>> Matan Koch: Good afternoon to those in the East, good morning to those in the West, Good sometime of day to those who are everywhere else. We come to you now with the sixth of our exciting seven part webinar series, Leaders Of The Future, and this will be Effective Disability Advocacy From The Inside. Next slide please. I would like to start by telling you a little bit about the logistics. You may notice already that we have live captioning and an ASL interpreter for this webinar If you are having trouble, don't see the captioning, go to the bottom of your screen and click "live transcript" and that captioning will begin to appear. Our colleague, Eric, who handles things technical, will also be putting in the chat some other instructions, other ways to access it if you are having any trouble with that. Because a PowerPoint is up, the interpreter is currently spotlighted, but you can always change your view to gallery so that you can also see the speakers. Once the powerpoint goes down you will be able to see all the speakers. We are taking questions and in fact we are excited to take questions, so if you have something to ask our panelists, use the Q&A box on Zoom or put a comment in the Facebook live and we will do our best to address your questions. This webinar is being recorded and will be posted with captions, with transcript and probably with this PowerPoint, although it doesn't have a lot of interesting information in it. And by the end of this week on RespectAbility's website www.respectability.org. Next slide please. I want to thank all of our partners and co-promoters for this series. You know it really is a collaborative effort because we all want to train leaders. I'm not going to read them all because it would frankly be too long a list, but you should definitely go back and look either on our website or in this presentation because they are all great. Next slide please. I do, however want to specifically thank our generous funders for this series: The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles and The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. Without their support this series would not be possible. Additionally we want to thank the David Berg Foundation, the Beverly Foundation, and the Diane and Guilford Glaser Foundation for their support of our general Jewish inclusion work. Because of them we are here to to do this today. Next slide please. As I mentioned, this is a series. The next webinar in the series, which is also the final webinar series in the series, is Tuesday, July 20th, where we will be updating our accessible events webinar for the technological realities of 2021. You will get to see our fantastic Vice President of Communications, Entertainment and News Media, Lauren Applebaum, and the incomparable Eric Ascher, who's running this very webinar, who will collaborate to give that to you. Next slide please. So why are we doing this, and why did all these sponsors come together, and why did our funders fund? Really it's because Jewish organizations say they want to include people with disabilities - more than 90 percent in the survey we did, and yet the same survey they told us that fewer than 15 percent of Jews can identify a single leader with a disability in Jewish communal life, and so we sort of said "we need to solve that problem." And a year ago we ran a series to help equip Jewish organizations to better include people with disabilities. If that's something you have a passion for, you can find that on our website. And this is the compliment, because we can't expect more leaders unless we actually train people now to be leaders. Next slide please. And so now without further ado, I am going to turn it over to our esteemed panelists, Hannah Henschel, a manager at Hillel International, Susan Sygall, CEO of Mobility International USA, and Aaron Kaufman, the Senior Manager Legislative Affairs at the Jewish Federations of North America, who will talk to you about the notion of effectively advocating when the change that you're trying to make isn't necessarily the same thing as what you're being paid to do. So with that, we drop the PowerPoint and I turn it over to our esteemed panel to introduce themselves. So in the order you're on the slide, Hannah would you like to introduce yourself first?

>> Hannah Henschel: A pleasure, yes. Thank you all for having me, my name is Hannah Henschel, my pronouns are they/them, and I am the manager of student engagement and wellness at Hillel International in Washington, D.C. My journey towards where I am today, a little bit of an idea of why I'm here with all of you, is that I had a disability in my youth that was really focused on my hearing and hearing loss. Today I really find myself as a proud ally and advocate for the disability community. I've been working in the Jewish communal world for a few years now, and my scope of focus has really been on inclusion, and disability inclusion, and LGBTQ inclusion. Currently at Hillel International, I help with our disability inclusion initiatives that focus on training on the local and international scale, one-on-one coaching, and it's just a pleasure to be here with all of you, so I'm excited to learn with the other panelists and learn in community with all of you and just talk about some some things that I've experienced here as a Jewish communal professional, I'll call myself. I think I'm passing it to Susan from here.

>> Susan Sygall: Sure, I'm happy to introduce myself. Thank you, Hannah, it's so great to hear about you and hi there, Aaron. My name is Susan Sygall. I'm a wheelchair rider, my pronouns are she and her, and I have the interesting thing of becoming a leader in that I was brought up, I was -- did not have a disability, I acquired a disability when I was 18. And I was studying at the University of California and I co-founded a recreation and sports program which is still running today, and while I was there I saw an ad in the newspaper to study abroad. And I thought "wow that sounds amazing, all expenses paid," so I got a rotary scholarship and went to Australia for a year and studied. And I wondered, why aren't there more people with disabilities having this amazing opportunity to study abroad, to volunteer abroad? And I also, when I traveled around and I hitchhiked in my wheelchair through New Zealand and I did all sorts of crazy things, I thought there's a family of people with disabilities around the world, and why aren't we sharing stories and strategies, so that all of us can get our rights? So I came back, I co-founded Mobility International USA, MIUSA, whose mission is to advance disability rights and leadership globally, and I'm thrilled to be here and to help to work to build a pipeline of leaders with disabilities. So I think with that, I'll pass it over to Aaron.

