>> Tatiana Lee: Hello hello hello. My name is Tatiana Lee. I am the senior associate of Entertainment Media here at RespectAbility. And RespectAbility is a disability nonprofit that fights stigmas and advances opportunities so that people with disabilities can particip -- fully participate in all aspects of community. My pronouns are she and her. And I will also give a brief visual description of myself for our blind and low vision audiences. I'm a brown skinned black woman with kinky curly hair in a puff, and I'm wearing clear glasses and hoop earrings. I'm wearing a gray shirt, and I have a black background with a RespectAbility logo banner behind me. I'm gonna hand it over to my colleague Lesley to introduce herself, and you are at our panel that is about advocacy burnout -- what it is and how do we avoid it. So take it away Lesley.

>> Lesley Hennen: Thanks Tatiana. Hi everyone, my name is Lesley Hennen. I am the Entertainment and News Media Associate at RespectAbility. I'm also a writer and a producer. My pronouns are she/her, and I will give a visual description of myself as well. I am a white woman with brown hair. I'm wearing glasses and a white sweater. I'm sitting in front of a black banner with the RespectAbility logo in white and yellow -- it's the same banner that Tatiana has as well. But yeah, as Tatiana mentioned, thank you all for taking the time today to join us for this panel discussion about advocacy burnout -- what is it, how do we avoid it. And if you would like to view the ASL interpreter in a larger screen, we invite you to pin their video, which will spotlight their video throughout the entire panel. We also have live captioning which is done by a real live person. That's available in the Zoom app by clicking the CC button in the toolbar at the bottom of the screen, as well as via your web browser. And we have posted that link in the chat box if you would like to view the captions in a separate window. This panel is live! We will be taking questions from you during the second half of the panel, so please go ahead and add your questions to the Q&A box if you'd like to ask us a question. Or if you're watching us on Facebook during the live airing, we're monitoring over there for questions too, so feel free to put a comment in the -- question in the comments. This panel is being recorded and will be available on RespectAbility's Facebook page and our website after the event is finished. A high resolution recording with open captions and our ASL interpreters will be posted and sent to everyone who registered next week. If you want to stay connected with RespectAbility, we invite you to sign up for our weekly newsletter on disability inclusion and equity in the entertainment industry. You can check out the link in the chat box to do so. And yeah, today we're talking about advocacy burnout. When you're a person with multiple underrepresented identities, disability included, that feeling of burnout can become real very quickly. So today, Tatiana and I are just going to share a few of our experiences and tips for navigating advocacy as disabled creatives and how to sort of handle that inevitable burnout feeling that comes with it. Please keep in mind that neither of us are licensed mental health professionals. We are just two disabled creatives who are sharing our own personal experiences with advocacy burnout. And we encourage you to check out the number of different mental health resources that we have posted in the chat as well, if you'd like to learn more about each of them and how they might be able to help you as well. Okay, that's the intro. Tati, you ready to get to some conversation?

>> Tatiana Lee: Yes, now we got all away with all the nuts and bolts and all the stuff, let's get into this conversation that we are both been really excited to have. This is something -- like she said, as Lesley said, as a creative we both experience and really want to tackle and talk about how we handle it. So I will start with asking Lesley, how did you get started as both a creative and a disability advocate?

>> Lesley Hennen: Great question. For me, I definitely started as a creative. I’ve always been a writer ever since I was a little kid. I’ve always loved writing. I started writing like making up my own short stories as young as like probably kindergarten or even before. And I remember there's like one specific memory from first grade that I remember. This woman came into class and she had like all these little toy like clay figurines there were like different animals or like different people and like different things. And she just like handed everyone like a bunch of them, and was like okay give them names, make up stories, like write a story about the. And it just like blew my mind as like a seven-year-old. I was like "whoa!" Like, the power was like so much. So that's like a very distinct memory I have of like realizing I loved storytelling and learning, like writing -- I loved reading and so I was like, oh I can write things that other people will read, and like that was just like a very pivotal moment that I remember. But yeah so that continued like all the way through like school and college. And after college I got involved in improv and sketch writing, which then turned into TV writing -- I think you and I have talked about this a lot, but it's like growing up as a disabled kid, like you don't see a lot of representation on screen. And when you do see it it's like, it's just not accurate at all. So I think I grew up wanting to see myself on TV, but not knowing how to do that. So once I was able to like put those pieces together, it was like oh I can tell my own stories and write my own TV shows, that was like a really pivotal moment for me. So then once I started learning like realizing that I want to write about my own experiences with disability, that was kind of when I realized I also had to be an advocate, because it was like I couldn't write a lot of these stories or tell them in the way that I wanted to tell them like authentically and intersectionally without also being an advocate in a lot of rooms so yeah. But -- how about you? How did you get started as a creative and an advocate?

>> Tatiana Lee: That is so funny. I probably feel like the average kid figures out the core of who they want to be by seven, but people do not give seven-year-olds enough credit.

>> Lesley Hennen: Right?

