank you so much, Linda, and thank you RespectAbility [ clears throat ] pardon me, for inviting me to be part of this project and this webinar. So today what I'm going to be doing is using two programs - two program models from my experience as director, first of all Director of Jewish Community Programs and Special Needs Programs at Jewish Family Service, where I worked for a few decades, and also as a private consultant working with terrific agencies like Jewish Family Service Houston. I've chosen a macro project and a micro project and want to take a look at best practices, the similarities in working in those two environments and some of the challenges and differences that are significant, and I really welcome any and all questions, almost all questions, at the end. So the macro project is HaMercaz, which was a or is a network of community agencies -

>> Linda Burger: Sally, one second and will you advance the slide, please.

>> Sally Weber: Oh.

>> Linda Burger: I know you can't can't see. Okay now here we are. Go ahead.

>> Sally Weber: Right, yes. I'm unfortunately a little locked out of seeing what's going on. I will say next slide, please. Okay. So HaMercaz is a network of community agencies providing one-stop resource for advocacy services and support for Jewish families with children ages 0 to 22 with developmental, intellectual and learning disabilities. This program was started under the umbrella of Jewish Federation Council with Jewish Family Service as the lead agency. The micro project is working with synagogues which include the synagogues in Houston and in Los Angeles, in all instances with the invitation to help create inclusion programs. And what that meant, how different congregations viewed that request, what they thought the outcome might be, varied significantly from community and culture to community and culture, but we'll take a look at some of the aspects of that. Next slide, please. So, these are some of the important similarities; in both instances these programs have professional staffing. HaMercaz - I was the staff person from Jewish Family Service, the Jewish Federation, Michelle Wolf, who many of you probably know, was the staff person from the Jewish Federation Council. We used to joke that we should just set up sleeping bags in each other's offices because of the incredible amount of time that we spent together. It was very labor-intensive, it was enormously exciting to have another staff person to share this with and especially to have a staff person from another agency - the interagency, interdisciplinary part of this was really a significant part of how HaMercaz developed. Synagogues - I was the outside consultant; in both instances, the continuity was really important - for HaMercaz, the continuity was staffing it for about 10 years, and synagogues, as long as the project lasted. For the most part, these projects, even though the synagogues first thought they could get through this in six months to a year, as Linda will testify, we found it going well into two years. The second similarity is that when we started the projects, we were open to what the target population would be, and it was determined by the project participants. HaMercaz, after much discussion, decided to specifically target Jewish families with children from birth to 22, which is the the cut off for the original center programming and other kinds of resources and support, we felt we wanted to really have expertise in a specific area. This presented challenges which I'll address a little later on, in terms of who we didn't address and who wasn't invited to the HaMercaz table. Synagogues each targeted their entire congregations, adults and children, with physical, developmental and or emotional disabilities. Next slide, please. The coalition building was significant in both programs but the basis of HaMercaz really was the coalition building, and I will get into a few of the details of that a little bit later. Initially, we invited every agency in Los Angeles dealing with what we called special needs, to come to an opening meeting - we had about 55 people - and through the course of the early days, the focus limited and narrowed as we started looking more at how expansive could we be and being completely expansive in a community the size of Los Angeles, how effective could we be. As the target population narrowed, some of the participants didn't continue and also not all the invitees chose to participate. We did include professionals, policy makers and consumers on a variety of levels, both from our target agencies but also from the community at large, and very importantly, the mission statement and the target populations were determined by the committee of partners, so even though Michelle and I came in representing the key agencies sponsoring this, it was really important that the mission and the target grew out of the needs of the participants. Next slide, please. The coalition building in the synagogues really rested on the importance of top-down support, starting with the rabbis and the board, and growing to all interested parties in consumers and their families. Without the support of the top leadership, there's really nowhere to go with this program, and I am a low-hanging fruit person - start where you can and build up - but the support of the rabbis was absolutely imperative. The support needed to include an invitation list, created by key participants, as well as general outreach. So I sat with the rabbis, I sat with the key leaders and said, "generate names. Generate names of people who should be invited - and think really expansively, don't just think about people who are movers and shakers, think about people who might be sort of on the fringe, but are family members or friends of people with disabilities. Think of people you've been trying to get involved, but because of conversations you've had with them or heard with them where they felt excluded because of accessibility and inclusion issues, they haven't been comfortable joining - those people have to be invited." The importance of personal outreach absolutely can't be overemphasized. Once we generated this list, the invitations to these people came from people who knew them and always included an invitation from the rabbi or rabbis - that was a central part of it because then the follow-up could also be from people who do them, and it was very, very effective in all instances. Next slide, please. So the key issues with our macro project, HaMercaz, was what's already being done and who's doing it: and that was a revelation - I started out considering myself incredibly knowledgeable about the services in the Los Angeles community, really enormous expertise in that area, and it was jaw-dropping to hear from people what they were doing, what their small and large agencies, programs and institutions and organizations were doing, and if it was jaw-dropping for me, for those who were coming to this sort of out of their own bubbles, it was remarkable. And that was our first meeting - we spent about an hour and a half on that. The second key issue, and we will come back to this as a challenge also, was awareness and respect for turf issues and boundaries. I'm using turf not as a negative term but as a term that requires a lot of respect and understanding of the fact that people create programs and projects within their own cultures and we can't come in expecting to recreate a wheel. HaMercaz was based not on recreating a wheel, but on looking at all of the wheels in the community that existed and what wagon could we hitch those to and what else needed to be in that wagon. If someone doesn't want to participate and we really want to have participate, what are the barriers? Are those barriers surmountable? In some instances, the answer was yes, and often had to do with "what's in it for me?" And in some instances, the answer was "no, we're doing just fine, thank you. We don't need to be part of something larger." If someone wants to participate but isn't appropriate, how do we address that? That was particularly an issue if their services didn't fit within the mission statement developed regarding the target population. For instance, programs that were addressing physical disabilities but not - where maybe there