>> Aaron Kaufman: Thank you Susan, and it's just such an honor to be on a panel with these two esteemed and talented individuals. I must have forgotten Matan's birthday if I had to follow that introduction. I want to also just thank my wonderful colleague, the Director of JFNA's network community -- communities rather, Rachel Levy for being here, and also my dear friends Rachel Hall and Carly Goodman. It's nice to have a cheering section. I came to the disability movement by birth, and yes I'm being partially facetious, I'm partially humorous, because I was born with cerebral palsy and I use a walker to get around, and have associated learning and visual disabilities. And why I do what I do is that -- my brother is my inspiration because he has cerebral palsy too, but his CP is more significant than mine in that he needs assistance with all of his ADLs and has an intellectual disability. So I always -- do this work because I love to get paid to fight for my people every day, and I think, I love subtly and politely busting societal stigma about the capabilities of people with disabilities on a daily basis. And it's an honor to -- have this panel moderated by my wonderful friend on the left coast, Matan Koch.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you Aaron, and with those wonderful introductions, I'm going to jump right into my first question. It's a question for all of the panelists to really answer. So you know that the theme of this webinar is effective disability advocacy from the inside, and you know that we are focused primarily on the types of advocacy where you do not have positional or related authority to get that done. So, for example, Aaron, though you advocate on disability issues, you are not, per se, JFNA's disability officer or something, and Hannah, while you work with students with disabilities, you're not Hillel International's disability officer, and Susan, while you run a disability organization, there are places like your synagogue where no one has appointed you to say "hey, let's handle this." So, I wonder if each of you could share an experience where you advocated, even though that wasn't, you know, precisely what you were being paid to do, and just what it felt like, what the considerations were, and then we'll ask some clarifying questions, but this will sort of set the stage for each of you of here's a tangible thing that I have done, and I'm not sure if y'all agreed on an order beforehand, but since Hannah went first and Aaron went last last time, let's have Aaron go first this time.

>> Aaron Kaufman: Well thank you, Matan. One thing that sticks out to me is that, with a former employer, I really had to push them to have closed captioning at our big event, our big annual conference, and to have an ASL interpreter, and just be more mindful of making sure that it was a meaningful experience for all participants. And all means people with disabilities. And at first I encountered resistance -- oh, it's too much money, we don't have a line item in the budget, you know, no one ever uses those things. But I think over time because I was at that position for a long time, I was able to change attitudes, and now we're a much more accessible organization at that former employer than we were before. So, advocacy is unpleasant. Sometimes you have -- you get grief, or you're labeled a complainer, but you have to do it because not everyone else is in the position to do it whether it's part of your job description or not.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you, Aaron, and now Susan.

>> Susan Sygall: Yeah, sure. So obviously in my role as a CEO I can definitely, you know, call the shots. But when I'm in our synagogue, which is a wonderful synagogue, you know, I was definitely -- people knew I was a strong disability rights advocate and so they were not surprised when, for instance, we went from a small synagogue to a big synagogue, they were great at consulting me in every stage of the construction. So one of the things was, you know, the, not the minimum standards, but what's the best we can do when building a synagogue? So all the bathrooms are accessible, the Bema has a ramp that you can go up one side and then the ramp continues the - and the other side, so when people are dancing around, I can join in my wheelchair and go up and around and down in a big circle with everybody else. We have a Torah stand that goes up and down, so if you're reading from the Torah and you're a person in a wheelchair or a young kid, you can adjust the Torah standing. There's braille and bumps and things, I should say, on the outside and sign language interpreters, you know, we obviously have on request. But I was also a big fighter that I thought on all the high holidays, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, there should be sign language interpreters whether you request it or not. So I think what you have, you know, you have to I would say have Hutzpah for a good cause. You have to speak out, whether you're considered fabulous or a bit annoying, and I agree with what Aaron said, I mean, we're talking about Tikkun Olam, changing the world. Well, if we change the world from the outside, the synagogue should be the model place, and with that, Hannah, and I see you nodding your head so I'm going to pass it on to you.