>> Tatiana Lee: Same thing happened for me when I turned seven years old -- well, similar thing happened for me. When I was seven, my mom bought me a camera. And the first thing I wanted to do was organize a photo shoot in the front yard. And I wanted to like do modeling, and I would do monologues in the living room. Like I just knew at seven I wanted to be a performer and be in front of the camera. And then growing up and you know, for the same reason, not seeing representation of myself, and it was like every time you did see it was so inaccurate. And then you know also me as a disabled black woman, I really didn't see, because any representation that I did see was of someone who was typically white. And so it was like well, where do I fit into all of that? And so I used to think people in the industry -- I used to think people with disabilities didn't want to be in the industry. So then you know, years later, got older, and you know, moved to L.A., because where does everyone go to want to be in Hollywood, you know, you come to L.A. And came to L.A., and I realized that there was so much lack of opportunities and access. Like people always tell you it's not about what you know all the time, it's about who you know. And I wanted to network and when I wanted to go to places to network where you know industry people were, I literally couldn't get into the rooms as a wheelchair user. There weren't wheelchair accessible. And so really I became an accidental advocate, because, to your point, to be in these spaces and to just be a creative person in this field, you have to advocate, because otherwise you're not going to get into that writer's room, you're not going to get that audition, and it's like, you're not going to have your stories be able to be told in the way you want them to be told. And so that's what happened for me. And it was just like, I did not plan to be an advocate. I was like I just wanted to move the Hollywood, have a thriving acting and modeling career, and just live my best life. But then it was like [screech], and I was like okay, what do I do? Okay, now I have to speak up and you know -- we learn that as kids. We learn how to advocate for our disability but then -- I think no one ever tells you as a disabled kid, you're gonna be doing this for the rest of your life. [Laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, yeah. No that's so true. And I also love what you said how you thought -- when you were a kid you thought that disabled people just didn't want to be in the industry, because I feel like I had a similar thought, but it was like oh like I'm disabled. There are no disabled people on TV. So I can't be on TV. It wasn't even like a, oh, like people don't want to, it was just like -- and no one ever explicitly was like you can never be on TV, but it was like as a kid, as you're watching all of these, like you don't see anyone that looks like you anywhere. It's like oh, okay, I'm not supposed to be in these places. And so you just sort of like internalize that. And then now I'm unpacking it like years later in therapy, but it's like [laughs] that's -- I thought that was such like a key moment that I also had was like sort of this realization of like why no one -- like why did I think that I just couldn't do these things? And that was also what led to be like oh like I have to do all this advocacy work to like do the things I want to do. So yeah I think that's a journey that I'm sure a lot of other disabled creatives or anyone from underrepresented groups can identify with. It's just that feeling of like, okay, I have to advocate for myself. And as kids, a lot of times -- like I remember being in gym class and they would be like okay like tell me what you need. And I was like I'm seven! I don't know, but I -- I just can't do this, so like --

>> Tatiana Lee: [Laughs] Exactly it's like, so I'm just gonna sit over here, and

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, there's a lot of like -- there's this expectation to self-advocate and also not being taught like a lot of -- I was personally never really taught how to self-advocate. It was just sort of like, "let us know what you need." And I was like "I don't know what I need, what are my options?" So I think that has sort of like -- that realization of like all of these things that I never learned as a kid has sort of turned into like why I want to advocate today. So like people like -- kids today or like people at any age aren't dealing with those same things hopefully at some point.

>> Tatiana Lee: Exactly trying to figure it out when you get to be like our age, it's like I don't want to have to be trying to figure it out. Like, same thing with me with like you know -- I was taught to advocate as a kid. And -- my mom was like, no, you're gonna sit in this IEP meeting, and you're gonna let them know what you want. You're gonna tell the doctors like what's going on with you, and all those things. But then, to your point, it's like, "I don't know." And it's like I figured that out. So it's like, how self-aware do you expect a seven-year-old to be? But then you know, as adults we're so self-aware. And I think actually that's another part of the burnout that comes is because now we're at this point where, I feel because we've come up against so much opposition in your life, you have no choice but to be more self-aware than probably the majority of the rest of society.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah.

>> Tatiana Lee: And it's interesting, but then that comes that additional layer of burnout, because you're like, "how are you not seeing this?" And I think it's like this thing where it's like, you're seeing it, no one else is, and it's exhausting even knowing that. [Laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: It is that. Yeah that awareness just in general is so exhausting, and then to constantly have to realize that other people aren't aware of it is like another layer of exhausting. Yeah. This kind of goes into our next question though which is how has wanting more space to be creative led you to wanting systemic change?