would be developmental disabilities but that that was not part of their services, that HaMercaz dealt with developmental, emotional and learning disabilities, so we did try to find other resources, other partnerships, to help connect people and sometimes there were less than good feelings about that, I think in general people ultimately respected that we were addressing a very specific field of needs and certainly respecting the needs and the benefits of the other programs, but simply not able to address everything. Next slide, please. Synagogues, the first key issue was how did diverse participants identify their needs? People in all instances came to the first meeting saying, "well, I think my needs are very different from everybody else's. I have a child on the autism spectrum and have not been able to find a appropriate preschool program and my synagogue has really closed me out." "Well, I have a mother who has Alzheimer's, and the synagogue has been helpful in some areas but not in others, I don't know what I have in common with a young parent with a three-year-old." But as the discussions grew, as people told their stories, the commonalities of the experience, the commonalities of the desire to be part of a community, overrode those differences, and those differences really became the building blocks for the kind of coalition and partnership that we were able to develop. In all the synagogues, we looked at how professionals, laity and consumers identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers in their congregation - just going to call that SWOB in the future: this was an enormously helpful tool in the beginning because it really helped identify priorities, and it was really helpful at the end, because at the end of the projects, at our final meeting when we went back and did the SWOB analysis again, people were like, "wow, this is really quite amazing." It's like, "look how much of this we've dealt with." And then finally, how the synagogue dealt with change in the past - never underestimate the power of resistance to change, this is a very human quality, and institutional quality - people want change, but they also want balance. Next slide, please. The surprises. HaMercaz - none of us were aware of how much was available, I already addressed this, and in the beginning, no one expected this model to work - too many personalities, too many turf issues, people were never going to come together - they were really wrong. HaMercaz is close to 10 years old now. Synagogues - the surprise, as I mentioned, was that very first meeting of storytelling, where our participants were stunned to learn about the commonalities of people's experiences within the congregation: people who thought they had nothing in common with someone else had an enormous amount of common, and that this provided a setting to talk about things that were never talked about elsewhere, and became a model for how do we want to open up the congregation for these kinds of conversations. Next slide, please. The stumbling blocks. HaMercaz, as I mentioned, the turf issues: I'm just going to share one really profound experience. HaMercaz started, the the first meeting that we held with the 50 participants, Jewish Family Service convened that - this has always been an area of interest and expertise for me, Jewish Family Service was committed to it, we had this great turnout - part of the feedback was what right does Jewish Family Service have to call this meeting - they're not a special needs agency, what gave them the credentials to do this? We took that really seriously, and we went to the Federation and we said, "you are the umbrella agency, we need you to be the convener of these meetings. We would like to be the lead agency because of what we've already committed to this, we're writing grants for it, but we need to address this turf issue differently." The question of who's in and who's out was an issue, I mean, as I mentioned, that was partly a decision in terms of the target, but it was also - what did we do when we have 15 Friendship Circles, and we want Friendship Circle represented on our boards, on our committees, but we can't invite all 15. Personality issues - I probably don't have to say too much about that except that was part of the long nights Michelle and I spent together, figuring this out. And then again, just dealing with the impact of change because you can't build things without changing things. Synagogues, we have the challenge of uneven buy-in - synagogues, again, where the clergy were very committed and involved fared much much better. The concern about the impact of change; homeostasis, who's going to start coming into my congregation, am I going to be comfortable, things that Dorsey has already addressed - I don't know what to do with that behavior, I really feel uncomfortable and is this going to change my home. And then the finances, which are always an issue - what's this going to cost? We did a pretty good job of programs that didn't cost very much except for some physical accessibility issues. Next slide. The tools we used were reinforcing buy-in from the top, doing a needs assessment in all settings about what exists and what's needed, SWOB as I mentioned, strict accountability both in HaMercaz and in the synagogues, updates, minutes, reports, partners and the community always knowing what was happening and having a place to respond and ongoing contact with committee members - that was a key part both of working with synagogues and with HaMercaz. The tools with HaMercaz was repeatedly focused on the message to partners that they have something to give but they also have something to gain, and what they had to gain was an important part of the conversations: some of the people who didn't participate said, "what do we have to gain you know if we join? We're just going to be giving." So that that was crucial to address. The ongoing acknowledgement of boundaries, and the continual cross-referrals which we tracked, because we wanted to show the participating agencies and programs that in fact, HaMercaz was sending people to them. We annually reassessed goals, achievements and needed modifications. Next slide. Synagogues - our tools: we had focus groups in all settings, which was an opportunity also to identify people who might participate on the community; we had working committees, so people weren't just coming to a committee meeting once a month, but they actually had jobs to do and they had smaller groups to participate with; the storytelling, as I mentioned, was extraordinary; and continually updating the congregation about the work of the community - I'm sorry, of the committee, which included reports, ongoing columns in the bulletins, conversations from the bimah, having speakers, etc. Next slide. What we would do differently definitely is looking at intersectionality a little differently - who is included in the community and who through oversight, indifference or intention is excluded. Our proof text for this is the exclusion of Jews with disabilities, but at this time it would also include participants of color in the LGBTQ community. Next slide. These are the must-haves: expectations - what are the parameters of what can be done and how will you address in all of these settings what can't be done? What's realistic, what's not realistic? How are you going to address people whose expectations really cannot be met? Wow are you going to find other resources for them? How are you going to build programs where maybe those needs can be looked at the following year? Patience - lots and lots of patience; the process is not linear, it's not easy, but it's never easy if you skip steps to push for immediate results - that's going to come back to bite you with all the things that you overlooked or brushed over, that can become barriers. And finally, the openness to new ideas that may not be yours: we come in as staff people, as lay leaders, taking leadership in these programs - I always like the the 55/45 rule, that out of 100 percent, if you get 55 percent of what you want, that's fantastic - if you get more than that, that's over the moon. So that's what I wanted to share for a starter: I welcome any questions and look forward to talking with my co-panelists. Thank you.