>> Hannah Henschel: Yeah, I mean I agree, and I'm hearing things that are so familiar to the work that i've done at Hillel in my personal life. I think what's been really interesting is, in this virtual year of being pushed more and more online, there's been a lot of asked of me to look something over, or to review how we send out material and making sure that it's accessible for Hillel International. So we've started to create standards and I find myself often floated onto emails with my colleagues of talking about, "oh, we need to restructure the way that we're framing this to make sure that we're actually, you know following our guidelines and our baseline of making sure that our virtual events are accessible for all that want to come on." So ensuring closed captioning, sign language interpreting, making sure there's funding for that. The other thing that I find myself often doing in my role is pushing our partners, actually, a lot, to be thinking harder and, you know, more impactful about the programs that they put on. There was a lot of options for partnerships this past year. This is one of them, right? A great partnership. And with those partnerships, trying to keep our partners up to a certain standard for how we do our virtual programs, and how we want our students and our community members to access those programs. So, ensuring that they actually have a budget and are ready for closed captioning -- if not, we'll hold it on our platform, happy to do that, along with ASL interpreting, and actually asking the question, you know, "do you have any more accessible needs that we can go ahead and make sure that we have a process for?" So that's -- the other thing that I often find myself, you know, pushing and asking our larger Jewish community and just partner organizations in general, because we're trying to set a standard and we really want everyone else to really meet us at that.

>> Matan Koch: Great, and so the interesting thing for me from those answers is that we sort of had you know, on the one hand Aaron mentioned the possibility of being labeled a complainer, and on on the other hand, Susan, you suggested that it was necessary to have Hutzpah, and so the question that I have, and in some ways it's more of a question for Hannah and for Aaron than for Susan, although Susan, I guess there is such a thing as social consequences which are different than professional consequences -- but with the knowledge that, you know, both of y'all are solidly in the middle of your careers which means you're not calling the shots of your organizations yet, and you also need to keep food on the table because, you know, it's really fun to pay rent and eat, I think a lot of people that are in our audience today are going to find themselves in exactly that role: wanting to make change but aware that positionally there are other considerations that they need to keep in mind. How would you speak to that concern? What strategies have you employed to be a change-maker whilst making sure that you don't become a former change-maker at your organization, or at least disregarded, which could be social or professional? So, you know -- so in our order of rotation I would normally be starting with Susan now but because I'd directed these questions first and foremost to Hannah and Aaron, who would like to answer first?

>> Aaron Kaufman: Hannah can go first, I'll go second.

>> Matan Koch: And then Susan, anything you have to add after that would still be great to hear.

>> Hannah Henschel: Great. So, I will say I am someone that tries to really have this lens in everything that I do. And I think that has benefited me in some ways of people looking towards me as I said, right, to reach out and ask these questions and be vulnerable in asking them. The other thing that I have the great power of having behind me, is the voice of the students, right, on our college campuses, and boy are they strong, right? They are very strong voices that are coming through, saying "we need authentic spaces that we want to join." They want to bring their whole selves into everything that they do. I think we know that, like, one in four people have a disability and, so as this generation of students are coming through, they're demanding that really that one in four people have leadership positions, are seen, right, in these really important roles that we have in Jewish life. So for me, I actually will say there's a lot of open space for me to go ahead and push people and ask questions, and even bring in those students and other professionals that I work with to the table to have these conversations straight away. The other thing that I think really benefits me in my role at Hillel is that we're all about relationships and how we build them. So really, it's building relationships and talking about who are we in our work that we're doing in order to really pull through our agenda or what we're trying to accomplish here. So I would say the power of the students has actually been a really big backup for me in the work that I'm doing. I'm really grateful for them. Pass it to Aaron.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you Hannah, Aaron.

>> Aaron Kaufman: Well I wanted to dovetail off of what Hannah said, because they made some excellent points about relationships. How -- I don't have the luxury of Susan as a CEO, having a lot of Hutzpah, because I, like you said, I'm in the mid-point of my career and I really need my health insurance and my paycheck. So, you know, I can't be right out there. So the way that I'm trying to educate people is by first, not immediately going in and saying you're doing this wrong, doing that wrong, or you know, I was offended when you said this or that, but first building a bond with the person like what's your favorite baseball team? Oh, I love baseball too, or learning their kids' names, and asking about their ballet recital, and building a rapport so that you can then later have those more challenging conversations. And the way you do it, like I talked to a person about a year ago who said, I see that you suffer from cerebral palsy, and so we had a great conversation, and at the end I told him how delightful it was to speak with him, but by the way I'm -- just so he knew for next time, you know, we don't like to be referred to as suffering from anything that we either have or confront challenges associated with, and he was very appreciative. But again, I didn't start up with that. And I first said it was so nice to meet him. Because I once had a colleague who said that people with disabilities -- he liked working with me because I was diplomatic. I had a great sense of humor and I was just friendly and most people that he had interacted with with disabilities were militant and angry. And so there's already that stigma, so I try to beat it. And the last thing is that, several times I have -- in different jobs I've had, I've been the first person that had a significant disability. Maybe somebody else had dyslexia or ADD. But I didn't want to give the impression that I was so aggressive or abrasive, that they never hire somebody else with a disability again. Thanks.