>> Tatiana Lee: Oh, that's a good question. And I think when I got here -- so I'm the type of person that -- and it's just naturally been a part of my -- you know I don't know if it has to do with you know growing up being a part of you know multiple underrepresented or -- not underrepresented, historically excluded, you know -- identities, but I have this kind of feeling of, you're not going to stop me from wanting what I want. And this is what I want. I know what I want, and I'm not gonna let anyone or anything stop that from happening. And so I spent many years -- I’ve, you know, been in Los Angeles for 11 years, I’ve worked in the entertainment industry as an actor, as a model, as a social media influencer, and as a speaker, and doing all these things for about six or seven years now. And so you kind of get to this point where you're like, "I want to do all these things." And you see the barriers that exist. And I think working as a creative, being an actor, and being a model, and doing all those things -- you see the gaps. You see the gaps in where things exist. And you're like, again, to my -- what I said earlier, why is no one seeing this? And so now you're like, okay no one is seeing this, so I have to say something, because otherwise, I'm not going to book that next modeling job. I am not going to get that next acting job, because you didn't make this -- you know, studio accessible for me to be on. And you know, things like that. And I remember -- I'll never forget. And this was before I had an agent who -- you know, having an agent is great for your career, it really helps opening up doors. But before I had an agent, I was just going on casting websites and submitting myself. And I'll never forget that this moment shifted so much for me, on top of not being able to physically get into rooms because it wasn't wheelchair accessible -- that was one of the big pieces. But I had submitted for this modeling gig and it was even for just background. It was like a background, like you weren't even the main model. You were like a background model. And I submitted and they accepted me. So they were like yay, so I'm like yay. Okay, I booked the modeling job. I can, you know, try to get a couple dollars here and there because, you know, not being able to work and go to different places -- that's also another thing. So you're like where am I gonna get my next paycheck from? How am I going to pay my rent? And then you know, trying to advocate for even just getting employment is a whole 'nother thing too. You know, just everyday employment. And so I was going for this modeling job. And then the day before, I messaged the lady -- the production, because they gave me all the information. I said "is this place wheelchair accessible?" And they said, "no it's not. Why do you need wheelchair accessibility" -- or no, "do you need -- are you in a wheelchair?" No that's what they said. They said "are you in a wheelchair?" And I said yes. And I said -- they said, "oh, well we didn't know that." And I said "well if you looked on my thing, it says, you know, I use a wheelchair, and I have spina bifida, and all these other things." They didn't see that. They only saw my headshot of my face, didn't click to read more information, and assumed I was non-disabled. And so at that moment, the lady made it seem like it was my fault, and basically was like, "well let me call you back," and then said "well we're gonna have to let you go, because you" -- she says "oh we're gonna have to let you go because we want the shots to look uniform and so therefore we need someone else." And -- you know "I'm just mad I gotta go find somebody else." And she blamed -- like made it like -- and I was like "what is this?" And I was like, "is this how everyone feels?" So just because I'm a wheelchair user, you don't think I'm good enough to be in this generic shot? And it's like we have more work to do. And so I think from there, it was just with the wheelchair accessibility and having to constantly have these conversations to even explain to someone why I should just be included, I think, got to the point of where my passion was. It's just like seeing it just frustrates me so bad. And so that's what happened. So like, what happened with you and you know -- what made you want to do more systemic change in these spaces?

>> Lesley Hennen: I feel like -- I mean it all does go back to that like awareness. Like once you start to realize the systemic barriers that you've -- faced as a person -- like for me it was like disability specific, it was like, I don't -- it was like, once I realized -- oh it was like the way society views my disability, not that like there's something wrong with my disability, that was like when everything clicked for me. And I was like oh. Well now I just have to change society, like as if that's like [chuckles] -- but it's like you can't -- I feel like once I was aware of that I couldn't not just try to change everything. And then it was also just like writing stories about my disability and like pitching them, like even in like with other writers, like in a classroom environment, it was like -- feeling like I had to just like explain so many things that other people don't have to explain. So it's like the entire concept of being disabled, like just different, and like people will say things you know, like oh -- I don't know if that -- like "this doesn't feel super believable for me." And I'm like well that's literally my -- [Tatiana laughs] like this happens to me all the time. And so it's like trying to separate like authentic like lived disability experience from what people have seen on screen like for years and years and years and years, and so it's like, we're constantly just going against like these historic -- like these negative and like false, just false stereotypes, and so it's just been like so much -- yeah it's like, once you realize what's out there and like what needs to be changed I feel like you -- I can't, I can't not try to change it.

>> Tatiana Lee: I think of the perfect thing when -- you said that, I thought about that, and I was like the rest of society gaslighting us that our experiences aren't our experiences, or that we should play down our experiences, or that it isn't that important or you know, all those kind of things. It's gaslighting! And --

>> Lesley Hennen: It really does, yeah, and that's so exhausting too like that again -- it just like keeps adding to this feeling of burnout as you're like, I just want to write! Like I just want to tell my own stories, but then it's like you're constantly being bombarded by all of these different things, and it's also just like the entertainment industry in general is not easy for anyone. Like it is very very hard to get anything made at all. And so then when you add on top of it all of these different barriers for like multiple different underrepresented identities, it's like, the burnout is like -- I'm exhausted just talking about it. [laughs]

>> Tatiana Lee: I know, I know. So we've talked about our goals and you know burnout and things like that, but you know we also talk about -- or need to talk about, and I think we don't talk about as a society enough about balance. So my question for you is how do you balance your creative goals that you have and your passions with advocacy? Because now you know -- people can see that we are -- or that know us know we're passionate advocates. So how do you balance that passion with your advocacy goals, and other also daily life, because you know, we have creative goals and then we have to advocate, but then we still have you know lives. You know, we both have families, you know, pets, and you know, bills and social lives. And so it's like, how do you balance all of that?