>> Linda Burger: Sally and Dorsey, thank you for sharing your experience with us and helping us understand how we can take your experience and apply it to our individual organizations and communities. Many questions have been posted in the chat boxes and I invite Matan Koch, Director of RespectAbility's California Leadership and Jewish Engagement to facilitate the question and answer session. Matan, an attorney, was a Senate-confirmed appointee of President Obama to the National Council on Disability and advised dozens of Jewish organizations including Hillel and URJ. We are so fortunate to have this talent at RespectAbility. Matan.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you, Linda, and first can I just ask Joshua, can you take down the PowerPoint so that we can see each other's faces as we're talking - thanks so much. So glad to see you all. So there have been a great number of questions coming in, I'm going to do some synthesis so that in the about eight minutes that we have for questions, we reach as many of your questions as possible, but before I do that I'm just going to cut and paste into the chat box, Dorsey has in fact provided the resources that folks asked for, so if you look down at your chat box in about 10 seconds you will see those resources appear - so give me one second and we'll get that up to you. Alright - I'm not a tech whiz but here we are - oh, the links didn't go so you know what, Dorsey, while we're question-answering you can maybe reproduce those links you emailed me into the chat box? Alright, so, I think one of the big, overall questions that came in was that a lot of these discussions seem to focus on professionals or parents - can you speak a little bit to how you've included, and this could be to either panelist, people with disabilities in the planning processes that you have done?