>> Matan Koch: Great, Susan do you have anything to add to --

>> Susan Sygall: Yeah, well yeah I think the word that I keep hearing is relationships. And you know, yes, you know, I'm the head of an organization, but I also work in the field of international development where I'm one of -- one CEO in an umbrella group of 160, and I'm the only person with a disability, and I am constantly bringing up, hey, if you're building schools in other countries, they need to be accessible. If you're talking about COVID -- responses to COVID, you got to think about disabled people. So I'm bringing up the same point over, and over, and over. And to be honest, you need to gather some people who are saying, yes Susan, keep bringing it up. And they're going to be people who are tired of hearing it, but you have to know in your heart and in your soul that if you don't bring up those issues, nobody will. And as Aaron said, these are my people. I have a responsibility to bring this up and I try, like I think my panelists, to be a positive person, but it's also fine to have righteous anger when you see discrimination, and I think those two can go together beautifully.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you Susan, and thank you Hannah and Aaron as well. I think that it, I think probably one of the bigger questions, the bigger questions that our audience can have, so I want to encourage the audience that if you have follow-ups that those that go in the Q&A box for when we get through our prepared portion. And I see questions are beginning to populate, but just a reminder that it is there at the bottom of the screen and we look forward to seeing your questions. But now moving on to the next of our prepared questions, and Aaron you already answered this in response to the last question and Susan, since you just referenced the need for it, we'll have you start with it, is how do you graciously respond? What are some ways that you graciously but firmly respond when there's a disability misunderstanding that you find yourself in? So Aaron used the example of the person who said "suffer from," and the way that he -- and the way that he had addressed that, but how do you like to frame these things? And then Hannah we will go to you and then Aaron if there's anything further you want to add, but it seems like you approached this in your last answer. So, but Susan first.

>> Susan Sygall: Yeah, well thank you for that question. I think for me, sometimes I go to what are the principles or the values that we can all agree on? So if there's a question of, you know, somebody is, let's say doing a leadership program, and their place is not accessible and you go, like don't you believe that leadership, don't you believe that every person has the right to be a leader? Every person has the right to have education, or in terms of this conversation, doesn't every person have a right to attend fully a synagogue, and be an equal member? And if you can find those principles that you agree on and then the values that you agree on, and then I think you can move forward, then if you believe that you need to do this. And so that's one way of doing it. And then to be honest, I also use what is the law, because if something is just a violation of the ADA or something, then to me it's like the law has teeth, and then that is the way to do it, and to say really, when you get equality, when you get non-discrimination, it's a win-win for everybody, so that's how I frame it. And I'll toss it back to another panelist.

>> Matan Koch: So I think Hannah was going to be our next answerer of that question, but I want to thank you Susan, because I think those are both really helpful ideas. One is the idea of framing it through shared values. The second -- I'm actually just, the reason I'm pausing for a second, Hannah, is I want to reframe what you said, Susan, which is to say that I have found, at least as an attorney, and I'm not talking much about myself, but for those who don't know, I am an attorney. I found that one of the great ways that one resorts to the law is then you can make it totally impersonal, right? It's not you're criticizing them, it's not a personal failing, it's, hey the law says this is what you got to do. And of course you want to comply with the law, so let's get into compliance with the law because, well, it's the law. But now going to Hannah Henschel.

>> Hannah Henschel: Yeah, well it's really important, right? I think like what Susan just said and Matan how you broke that down is so key on how we respond, because it holds people accountable, right? This accountability piece is really important, and for us at Hillel we really place ourselves in value. So it's really easy to look back and say, why are we doing this? What's our "why" here in the first place? Is it to bring in every Jewish student? What is the every? Who are we trying to bring into the room, into the space, whatever that might be? So I think a lot of it is actually, I'm agreeing with Susan really on this that it's back to what's the why here, what's the reason, what's our value base. The other thing that I usually bring out, is we've made a huge investment, right, in disability inclusion, in our students, in our Hillel professional staff. And that means something. Even if we can't see the investment and touch it, we can feel it and see it in the culture and that's really important, so it's that other piece of, we've invested so much my time and energy. You know, everyone's time and energy here. We've built this culture for years and years. What are we doing, why do we have this as our disconnect? So that's the other piece I like to bring up, is just also this investment lens that we've made.

>> Matan Koch: Aaron do you have something to add on this? I know you approached the topic in your last answer but want to give you a moment to speak.