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, great question. First of all I will just say that it is hard, and I do not always do it well. And so I think once you get over -- once I got over this idea of like oh, I have to be perfectly balanced all the time, like that is -- once I got over that mindset, and just realized it was a process, like some days are going to be easier than others, that has helped me just sort of feel more comfortable with the process of like trying to balance it all. Because it's -- there really just is so much at the end of the day that everyone is trying to deal with, and like, realizing that about other people as well, I think is super important. It's like, I'm balancing everything I'm doing. You're balancing a whole other unique set of things. Like, everyone else is balancing, like we have no idea what's going on. So I think just generally like treating people with kindness and like trying to realize that is like a good way to go. But then for me specifically, I'm very -- I'm a virgo libra cusp, which means I'm very organized. And so I have a spreadsheet for everything. So I have like for my creative like my writing goals I have a spreadsheet of like all of the script ideas I want to get done in the upcoming year. I have like all of the fellowships or competitions I want to submit to in the upcoming year. And I will like track -- it just like helps me feel a little bit like in control, when I can be like, okay, I'm going to submit to this thing by this day, and like I can block off on my calendar, like I am going to write for one hour on this like specific idea, and then I'm going to submit to this specific thing. And then within there I can also fit in all of my work things, my family things, medical doctor things, like -- I know in this upcoming year I'm gonna have to probably buy -- start the process of getting new leg braces, which is like -- and I just moved to L.A., so like I have to find a new doctor first, I have to get a referral, I have to get all my paperwork transferred over to the new doctor, and then I have to get a fitting -- like it's just like this whole process that I already know I'm going to have to figure out how to balance. And so for me it's a lot of just like looking at my goals, looking at my like work projects, like other responsibilities I have, and just figuring out where I can slot things in to my time. And also like being very intentional about planning like -- it sounds so lame but I have to plan my free time. So I will block off like -- I will do nothing from like this time to this time, and like really being intentional about like self-care, which like -- free time is self-care. Like you need to take time to just kind of unwind and relax. But yeah, that's how I try to balance things. It doesn't always work some weeks are better than others, but what about you?

>> Tatiana Lee: So first of all I commend you for being like such a great planner. I am not. My ADHD and my dyslexia is not set up for that, although I'm working on it. I will say I am getting better because I'm constantly adding things to my plate and -- well, not adding, but things just come to my plate. So I am learning, and you've been a great help with helping me with that too, so thank you. But I think one of the things that -- and this is something I’ve been talking about with my therapist is that I’ve really had to work through is -- number one is letting go of caring about what others expect of me. I think that was one thing that I’ve had to work through this year was like, forget all the expectations others have on you, you know, whatever your mom thinks you should be doing, what your boss thinks you should be doing, what this person thinks you should be doing. You know what you can handle in whatever moment and you need to assess that and deal with that accordingly. And if one thing you can't handle, that's okay. And if someone has a problem with that you have to be okay with that. So right now working on learning of allowing people to you know -- me being okay with people being mad that I'm not answering their calls or you know, I can't get this one thing or I have to say, oh can someone else take this on, or something like that. I think being very intentional about that and being honest about what I can take on and what I can't, where before I was always that person. I always felt like I had to always say yes. Anytime anyone asked me to do anything or be there for them, I always had to say yes. And so really balancing that, I think, has been really key for me. And the other thing which you mentioned is self-care. Taking those moments to be like you know what? Today I'm gonna do nothing. I'm gonna turn my phone off. I am gonna give myself a facial, I'm gonna take a bubble bath, I am gonna cook my favorite meal. And I think really finding those things that I love to do that like isn't something that's exhausting for me, that brings me joy in those moments. Of course the work that I do brings me joy, but it is exhausting too. So it's like those little things that give and fulfill you back in yourself, like those self-care moments. But my favorite is bubble bath, and you know, things like that. So I love doing those things and just -- I'm still trying to figure it all out. And it's funny that you talked about getting braces and all that stuff, because I also have to go through the same thing with my wheelchair, because I'm due for a new wheelchair. And that process is like a year and a half daunting process -- actually I have to get started [laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Oh no we gotta get started, we gotta go! Oh yeah, one thing also I forgot I was gonna add that I’ve started doing recently that I really like is -- well I used to do a gratitude journal, so like every night I would just write down three things -- that I was really grateful for that happened that day. But something new that I started doing that -- I got the idea from TikTok so shout out to -- I don't remember the name of the creator, but thank you for this idea. It was like an energy journal. So I write down like three things that gave me energy during the day, and three things that took away my energy during the day. And so -- and it's not even like okay, like these things that took away my energy. It's just sort of like being aware of them, not necessarily like, okay, I'm not gonna do these things anymore, because like some of them we have to do. But it's like -- just being aware like, okay, when I have to do this thing, it drains a lot of my energy so like being like -- thinking ahead of me, like okay, what am I going to do to sort of give myself more energy get that balance back into check, I think. is something that I’ve been working on that has been just really interesting, sort of like a fun self experiment.

>> Tatiana Lee: I love that. I love that. And actually I’ve heard about that. And that's kind of -- I don't know if you know, but like that's where the idea of people that -- folks that have chronic illness came with the ideal spoonie.