>> Sally Weber: With the synagogues, people with disabilities were part of the committees in every instance. With HaMercaz, we had participants with disabilities but because the purpose of that program was to bring together agencies, we incorporated people with disabilities in different ways, so we had community-based programming, we had support groups, we had educational programs where the participation and feedback was a crucial part of what was brought back to the professional community. I don't know Michelle Wolf is online, I think Sarah Lipstein is, who started as an intern with this project and later staff and then director of it, but I don't know if Sarah has anything to add to that.

>> Linda Burger: What about you, Dorsey?

>> Dorsey Massey: Sure. I would love to say that we are flawless and we always include and have everyone's voice and to consider and, we don't always do that. I think specifically with our programs within the Center for Special Needs and programs specifically for individuals with disabilities, we very much listen to our community members, we have folks who bring suggestions to us and we say, "yes, let me help you do that," through the broader JCC - I think that that's definitely an area where we miss the mark a bit. I will say within our diversity, equity and inclusion task force, I am a person with disabilities, and in addition to me there is a person who identifies as gay who's on that team, and where we try to balance not being a collective voice for any affinity group but being representative of a voice within an affinity group.

>> Linda Burger: So I would just like to add to this because I think this is exactly what Matan's job actually is in California where you're doing a program called Operation Moses and we're trying to increase the leadership status of people with disabilities within the Jewish community and to find ways to bring them into organizations as key staff members, and it's a great question because it's something that, I think RespectAbility sees at a very high level and that we all need to be working towards a staff component as well as a board component of people with disabilities, of color, of diversity, trying to find that balance is the world that we're living in right now. I think, Matan, you have another question for us.

>> Matan Koch: I do, and so Dorsey, you used a term when you were presenting 'normalization of disability'; the initial question that came in was just if you could define the term, but I actually want to broaden the question, have you both define the term and also tell us a little bit about what it means to normalize different groups within a within a diversity framework since, this is a broader diversity question.

>> Dorsey Massey: Sure and happy to have other voices on this as well. What I meant, and our reference for normalizing, specifically disabilities, is to take the difference out of the disability - in... let me like, sort that down a little bit more. I don't want to take away anybody's uniqueness or anyone's idiosyncratic strengths and beauty; what I do mean by normalization and taking away the difference is taking away the othering that comes with difference, so really looking at ability as a spectrum and seeing that we - identifying and recognizing that we all have places in our life where we need a little extra support, where we need extra time to process, where we can benefit from having someone there to help us, and saying that that's okay, that's not something special that someone who has a disability needs, it's something unspecial that all of us need at any given point, so in this idea of we all need help at some points, really bringing that to the forefront and making it normal or typical or standard in our programs and within the JCC to have that support so that people who do need it have access to it and people who don't need it don't have to utilize it while it's there. I think that we're working a lot within our staff to normalize, to say that it's normal to have a difference, it's normal to have a variance in the way that we communicate or understand or interpret information within our colleagues and within the constituents that we work on. But please, anyone else who wants to chime in, I'd love to hear you.

>> Sally Weber: Yeah. I was thinking as you were talking that the part of the power of the storytelling, especially in the synagogue setting, was the issue of normalization, but it came from the flip-side of the coin, which was developing the commonality, and that when people felt that there were these profound differences, what they were experiencing was abnormal, no one could ever understand it, the commonality, not of the disability, but of the experience, was so powerful. That that was a message they were then able to take out. And when we talked a little about intersectionality, back in those days in the very beginning of this, the synagogues especially, when we talked about a lot of the issues of accessibility, people immediately went to, "oh, well actually, that would really be helpful for my aging mother - accessible bathrooms, it'd be really helpful for my aging mother," and then saying, "well gosh, actually, does that come under the heading of special need?" And starting to develop this this broader and broader understanding of the fact that that we all have special needs, it's just the language that we've used to isolate people rather than seeing it as as a human quality.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you, Sally. It's so exciting and there's so many more questions but sadly, we're at time, so I want to encourage you to reach out to the panelists, so I'm going to turn it back to Linda to take us home. [ Laughter ]

>> Linda Burger: Thank you so much, Matan and gosh, I wish we had more time. There's one final slide if Josh could share it with you and it's just a reminder that next week, we have our last in the series - it's actually being moderated by Matan, and he's going to be joined with Ariella Barker, who's a former RespectAbility Fellow, Bobby Silverstein, principal Powers Pyles Sutter and Verville, PC and Matthew W. Dietz, Esquire, Litigation Director of Disability Independence Group Inc. So I hope we'll see you next week, same time, same place, and thank you to Sally and to Dorsey, and everybody be well and stay safe.

>> Sally Weber: Thank you all.