>> Aaron Kaufman: I actually do, surprise, surprise. I would just like to say that I think a lot of the gentle corrections comes from, there's such a lack of knowledge of disability if you don't live it, or you don't have somebody close to you that is. For example, I was working in another job once, an old job, and this person, this woman said to me I'm embarrassed to say this but I didn't know the difference between cystic fibrosis and cerebral palsy until you started working here. And she is a wonderful person, and she's a friend of mine, but if you don't live it, you don't understand it, so I just wanted to lay the predicate for that's where a lot of it happens. And then I also try and use humor because people will say to me -- people will say to me that, you know, how do you get up in the morning with all your troubles, and I say which is kind of a rude and awkward question, so I'll make a joke out of it and say I believe -- "it's because I believe in the phrase on the back of our money, in xanax we trust, and that's how I make it." And then I go more seriously. But I think humor is important because i've had people say to me, in terms of the terms that people like to be called, you know, we used to like to be called handicapped, now it's a person with a disability. Well I'm just not going to call you anything because I can't keep up with the terminology. So humor, I think, prevents people's defensive hackles from coming up and shutting down.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you Aaron, thank you everyone, and Hannah you actually prefaced our next question and you prefaced it by talking about the culture at Hillel International. I know in our prep, one of the things that you said is that you, along with the rest of the of the Hillel team, has worked very hard to build a culture of inclusion and not just, gee, we do this once in a while kind of thing. And so starting with you but then moving to Aaron and then to Susan, what are some of the ways that one can go about beginning to not just address issues, but build a real culture of inclusion?

>> Hannah Henschel: Yeah, a great question. Really this culture building is something that we at Hillel have been working on for quite a while now, and one of the first steps in us really creating a culture was creating community with each other. So one of the first things that Hillel did before I joined on, actually, was to create a confidential group of people who identify with having a disability to gather and start building community with each other and talk about what needs they have working with Hillel, working at Hillel, being a person at work, working community with others. And from there we launched out a huge amount of resources to where we are today. We actually launched two years ago an employee resource group that is focused on people with disabilities, and we have five other employee resource groups, but this resource group is for anyone that works at Hillel International or at one of our local campuses. People can also join multiple employee resource groups because we know the multiple identities that everyone holds. And this group really is to not only say, okay, like, what other resources do we need to develop? Do we need to look at our healthcare plans, how we can be doing that better? But also, "hello! Nice to meet you, another person who has disabilities in the network. Like, let's actually get to know each other and just learn more about each other." And so this group, I will say, has been slow to build. Some of our other groups have really had quite a great entry point of a lot of people joining right away, but for this group we actually see that there's still a lot of de-stigmatizing that we need to do for people to feel like they want to join and be a part of the group. So this is actually something that we're working on right now, is just working with the group to figure out what do we need to do to actually create this to be more accessible? What's the barrier that some people have to joining this group? It's a completely confidential group except for the leaders who are out and proud and talking about why they are a part of the group which is really, really important. So that's one of the culture building pieces that we do. The other culture building piece that we do is at least, you know, every semester, I'll say -- I talk a lot in semesters and school years because I work with colleges. And so at least every semester we offer some one-on-one virtual, or if we can, in-person opportunities to jump into disability inclusion trainings or resources that really focus on our current population of students and what the needs are. And with those trainings and resources we bring in outside partners that we really appreciate, like RespectAbility, and we also work closely with a lot of students who are also self advocates on their campuses because it's so important to hear from our students actually what their interaction is with Hillel and on campus. So a lot of this work is around not only creating community with each other in the disability space, but also creating resources and making sure that there's a good foundation of learning and knowledge being shared. So that's -- a little bit about how we're building this culture.

>> Matan Koch: So thank you Hannah. Before we move on to you Aaron, I just want to ask Hannah a clarifying question, which is that obviously it Is wonderful and, you know, under Adam's leadership and before that under Eric's leadership, so wonderful that Hillel is doing these things. If you were at an organization where it wasn't coming from the leaders, do you have thoughts about how you would bring about some of those exact things that you're talking about. Just before we, because you're speaking of the organizational strategy, but remember, most of our audience are folks that won't be in a position to influence organizational strategy right now.

>> Hannah Henschel: Yeah, so here's what I'll say. What I think the beauty behind the employee resource groups are, they were all kind of self, you know, community building moments that happened. It wasn't actually from, you know, Adam or the top leadership down to say we need these groups, it was actually the people working at the organization that was like, I've met a few other people at our conferences, or I held a lunch one day, you know, and a few people came out of the woodwork to talk about this common cause, or topic. And that's actually how these employee resource groups got started, which I think is really wonderful to see. And once again goes back to, like, this point that we had around relationship building. If we are in relation with our colleagues of bringing our full selves to our jobs, and knowing that we can hopefully do that, there's the community that starts to be built. So really, I think that's the beauty of these employee resource groups is that, yes, the funding might have come right from our leadership and, you know, some some additional resources have come from that, but they were self-organized at the very beginning. So, yeah I hope that answers --

>> Matan Koch: Great, thank you, and now Aaron we move to you for your take on the culture building question.