>> Lesley Hennen: Oh yeah.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah, because it's kind of that similar concept of like what can I handle that day, and this one thing like just completely used up my spoons, and you know, I only got four spoons for the day and they're used up, so I can't do anything else. I'm checked out. Like and identifying what those things are. But I think -- I like that part about identifying what those things are, and it's like, I can't handle this right now or I can, and you know, dealing with them accordingly at that moment, I love that.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, it's something that's helped me a lot. The past year especially has been just like so many new changes and like, we're still in a pandemic, and it's just like so many things, so lots of energy is all over the place.

>> Tatiana Lee: Definitely.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah let's see. We kind of. touched on this already but I think it's a good question still. Do you feel like you have to be an advocate in every room you go into?

>> Tatiana Lee: Unfortunately, most rooms. I don't -- I feel like there aren't few rooms where I feel like I have to do that. So -- and I think that that adds on as people don't understand your experience, and it goes back to that -- not necessarily gaslighting, but not understanding your experience. And I think I’ve come to really realize that like -- people can empathize with your experience as much as possible, but they will never fully understand and get it. And so you know me, I’ve been in situations where I’ve been in rooms that are, you know, disability focused but then is predominantly white, and them not understanding you know or grasping my experience of being a black woman, or you know -- or being black or a black woman. And then I’ve been in spaces with other black people or you know black women, and them not understanding or grasping or empathizing enough with my experience of being disabled. And so being in those rooms are very very rare, and I think one, my immediate family, like just my mom and my sister, like they've been around me my whole life, so they get it, so I feel comfortable talking with them about and just being my authentic 100 percent self, and being as vulnerable as I can be. And then I think you know, in our media team you know with Vanni, and you, and like our -- you know, our little team is like -- I can feel I can bring my authentic full vulnerable self, and be fully supported. And then there's a few other places, but it's very rare that I find a space where I can feel that. And that's why I think it's really great for folks to have affinity groups. I really think that's so important. And one of the things that I got to do this year which was really really great was just kind of an idea -- but I didn't realize how therapeutic it was. I started a -- group for disabled black women and we called it Disabled Black Girl Magic, and it was just come -- and we didn't have any goal. It was just come there and just be you. And it was so empowering to be in that room and to share our experiences. And it was so funny because so many of the women in that room were sharing their experiences, and every other girl in there were -- was nodding their head, and got it, and completely understood and empathized with it. And it was like, "yup, the same thing happened to me!" And you know -- and then we were able to talk in a way that was -- that we understood because that is the way we talk within our own families as black women. And so to be able to be in that room and share your experiences of being a disabled black woman and everyone just getting it was so refreshing. I didn't realize how much I needed that, and I'm getting emotional just thinking about having that space. And that's why one of the things that I tell you -- if you don't have an affinity group or just a group of people that understands or has similar shared experiences as you, create that space. And I think that's so important and it was just so therapeutic for me. How about you?

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, I mean, I 100 percent agree with everything you just said. And I think you know, finding that community is so important. For me like when I did the RespectAbility Summer Lab in 2020 as a writer, that was the first time I'd ever been in a room -- it was a virtual room but still -- the only time I'd ever been in a room that was entirely made up of people with disabilities, and we were also all working in the entertainment industry. So it was like -- I had never had that experience of -- like, everyone here gets it. Like we are all trying to do essentially the same thing. So I think that was just like such a cool feeling. And I think as far as like feeling like I'm an advocate in every room I go in, yeah, I think I agree with you. It does feel like it is most rooms that I go into. And even like -- my disability is like -- it's physical but it's not always visible -- depending on what I'm wearing. So a lot of times I will sort of find myself in these situations where I have to like prove that I'm disabled, or like -- a lot of times -- because like I can do stairs but -- only if there's a railing, and so sometimes -- if I'm -- like I used to live in New York, and so I -- a lot of times this would happen where I would be on the subway like trying to get up the stairs, holding onto the railing, and people would be coming down the wrong side and like wouldn't understand why I wasn't moving for them. And I would have to like in the moment just be like, "I cannot let go of this railing or I will fall down these stairs." And they like -- couldn't under -- because I'm wearing long pants and they can't see my leg braces and they like don't understand why I'm not moving for them. And it's like this -- moment where it's like, I have like -- I don't know, I feel like those moments happen to me personally a lot where it's like I don't know that I have to advocate for myself until it's like in the moment and already happening, and then it's like -- so that happens a lot. But yeah, like you mentioned -- our team, it's so nice to just -- we all can bring our full selves, like every part of ourselves, and that's such like a -- I’ve never had that type of like working environment before --

>> Tatiana Lee: Me either.

>> Lesley Hennen: So it's -- a very refreshing -- a whole new thing, and I'm like everyone should have this. So that again goes back to like the advocacy work. It just kind of goes hand in hand, because it's like I will -- like everyone should have this, but yeah, I think it is hard, especially because like certain rooms -- and -- using the word room -- figuratively and literally, but it's like when you're with a family -- sometimes family members -- don't necessarily get it either, so --

>> Tatiana Lee: Don't get it! [Laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, you have to advocate for yourself within your family, and then that just feels weird, and then like -- I don't know, there's just so many nuances to all of this that it's like we're kind of advocating for ourselves all the time in one way or another, even if like, I don't clock it as advocating, sometimes afterwards it's like, oh yeah, that was -- that's why I'm feeling exhausted today, it's cause I had to just like explain to a stranger on the street why like --

>> Tatiana Lee: Oh my god, yes. I know and it's funny, or having those weird awkward -- and probably anyone with a disability you know listening can relate to this or having to deal with that family member during the holiday that were saying "well, you're not disabled," and it's like I don't feel like having to do a training with you on what is the definition of disability right now! [laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Pull out our 101 presentation.

>> Tatiana Lee: I’m just. trying to eat my turkey!

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah I know, oh man -- I have so many family stories I can tell right now, but -- [Laughter]

>> Tatiana Lee: Oh my gosh it's so funny. So we talked about like you know sometimes only identifying that burnout in the mid -- in the moment, and also you know, if anyone has any questions that they want to pose or any topic they want us to kind of discuss a little bit, put it in the chat. We would love to hear from you any questions you have. Again, we are not health care professionals. We are just two advocate slash creatives that are navigating the industry and just sharing our perspectives and how we navigate it personally. But if you have any questions in terms of that, please put in the chat. We would love to hear from you. But I have a question for you Lesley. How do you -- well we identified that you know, sometimes it only comes up in the moment, but what is your process once you've identified the feeling of burnout? Like, we talked about -- self-care and things like that, but what do you do like in that moment where you're like, I'm super frustrated and I need a minute, you just completely used up my spoons in this moment. Like, I don't have time for you. What do you do? [Laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, great question. And again I feel like it's such a process, like -- I'm still learning. But I will immediately go to self-care. And so it's like if I get home or I like turn off my computer for like a work from home day, and I'm just like so exhausted. I will -- and again, I go back to my little spreadsheet or my calendar, and I'm like okay, what was I supposed to get done today? Like, what can actually be put off, you know, for another day? Like, what can I realistically -- I don't have the energy to do all these things today. What can I do tomorrow, another day? And so I will just like reschedule something to another day, so I know I'm not -- doesn't feel like I failed or like I am not going to do something, I'm just rescheduling it. It's like a meeting [chuckles] and so I will just kind of figure that out first and then I will -- yeah, like take a bubble bath, do a face mask, watch my favorite TV show, my favorite movie, just like take time. And I think I’ve realized for -- if I don't do that and if I try to push through, I just -- I can never get back to that balance. And so I just -- know that when I start feeling exhausted and just like -- also if I notice like things -- maybe things at work are taking me longer to do than they normally would, that's a sign of burnout for me. It's like -- I if something -- if it takes me like three hours to read a script and it normally takes me like 30 minutes, I'm like, okay, something is -- I have to kind of reevaluate my energy today, and figure out like what needs to go, what like definitely needs to happen, and what can be done later. So for me it's just sort of this like puzzle game almost of like figuring out like what do I have left in me to do for the day or the week or the month or whatever -- like sometimes I need to really think big picture too of figuring out like I have these really big deadlines coming up. How am I going to make sure that I meet them without like totally burning myself out? So for me it's a lot of just like self-check-ins and just like being really intentional with my time. But yeah, what about you?

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah, I think kind of the same thing -- processing in that moment, and I'd take a step back and know that moment -- actually it was funny, I'm just talking about that -- this with my therapist this weekend. And she's like in that moment, you just need to stop. She's just like, just pause everything and you know -- one thing that works for me is deep breathing and you know meditation, and -- whether it's listening to sound baths or you know some kind of low-fi or something that puts me in kind of this kind of more calmer vibration has really really helped me. So it's like, what puts me back in that space? So do I need to take a moment and breathe? And you know figure that out and then you know assess accordingly. Do I need to not take on a task right now and schedule emergency you know self-care moment, or do I need to schedule a nap or do I need to cancel all of my meetings for the day? And it's just like I need to just go take a nap. Because some days it -- gets so bad where it's just like, I can't deal with anything, I just need to go take a nap and just go to sleep and wake up tomorrow. And then some days are like, you know, I just need a nap or I just need a moment. And so you know, sitting on my yoga mat and you know doing that meditation and going and jumping and taking that bubble bath and -- but in those quick moments, the deep breathing has really been helping me. That's something I’ve been exercising a lot more is just, you know, breathing it in and letting it out and screaming -- all of those different things, whatever you need in that moment. And it's like really assessing -- checking in with your body and assessing what your body needs at that moment and -- being honest with yourself and giving yourself that. If you need to scream, go ahead and scream. There's nothing wrong with you needing a moment to just scream it out. If you want to get in bed for the day, there's nothing wrong with that. Get in the bed and cancel all your meetings for the day and turn off your phone. Like, that is okay, and I think that's one thing that we need to learn so much more is that all of those things are okay. They're completely okay. And I feel like as a society, we don't you know preach that enough. Like, all of those things are okay. We don't have to be these everlasting Energizer bunny of producing, like, content and producing output of stuff, and it's like, you don't have to be that all day every day. And I think being honest with ourselves and analyzing that is so important.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, I agree. Especially that like once you get over the mindset of like, oh, I have to do all of these things. I have to do them all perfectly, and I have to do them all at once. Once you realize that like that is literally impossible and no one -- you don't have to do that. It's perfectly -- it is healthy and okay to take a break when you need it, take multiple breaks, and I think -- yeah, there's so much emphasis put on like quantity over, like, just everyone doing so many things or like -- I know for writers specifically, a lot of times, you know, you go on Twitter and like someone is saying like, oh I wrote 75 scripts this year, like, great year for me! And you're like oh man, I only wrote one script this year, like, this guy wrote 75? Like how am I ever getting -- so like you start to fall into that like mindset, and it's like -- you can't do that. [chuckles] Like, everyone is on their own journey. Good for this person for writing 75 scripts. Good for you for writing one script. Good for anyone writing anything, honestly, you know --