>> Aaron Kaufman: No, it's always a pleasure to hear Hannah and Susan speak so I didn't mind going last. The question is how do you build a culture of inclusion? And I think a culture of inclusion begins by everyone in an organization taking ownership of disability inclusion, or ownership of LGBTQ inclusion, or whatever the marginalized population is that you're talking about. Because in my experience, just talking to so many friends, at least initially when a disability inclusion specialist is hired, everything disability related, they'll say "Oh, that's Sally's job or that's Hannah's job, or that's Susan's job or that's Aaron's job." But I think that a organization has really turned the corner when all the inclusion questions and all the issues that come up don't get dumped in that person's lap, but people realize well, I should educate myself, or I should try to answer this question. Because that to me indicates that inclusion is a long-term priority. Because, while I wish us both a long and happy life, my friend Hannah and I could get hit by a bus tomorrow. And so it can't just be one person's mission. And I think you create a culture by being open and sharing your story so that they, people around you, your colleagues, get a sense of what life is like living with cerebral palsy, or living with a hearing impairment, or living life as a wheelchair user, and then they say, oh, I have a greater understanding so I'm more passionate about it.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you Aaron. Susan that brings us to you to reflect on that same question.

>> Susan Sygall: Well yeah, thank you, and I think Hannah and Aaron said so many great things. I'm not going to repeat that. We do a lot of consulting with international development organizations, exchange organizations, foundations. And one of the things we talk about is a lot of people now are really talking about DEI: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. But they're not doing disability as part of it, that disability is part of diversity equity and inclusion. So we have to talk a lot about that. And I also think that it's really important then, as Aaron has mentioned, that disability inclusion becomes part of everything that people do to create that culture. And I think, you know, now is the time. One of the things that we found that works as a good strategy is, a lot of times we'll show some of the videos about how disabled people got their rights, the takeover of the health education and welfare building with a hundred people, because a lot of times we want people to see disability as a right, the same way they see civil rights, and women's rights, and LGBTQ rights. So sometimes talking about the disability rights history is a way to get them to switch their attitude so they see this is a disability rights issue. So I'll leave it at that.

>> Matan Koch: Thanks so much, although I am going to ask you a follow-up right now. It's the flip of the follow-up that I asked Hannah, which is to say, obviously when when an organization brings in MIUSA, it's because they've already decided, but in some places, like in your synagogue for example, no one particularly said, hey, you know, Susan, we're bringing you in to change our culture, even if they've consulted you on their ERG, nobody said Susan's our cultural consultant today. How do you affect culture change as a member/volunteer in a non-profit or Jewish organization, where, like, you're not even going to be able to bring together an ERG because you're not an employee, right? What are some suggestions you have for folks that are participating in that way? Is the question clear by the way? I kind of --

>> Susan Sygall: Yeah and -- thank you, I appreciate that. Well one of the things when I think my panelists mentioned it is like in the synagogue, they just started a accessibility committee. So it wasn't just me, it was a few other people who believed in that. And that committee, which is, goes fine without me, they're bringing up a lot of the issues, like who's tutoring students with learning disabilities so they can have a Bar Mitzvah? So getting some, as I think Hannah mentioned, some grassroots committees is good. And also I think sort of, you know, when everyone is going around and dancing, you know, the Hora or something, are you in a wheelchair just getting out there and being part of that circle? Like, you need to, I think, really in every way that you can, really show that you want to participate and have the right to participate in every way. So you know I think you're pushing and you're paving the way to others -- and I think it's, I'm going to say righteous Hutzpah, and I'm going to leave it at that.

>> Matan Koch: Fair enough, although I will note that it is profoundly difficult to drive a power wheelchair in a circle in the middle of a Hora. I know, I've tried. A topic for another time. But I did want to add that. And I really want to pause now for a moment and again commend folks to the Q&A box, because these panelists, our goal is nothing short of the fact that when you finish this webinar today, you feel empowered to be an advocate for change within whatever organization you're in, whether you work there, whether you volunteer there, whether you're a member there. So if there are questions you have to make that happen, I see there's some questions in the question box on other topics, and of course if we don't have questions on these direct topics, we'd be happy to let these esteemed panelists talk about some of these other topics. But I really want to encourage people - if you have a question about the topic of this webinar, which is how to -- effectively use your role as, you know, and be an advocate within the roles that you find yourself, we have this panel here who wants to share. While you all are thinking about that and putting more questions in the question box, I will ask one, sort of very relevant question that came in in the question box, which is, everything that we've been talking about is really about taking on an amount of personal agency, but how do you take on that amount of personal agency without becoming the token Jew with a disability in the room? So I don't know who would like to speak to that first. I'm not going to call on someone because

>> Aaron Kaufman: I'll start Matan.

>> Matan Koch: Okay, thank you Aaron.

>> Aaron Kaufman: Well I think what -- what Erika seems to be getting at, the questioner, is the question was again -- was what do you do to make sure that you're not the token person or things like that. Well I mean, I think that the first thing you need to do, if people feel like they're coping with that, is develop a support network. I will call my friends with a disability often at, you know, at the end of the day or whatever and you say you won't believe it. But I think that even -- and this was not the case certainly for JFNA, they hired me for my qualifications, they're the best employer I've ever had. But even if you want to be cynical and say that they hired you as a token at your particular job, through your skills, your passion, your charm, whatever your talents are, you make them realize that they're not just checking a diversity box, but they have a real asset on their hands. Does that answer it Matan? It was a little hard for me to understand.

>> Matan Koch: I think that is a good part of answer, especially the part about about, you know, showing that you are of value beyond the fact that you are a person with a disability, but I'd love to hear if either of the other panelists have perspective to add to that question of, how you can stand out as an advocate without becoming the token? And I know that's not exactly how it's phrased in the question box, but I do try to broaden them out so that they can speak -- so that questions can speak to a broader audience. So either Hannah or Susan, would you like to speak to that?

>> Hannah Henschel: I'm happy to jump in on just the perspective that I hold with it. I think what's interesting is when you find yourself as the only person who might identify with a, you know, minority identity in the room, is to know what your boundaries are and how you want to show up in that space, and also how you're going to hold other people accountable and call out the fact. You know, I am the only person, from what I can tell, who is in this space right now. What are we doing about that, you know, like what can we do here? I think there's also something really important on making sure that people aren't doing identity related asks of you as an individual. If you're just showing up as a student and you just want to go ahead and be in the space -- right, like, Hillel's my example -- at a Shabbat one evening and someone comes up to you and says, "oh I know that you're, you know, a disability advocate, can you actually, like, come and teach us, you know, next week around disability inclusion and, you know, all that sort of stuff?" Making sure that you have a boundary of saying, you know, thank you so much but actually no, I'm not going to also be the educator in the room because I don't have to be the educator in the room. I can just be, and be myself in this space and ask you all to be pushing and working harder and making sure I'm not the only one in this space anymore. So that's something that I talk a lot with my students and colleagues around is just making sure that even if we're the only ones in the room, understanding what our boundaries are, why we're showing up to the space and knowing that it's not on us to educate others on who we are.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you for that Hannah. I'm going to turn, this isn't a minute but I actually want to add a tiny piece from my own personal experience, that I think amplifies one of the points that Hannah's making, is that your boundaries don't have to be the same every day of the week either. So you know, there has been a time where I was a fairly well-known advocate for Jewish inclusion. You know, where it was already what I was doing for a living and my name was out there. But I also had a synagogue of which I was a member. And sometimes you know, when I'm at synagogue just being at synagogue, I don't want to be pulled in for my expertise in disability inclusion. That doesn't mean -- and this is exactly how we did it, that if that same synagogue calls my office on Monday and makes a professional appointment for me to come in and do what I do that I'm not willing to do it just because it's my synagogue. So to turn that back to Hannah's example for a moment, it may be that you really don't want someone coming up to you at Shabbas dinner and saying "will you lecture my class next week?" But if they send you an email saying can we set up a time where you might come in, like me, you're thrilled to do it, because it's actually something you have passion for, just not something you want to suddenly have to shift your mind to while sitting and enjoying your own Shabbas dinner. So you can set different boundaries at different times too. It's not like if you said yes once you have to say yes every time, or if you said no once you can never say yes again. Now, Susan I want to turn it to you this question as well. [Crosstalk]

>> Susan Sygall: Yes, well thank you. I think that's a great point. You know, I have a great synagogue and I'm, I think, loved and respected. And so my whole relationship with synagogue and I think it's a model synagogue, is very good. But I am often in my work world the only disabled person in all these conferences and meetings. And I think that -- you know, I think for me, as an activist, yes, sometimes I'm probably the token disabled person on somebody else's board. But if you ask me, I'm not going to be token. I am going to really speak up I'm going to really push the issues, I am not going to go away, and I'm not going to let down. And to do that in a positive way so you don't burn out, or as Hannah said, like, what are your boundaries? My sort of check with myself is, can I do this joyously? Can I do this in a way even if I'm angry and all that, that it doesn't burn me out. And I guess that's my boundary, is can I do the work, but I have to be able to do it in a way that it's joyously. And I agree with Aaron, at the end of the day when you're super frustrated and somebody's not listening to you, you need to have some great friends who you can sit and talk to and vent and get it all out so you're ready for the next day.

>> Matan Koch: Thank you so much. So we have time for one or two more questions, and so I want to do the invite one more time for questions directly on our topic. Then before we switch to some of the interesting questions in the Q&A box that are not precisely looking at the topic of the webinar, I want to circle back to each of the panelists and say is there anything that you wanted to say that you did not get the chance to say yet, but no question has given you the opening to share? And it looks like Susan might have something.