>> Tatiana Lee: Even if you got a page done! [Laughs]

>> Lesley Hennen: Exactly. If you wrote down an idea to work on later, congratulations that is -- that's a lot [chuckles]. So I yeah I think -- just like you mentioned, we don't talk about it enough about how -- like it's okay to take breaks, it's okay to put your mental health and yourself first, and like -- you know, you are important and like you have to take care of yourself. And like, that's gonna reflect in the work that you do at the end of the day, so yeah.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah.

>> Lesley Hennen: Let's see. Do we have any questions in the chat?

>> Tatiana Lee: I don't see any questions yet. If anyone has any questions, definitely, that has to do with mental health, advocacy burnout, any of those things, please shoot us a question, comment, any of those things. And while we are waiting for those questions or comments, I have one last question for you. So we are at the end of the year, which I know everyone is looking forward to -- like, pretty much the entertainment industry has shut down for the holidays. You know we had Thanksgiving and you know, so much more coming. So what is one way that you are going to try to avoid burnout going into the new year, and what are you doing to work on that this holiday to relax?

>> Lesley Hennen: Cool. Good question. So I love the idea of new year's resolutions. Like, I’ve always loved them, and then recently I think I saw -- I was on Twitter someone with the idea of also like setting resolutions of like things you're not going to do in the new year, like things you're going to like leave behind in the old year. And so I love that idea. So I'm going to try to sort of leave behind just a lot of the feelings that we've talked about today of like feeling like I have to do everything, and I have to do it all perfectly, and I have to do it all right now. And just like realizing sort of leaving that sort of feeling of urgency that I'm putting on myself, like -- no one is putting it on me, it's really me feeling like I have to do all these things like right now. So I'm gonna try to leave that behind. That's one thing. And just really prioritizing my self-care. Like I think -- that as much as I really try to intentionally set time aside, sometimes -- you know, it just falls -- on the back burner sometimes, even though you know -- like I will be like okay, I'm really tired and burnt out, but I can if I push through for just one more day, then I'll do xyz. And then I don't end up doing that. And so it's like being like -- following through on my own actions, you know. So I think that's a few things I'm going to try to do, just to be more intentional and like, just kind of leave those feelings of stress in the old year. What about you?

>> Tatiana Lee: So one thing that I'm doing is first of all, just taking some time to just relax, shut off, just you know, regroup. One of the things I always -- every year I do a resolution kind of -- actually not necessarily resolution, I don't like to call them resolutions, but maybe goals, or things that -- you know, these are things that I want to manifest for myself in the new year. I write those down and thinking about that -- and again, letting go of what does not serve me anymore that I need to let go. Like, one of the things that I’ve been working with this year is letting go of not caring about how others feel about the way I do something or what I choose to not handle at that moment, or those perceptions, or things like that. And so that's one thing I’ve been working on. And definitely spending time with my family. My family and I are planning this vacation for the holidays, so that's going to be really really nice. And just tending to my self-care, you know, taking those bubble baths, and all of those different things, and listening to my music, and all the things that I love that make me feel good inside, and that really fuels me. Working on writing and getting those stories out that -- I’ve been so in my head that I haven't been able to get those stories out or those ideas. So taking time to write those down, I think, are some of the things that I'm gonna do. And yeah. So I think that it. We do have one question that came in. Oh, okay. So someone had mentioned about, you know, when I talked about like, spoonie, and being a spoonie, and there's like this -- and I'll find some information, it's like -- I think it's called like spoon theory. But it's this idea of, you know, as a person with a disability that -- to Lesley's point of what she was talking about earlier -- that you only have enough space to -- and I think this can apply to anyone, but more or less more spoonie is for more the chronically ill community, because you know, we, as people with chronic illness, may not have the same level of energy for -- as someone else. So someone who's non-disabled, they can do things -- they can do the same thing that a person with chronic illness or disability can, but it's just -- we use a certain amount of energy, or we -- because we have to do it in a different way. So what does that look like, and being honest with ourselves of how much energy we have to do it. But then, you know, we come from this society that puts so much emphasis on what you produce, how you can be an asset, and all those things. And that you know, those type of ideas disproportionately don't include people that have chronic illness, that may have less energy or use up more energy doing those tasks. So it's honestly processing that, and being honest with yourself. And it's like yes, I'm a person with a disability, and I have chronic illness, and yes I am very capable of doing my job and doing my job very well, just as much as any person who's non-disabled. But yes, does it look different? Yes it does. Does it use a certain amount of level of energy then that person who is non-disabled? Yes it does. So I think being honest with that. And I'm completely paraphrasing -- summarizing, but yeah, that's kind of the general idea of the -- and I think it's called spoon theory, but I'm gonna find it.

>> Lesley Hennen: I think so, I think you're right and it's -- generally -- like the spoons are really kind of -- a metaphor for like, you get 10 spoons to start your day, and then like, as you go throughout the day, certain things take away more energy. And then the spoons equal that energy. So it's like you have to do xyz, and that took two spoons, so now you have eight spoons to get through the rest of your day. Then like more things keep happening throughout the day and then you keep using your spoons. And then by the end of the day you're out of your spoons, or maybe halfway through the day you're out of spoons. And so it's just sort of like -- giving like a visual metaphor to your energy and spoons, to kind of represent each other. But yeah I think I feel like you -- oh yeah, thank you for dropping that link in the chat.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah, it's a medical website -- a health clinic -- Cleveland health clinic or -- I just picked that as an option. There's a lot of different content out in the -- webesphere of information, but just you know, Google and do your own personal research on spoon theory. And that's essentially what we were talking about. Ah, nice, they found it. So yeah, we have about five more minutes, so I don't know if there's any other final words you have or if anyone has any final questions before we finish.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, I'm just looking at the Facebook. No questions yet, but I do see one comment from Gary, who just says thank you for reaffirming that it is okay to step back from the project and recharge. As content creators it is essential, a great conversation. So yeah just, I guess my final word would just be it's -- take all the time you need to recharge from whatever you're working on, and just, you know, knowing that so many other people are with you, and we all are experiencing these different levels of advocacy and burnout in different ways. And so just -- yeah, just being aware of like, everyone is doing their best, everyone is dealing with so many different things, and we're all -- we're all with you.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yes, and I think my final words is you know, you said we're all doing our best, and I think just reminding ourselves that our best is good enough. And you know, you can still set those goals, and if you don't get to it right now, that's okay. Look at it next month when you're feeling a little bit better, or when you have the mental capacity to work on it. If you don't have the mental capacity at that moment -- then that is okay. Take that time to veg out and do what you need to do. Net for you know a week or -- maybe not a week, but -- if you need to, that's what you need to do, that is okay. And it's like, take those bubble baths, listen to that sound bath, watch those videos -- I love those videos -- those calming videos that have, like, different things -- like they just help me so much -- things with light -- I love sensory light things, it's really calming for me. And --

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah. [crosstalk] that I'm very jealous of.

>> Tatiana Lee: I got this speaker that lights up, and I just -- things that just bring me joy and just make me say [breathes]. And I think finding -- I think that's it! It's like, finding those things that make you say [breathes].

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah that's a nice feeling of like, okay, I'm here. [chuckles]

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah exactly, and continuing to check in with yourself, and -- yeah, I think that's what I'm gonna take, I'm gonna use these next couple of weeks at the end of the year to take that time, also set my goals for the new year and figure out when I'm gonna tackle them, try to do -- being more intentional about planning, but yeah, getting that mentality of like, it is what it is. And I'm gonna always do my best and just being okay with that your best is good enough.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, love that. Perfect. Well I hope everyone has a great new year, a very relaxing end of this year, very recharging and getting those goals ready for the new year. But yeah, I think unless there are any other questions we can end -- about three minutes left. But definitely check out the resources we posted in the chat. Thank you Tatiana for posting them again. So we have the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Brown Girl Therapy, BetterHelp, The Trevor Project, To Write Love On Her Arms, RAINN, and the Born This Way Foundation. Those are just a few organizations that we really love, and each one of them has different specialties and different resources for different communities. So feel free to learn more, whatever you are interested in or whatever you think you might need. But yeah, thank you everyone for joining us and taking time out of your days and busy schedules to listen to us. Yeah.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yes, yes. And I will just add that I threw in the chat, if you want to sign up for our newsletter -- we have a entertainment Hollywood inclusion weekly newsletter, where we have casting notices, we have different opportunities for different labs that are going on in the industry that you can apply for, whether disability focused or not, casting calls, opportunities for different things -- so check that out. Sign up to our newsletter. And also upcoming events, we will you know, always do different webinars, and you know -- so if a webinar interests you, tune in. And stay up to date with all that is going on with our entertainment and media team, and our work. And yeah, have a happy holiday, enjoy yourselves, and you know, be careful out there. You know, the pandemic is -- getting really -- heightened even more, again, which is -- kind of frightening. So yeah, be careful out there and you know, take care of yourselves, the best way you need to take care of yourself within that moment -- it's like everything I keep reminding people, you know that I have friends and family that's hurting themselves -- I'm like we're in the middle of a pandemic, and it's like, that enough is stressful.

>> Lesley Hennen: Exactly, so true, yeah.

>> Tatiana Lee: So be gentle with yourself. Please be safe out there. Enjoy your holidays but please be safe. Get vaccinated and boosted if you're able to. Please just enjoy and have a happy and safe holiday, and end of the year.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yes. All right, thank you everyone!