>> Susan Sygall: Yeah, I have something. You know, as I said in the beginning, you know, my role in my organization is to build a pipeline of leaders, and I would love to see more Jewish leaders with all types of disabilities be in leadership positions. And one way to do that, I think, is to, I mean, there are many ways, but one way is to do that is to participate and think about volunteering or especially studying abroad or getting a fellowship, or a Fullbright. And a lot of people may not know that this is possible. So I don't know if you can put in the chat box, one of my colleagues, our website is MIUSA.org. And we're having a free virtual conference called Joining Hands that you can learn about possibilities and scholarships. So I just invite anyone who's listening, even if you're vaguely interested in imagining or dreaming that someday you want to be sort of a global Jewish citizen, diplomat, or a leader. I encourage you to look at our website because, yeah, I think there's probably a lot of fabulous people listening to this, and I want them to have all the opportunities for us to be leaders. So with that, that is my comment thank you for giving me the opportunity.

>> Aaron Kaufman: And Matan I'd like to say something if I could.

>> Matan Koch: Sure.

>> Aaron Kaufman: To our wonderful able-bodied allies that are listening on Zoom or live on Facebook, I want them to know that being disabled is tiring. And you may be sitting here saying, well, we know that cerebral palsy causes fatigue, Aaron, because I could look that up on Google. But I don't mean that kind of tired. I mean that it's tiring to constantly educate people, to constantly make jokes to put people at ease, to constantly be asked the question, you know, what happened to you? To constantly be told that there are some quacky cures, which happens to me a lot. So many people, depending on where they are in their frame of mind, might not want to be a leader that day. It doesn't mean they're jerks, it just means that it's emotionally draining after a while.

>> Hanah Henschel: Yeah. I also have just one more piece to add. And it kind of builds off of what Aaron and Susan both said. It can be really hard to see yourself in some of this work, because we don't really have great pipelines right now for people to actually see themselves as future leaders. And with that, right, there needs to be someone that pushes and is actually putting themselves out there. I've seen so many great accomplishments. I have a few students who are on RespectAbility's Speakers Bureau who never thought that they would be, you know, doing some of that work before, and didn't know that that was even a possibility. And so by them just going out there and putting themselves out there, sharing their stories, they have now seen themselves, you know, growing into these leadership opportunities. So I'll just say that I know it's really hard to sometimes see yourself in doing this work, but sometimes you're the person that has to show that leadership path and do it. So I'll stop with that.

>> Matan Koch: I really feel like that's actually a great note on which to bring us to our outro, to our exit point. But I also want to say, you know, Susan has shared the MIUSA website. Josh, can you please put that in the chat? That's MIUSA.org. And also at RespectAbility.org, are two places that you could look for opportunities if that's something that you want to pursue. And so I know that both of the other organizations here mentioned, Hillel and JFNA are consistently also looking at some opportunities for that. So honestly, if you say to yourself, what has been being talked about this hour, I want to do that but I'm not sure what my path is, I'm not -- drop one of our organizations a note, drop one of the panelists a note. We will help connect you with the opportunity that will help you and from that now, and I want to talk about a few opportunities that RespectAbility has. Can we put the -- PowerPoint back up for a moment? So the first one, and Hannah referenced it, is our National Disability Speakers Bureau. It's really a program that helps Jews with disabilities, and others -- we have Jewish and non-Jewish divisions -- find their voices, and learn how to speak meaningfully on these disability inclusion topics. Aaron and Susan are actually in said Bureau, but if you are a person with a disability that thinks you really might have something to add, we're not taking a lot of applications at this time but sometimes we make exceptions. But also if you feel like you want to bring someone in to share their lived experience, we have a wonderful group and you should contact Jake Stimell at JakeS@RespectAbility.org. Next slide please. So we mentioned that RespectAbility had options for the leadership pipeline. Our flagship option if you're interested in this type of non-profit leadership, is our National Leadership Program, and specifically our Jewish Inclusion Fellowship. So if you are a senior in college or above, and there is no upward limit, but we do ask that you sort of hit that senior in college point, and you think you might be interested, please go to the URL that is listed on this slide which I finally learned not to try to read off during a live presentation, and send us an application. We are right now accepting applications for the cohort that starts in September, so this would be an interesting moment if that is something in which you would be interested. Last slide please. So with our last slide, I would say that the series is coming to a close. Our last webinar, which will be full of very practical tips for making your events, virtual and physical, accessible is on July 20th. You can still sign up at the link that is there. But more importantly, what I want to remind and share is this that same link will get you to archived versions of today's webinar and the previous five, so please -- you know, our goal is to give you, equip you in every way we can to be a leader. That is our success criterion. So go to that URL and if you have not been at the previous ones, take a look. If you have been at the previous ones but you know someone who should see this material, send it to them. Let us all do our part to build a pipeline of leaders. And we are at time, so I'm going to thank the panelists one more time and then ask Eric Ascher to take us out. Thank you, and Eric, take us out.